

Rust Report

News and views of the action in Australasia's IT sector this week

February 1, 2008

THE RUST BUCKET

Market influence

What a week! Investors are bailing out of technology stocks and several companies are seeing the need for new leadership. Things change quickly in this industry.

Innovation and ICT uptake in Australia are highly dependent on the e-skills of the workforce. However, evidence is pointing to growing e-skills gaps. The transition to a knowledge-based economy is making education and training a lifelong process rather than a one-off activity.

What are the key aspects to building a vibrant ICT industry in Australia? Some of the common characteristics for a vibrant ICT industry seem to be

- 1) An educated and willing workforce,
- 2) Some key academic centres of excellence,
- 3) A stable business environment,
- 4) A strong and flexible communications infrastructure,
- 5) A good climate for investment for start-up activities, and
- 6) Strong leadership.

But then we don't have to be perfect. On the one hand it is a high-growth industry and on the other it is also now a global industry. Because of the rapid pace of technological development, if we are to keep up we must make sure that public opinion, and investments in R&D, education, literacy, and leadership do not stand in the way of technology implementation. That said, Australians must benefit from our advances in technology and ensure we are able to exploit technology regardless of its sophistication.

The factors affecting ICT spending today include economic conditions, business environment, corporate culture, senior systems installed, vertical market growth, and many others. Together they constitute a shifting mosaic of influence over ICT budgets.

The challenge for all ICT vendors is survival; how do they get from today's economy to tomorrow's? Vendors can't manage their companies the way they have in the past and hope for survival. It's not that companies have been poorly run; it's just that the rules have changed too quickly for some of the older vendors.

Strong local leaders are now essential to build an effective organisation around values and work styles. In terms of who will win, the jury is out as there is a lot of innovation now reaching markets. Established vendors that broaden their portfolios will influence the rest of the market and cause other vendors to follow suit. Acquisitions, too, can influence the market as well as customer purchasing decisions, while the move of a CEO can lend a new found level of expertise to a formally inconsequential vendor.

— Len Rust RustOz@bigpond.com.au

Powerlan works with HCL on big Indian job

Clarity, a subsidiary of Australian ICT products and services supplier Powerlan, is working with Indian company HCL to implement an operational support system (OSS) for giant telco Bharat Sanchar Nigam. The contract calls for the provision of an inventory management, provisioning, and fault management system to support BSNL's voice services in the southern and eastern zones of India, explained Jon Newbery, CEO of Powerlan.

"Using Clarity's products and consultancy HCL will deliver a highly-scalable solution designed to rationalise the number of IT platforms, consequently lowering infrastructure and capital expenses as well as reducing time to market," Newbery added.

"We hope that this project will be the start of a long-lasting relationship with both HCL and BSNL, as next generation OSS becomes increasingly important to cope with both a large customer base and an increasing number of products and services." www.powerlan.com

Accenture savours Aussie flavour

Multinational services provider Accenture has set out to acquire two companies — Memetrics Holdings and Maxamine — that have distinctly Australian backgrounds.

Memetrics Holdings, which specialises in the optimisation of Web content, was established in 1999 by University of Sydney Professor Jordan Louviere and Hikaru Phillips. Louviere was a pioneer in the development of choice modelling-based marketing applications.

Maxamine, which specialises in Web analytics software, was set up in South Australia but moved its headquarters to California.

Accenture believes the acquisitions will strengthen its ability to provide digital optimisation services.

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INSIDER EDITION

IBA strengthens position in China

Australian health management systems developer IBA Health has chalked up a new order in China through its majority-owned subsidiary Shanghai People's Health. The new contract, valued at \$A1 million, involves the second phase of the Changning District e-health project and will cover 16 hospitals.

In addition, SPH has reached preferred vendor status for the delivery of an e-health infrastructure and software project to support Internet-based consultations and the remote delivery of care in one of China's largest provinces, explained Gary Cohen, executive chairman of IBA.

"Through the Internet-based infrastructure projects we are developing, there is the potential to fundamentally change the way healthcare is delivered in China," Cohen added. www.ibatech.com

- Through its recently acquired subsidiary iSoft (*Rust Report*, Nov 2 2007, p4) IBA has been awarded two contracts in Germany to a total value of \$A1.2 million.

Aconex to drive Sydney development

Victorian company Aconex has been selected to provide its information management solution to Frasers Broadway, a controversial development on the site of the former Carlton United Brewery site on Sydney's Broadway.

"Over the lifecycle of this development we expect that hundreds of thousands of drawings and documents will be created that will need to be shared between the numerous parties involved in the project," explained Michael Goldrick, construction director for the developer, Frasers Property. "Using Aconex will save time by giving people fast retrieval and distribution of their files and will cut administrative costs, such as printing and couriers," he added.

Leigh Jasper, CEO of Aconex, said he expects more Australian developers to begin using Aconex. "Currently around 25 per cent of new projects in Australia use a collaboration tool compared to around 50 per cent in the UK and US, so we expect our growth to continue," he explained. www.aconex.com

Emagine wins South African order

Australian company Emagine International has been selected to provide its campaign management solution to South African company Blue Label Telecoms, which provides electronic tokens for a variety of applications, and customers, including telcos, utilities, transport companies, and financial services institutions. The deal presents an opportunity for Emagine to expand across Africa and Asia, claimed CEO David Peters. www.emagineinternational.com

IRESS takes on life insurer

IRESS Market Technology, an Australia provider of share market and wealth management systems, has been selected to provide its AppCentral platform to Asteron Life. AppCentral is a Web-based life insurance application that allows advisers to complete life insurance proposals and submit the information electronically. The platform is integrated with IRESS's financial planning applications, Xplan and VisiPlan.

"Asteron is investing in a range of innovative technology solutions, such as signing up with AppCentral to make it easier for advisers to do business with us. This means advisers can spend more time doing what they do best — providing clients with professional face-to-face financial advice," said Graham Burnard, Asteron's head of sales. www.iress.com.au

- Asgard Wealth Solutions has licensed the XTOOLS and XTOOLS+ modelling components of Xplan for inclusion in its AdviserNETgain software. The tools will replace Asgard's own Assirt Desktop tools.

Bravura on target for Perpetual

Bravura Solutions has completed the first stage of a consolidation of Perpetual Limited's unit registry systems. The project involved the migration of Perpetual's largest legacy system into a single service-oriented architecture platform. "The migration was the first step in the creation of a single wealth management platform for Perpetual's entire business, said Eric Wang, COO of Perpetual.

"The new Bravura applications deliver enhanced functionality, which will introduce significant improvements across our banking, custody, funds management, and compliance processes while also delivering significant savings and efficiencies," Wang added. www.bravurasolutions.com

Betting sites take punt on POLi

Online sports betting companies Sports Acumen and Global Sportsbet have adopted the POLi online payment service from Australian developer Centricom to facilitate payments by customers. The service is safe because neither the merchant — in this case Sports Acumen and Global Sportsbet — nor POLi receive any of the customer's details, said Simon Warner, managing director of POLi.

"The instantaneous nature of the POLi payment solution gives our customers more options, particularly those who do not have credit cards or do not like using them over the Net," said Tom Sillman, head of customer service at Global Sportsbet. www.centricom.com



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INSIDER EDITION

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IBM gets amongst the contracts

IBM has swept into 2008 buoyed by a number of solid contracts — two with big banks and one with a state government. The deals included:

- A three-year outsourcing agreement to take over the National Australia Bank's desktop and service desk IT infrastructure, help desk, and desktop support for 28,000 NAB users around Australia;
- Inclusion on the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's panel of suppliers of application and management services; and
- A four-year contract to help the Queensland Government implement business solutions as part of its shared service initiative. IBM's consultants will provide application development and testing, training, and change-management services.

TechOne ties up two more councils

Applications from Queensland developer TechnologyOne have been selected by the WA councils of the City of Joondalup and the Shire of Busselton.

Joondalup, a former user of TechnologyOne's property and rating system, is to implement the Financials and Works & Assets applications. Busselton will implement a fully-integrated Local Government suite.

"At TechnologyOne we provide a one-stop shop with an entire integrated system that is at the top of its game and is best in class," claimed Adrian Di Marco, executive chairman of TechnologyOne.

www.technologyonecorp.com

Teen site turns to Macquarie

The Habbo teen social networking site (www.habbo.com.au) has selected Macquarie Hosting to host its mission critical applications and Web site. The hosting services will be provided from Macquarie Hosting's data centre in Sydney, which is able to provide specialised services such as load balancing, explained Aidan Tudehope, managing director of hosting at Macquarie Telecom.

www.macquarietelecom.com/hosting

Lexmark signed for Optus shops

Lexmark has won a contract to provide colour laser printers and multifunction printers to be used in the chain of Optus 'yes' retail outlets. The devices will allow a range of scanning, printing, and storage capabilities, a spokesman said.

Aussies worth watching**A roundup of companies making waves at home and abroad**

- **BRENNAN** is a services provider with a focus on building, operating, and maintaining all aspects of ICT infrastructure for mid-size organisations. The company has four major lines of business: voice, data and Internet; IT services and solutions; software; and technology sourcing. Brennan partners with its clients to deliver a complete range of solutions. www.brennanit.com.au
- **COMBO** specialises in the provision of IT support services to small-to-medium size businesses. The company's IT solutions include networking, maintenance, firewalls, troubleshooting, and e-marketing services, including e-mail marketing. Combo is planning to take the company national and moving into remote managed services. www.combo.com.au
- **OCTAHEDRON** provides solutions for jewellers in 10 countries and three languages. The company's Web-based jewellery store management software increases productivity, efficiency, and profits, as it enables optimal management of company resources. www.octahedron.com.au
- **MENULOG** is a Web-based booking service that takes services to almost 30,000 restaurants in nine countries. The company processes bookings and takeaway orders for staff members of major companies and thousands of frequent diner members. Menulog's eating out guide features special offers, online booking, critics' reviews, user ratings, and a search facility. www.menulog.com.au
- **MYCYBERTWIN** allows companies and individuals to create an artificial intelligence clone of themselves that can talk to clients on their behalf. The clones live on social networks, on corporate Web sites and inside virtual worlds. MyCyberTwin allows companies to get their messages out to potential customers to promote products, run surveys, or have FAQs answered. www.mycybertwin.com
- **TAURUS SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS** delivers Web-based project, contract, and tender and works management solutions for both the private sector and government. The company provides effective solutions for clients' contract and project management problems. Clients include local government agencies, construction companies, and consulting engineers. www.taurus.com.au

DEAL MAKERS

ERG makes \$250m counterstrike

Troubled fare management specialist ERG has struck back at the NSW Government's claim that it intended to seek damages of some \$A95 million after cancelling the Tcard project (*Rust Report*, Jan 25, p1). The company issued a statement noting that it is "considering legal action" after identifying losses of about \$A250 million on what it described as "the NSW Government's unlawful termination of the Tcard contract".

Colin Henson, chairman of ERG, noted that the gloves are about to come off. "ERG has been restrained in its previous comments so as to try and facilitate a successful project," he warned. "It needs to be remembered that ERG has successfully delivered similar programs with co-operative government departments in cities all around the world . . . and many of ERG's current project customers have provided references supporting the company. www.erggroup.com

TechOne opens UK support centre

TechnologyOne has joined forces with Imass, a British developer of geographical information systems, to set up a shared service centre. The centre will enable customers to access TechnologyOne's solutions through a software-as-a-service delivery model, said Adrian Di Marco, executive chairman of the Queensland developer.

"The shared service delivery is ideal for our public sector clients as it endorses the central government's guidelines on enhanced partnerships between local authorities. It provides local authorities with a simple way to reduce infrastructure costs and share technical resources to greater effect without compromising the quality of the solution or service provided to the community," Di Marco explained. www.technologyonecorp.com

Hunting out users' IP assets

Software developed in-house by large corporations is the target of Secret Sauce IP Ventures, a newly formed company set up by Steve Telburn. "Secret Sauce IP Ventures will identify valuable intellectual property hidden inside Australia's major corporations and extract value through the creation of international licensing programs and start-up ventures," Telburn explained.

The company has entered a partnership with US counterpart Fluid Innovation, which targets applications developed within Fortune 500 companies. "We now have direct entry into a global network of independent software vendors that are actively seeking proven technologies developed inside major corporations," Telburn said. www.secretssauce.com.au

Aussie targets US Cognos users

Australian geospatial systems developer Integeo has joined forces with Canadian BI consultant SpotOn Systems to offer location intelligence capabilities to Cognos users in North America. The offerings will be built on Integeo's Map Intelligence development platform. www.integeo.com

Commander mounts salvage attempt

Still reeling from a host of problems that have led to the departure of its CEO, COO, and CFO, Commander Communications has launched a "business turnaround plan". Included in the measures discussed in the plan are a reduction in headcount from about 2000 to some 1400, a rationalisation of the hardware the company sells, and the sale of non-core businesses that had been acquired under the previous management team.

"Following the restructure Commander will quickly emerge as a more focused provider of services to selected attractive market segments where Commander either has or can build competitive advantage," noted Amanda Lacaze, the company's new managing director and CEO.

"Some areas of the business are underperforming or are simply unprofitable," Lacaze said. "By taking decisive action today, I am confident we can maximise value for both customers and shareholders." www.commander.com

m2m formalises reach in Vietnam

Wireless communications specialist m2m Corporation has formalised an agreement with Vietnam Multimedia Corporation — Wireless Broadband Company (*Rust Report*, Oct 26 2007, p3). The deal covers Internet products and services provided by m2m's subsidiary Profit Way Technology. "This agreement will give the m2m group immediate access to over five million existing retail subscribers to market VoIP and related services," claimed Michael So, CEO of m2m. www.m2mcorporation.com.au

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DEAL MAKERS

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Zylotech finds strong Asian partner

Australian video surveillance specialist Zylotech has entered a two-way distribution agreement with Asian hardware manufacturer Vivotek, which makes IP cameras and is known for brands like D-Link and LevelOne.

Under the terms of the deal Zylotech will become exclusive distributor of Vivotek's camera products in Australia, and Vivotek will distribute Zylotech's Smart-G Enterprise Protection software in Asia, Europe, and the US, where Zylotech is not represented.

"Having worked together with Zylotech in developing our mutual offerings for many years, we have now jointly reached a totally new global stage based on trust and respect," said Eddy Lan, president of Vivotek. www.zylotech.com.au

Unify teams up with SAP on ID

Unify Solutions has been appointed SAP's first Australian solutions partner specialising in identity management. Under the terms of their agreement the two companies will work together to sell and implement SAP's NetWeaver solutions, explained Mark Goodall, managing director of Unify.

"Compliance continues to be a primary business driver in the identity and access management market," Goodall said. "Customers are increasingly demanding seamless integration between their GRC and identity management solutions as they contend with growing security threats and increasing regulatory oversight." www.unifysolutions.net

— Business Briefs —

- Grabba International, a Brisbane-based developer of mobile data capture devices, has bought Fusion Sport, Australian developer of the SmartSpeed elite sport training system. The acquisition will allow technology-sharing that can be incorporated into future products, claimed Frank Downes, CEO of Grabba. www.grabba.com
- Data-inCrypt has obtained exclusive Far East and Asia/Pacific licensing rights to a secure email platform from US company CertifiedMail. The Australian company will offer the service as the Data-inCrypt SMX secure registered email service. www.data-incrypt.com
- The Australian Information Industry Association is accepting nominations for the 2008 iAwards, which recognise outstanding Australian ICT innovations. Details from www.aiia.com.au
- South Australian broadband services provider Internode has connected the first customers to its WiMAX wireless broadband service on the Yorke Peninsula. Some 200 people who are too far from a telephone exchange to receive ADSL services are the first to use the service, carried over a network of 10 base stations. www.internode.on.net
- A trial of Webphones from WA company PieNetworks has been halted by Telecom NZ. The pilot involved PieNetworks buying payphone sites and replacing them with rebranded Webphones.

A CEO told me

Andrew Keayes

Joint managing director Ethos Corporation

RUST: Can you give us an overview of Ethos Corporation?

KEYAYES: Ethos Corporation was created three years ago, initially with a founding team of six including myself and Kevin Charman operating as joint managing directors. The business has grown to 30 people, with our Melbourne office under the leadership of Virginia Bacon opening this month.

The technology vendor and service provider market represents a cornerstone of our business.

RUST: What do you see as the biggest challenge in recruiting today?

KEYAYES: Some would argue that the candidate market is tight. I'd like to suggest that high performing organisations tend to minimise the impact of such a market with a few simple steps;

- Retaining the service of one recruiter, not multiple. (maximises recruiter commitment),
- Becoming being very competent in selling their opportunity, understanding the need to compel someone to leave a successful career,
- Remunerating in the upper percentile, and
- Being highly responsive with feedback and next steps (time kills all hiring opportunities).

RUST: How can we attract more students to IT?

KEYAYES: Technology graduate intake undoubtedly suffered during the early 2000s. It's all about profile. If you look at the recent accounting CPA and CA accreditation TV advertisements, for example, they paint a clear picture and a path for those at the beginning of their career. I think they provide an excellent benchmark. Also, past governments have had mixed commitment toward the sector and innovation and this means that often the excitement that comes with technology and R&D is lost (and usually overseas).

RUST: Where are the vendor jobs in the industry now?

KEYAYES: We've seen a lot of acquisitions over the last three years which have, on occasion, resulted in a headcount freeze, however, demand has generally been strong.

Interestingly there are a number of niche, point players aggressively hiring pre-sales and sales expertise. These organisations can be very appealing to a candidate who is seeking to move away from the large technology corporation. In terms of the more established players, demand is steady. Of late we have also seen a real increase in strategy and consulting hiring.

RUST: What are the key skills that successful managers need?

KEYAYES: There's a saying that "people join companies and leave managers". An effective manager can create a microculture within a culture (if the larger culture is negative) or can leverage a strong culture to their advantage.

As a leader, it can be healthy to benchmark yourself against the best leader you've worked under. What were their qualities? How would you rate yourself against them? How would your team rate you? Ever thought of doing a 360 feedback session?

Ultimately those who can create an environment that enables performance will be the most personally and financially fulfilled.

RUST e-RESEARCH

The talent war heats up

This year, 2008, risks being the year of the revolving door if employers continue to focus simply on attracting new staff, rather than developing and retaining current employees. The resulting staff turnover is expected to cost Australian businesses more than \$A100 billion over the coming 12 months, according to forecasts by Unisys.

"At a time when the skills shortage is squeezing the Australian economy, staff turnover is turning into a major problem that is already costing the country's businesses more than \$A100 billion a year. It costs more to continually replace staff, and in a tight labour market each new hire drives up wage levels for the same job role without a corresponding increase in productivity. When good staff leave intellectual property and the valuable relationships they established with customers and business partners go with them. All indications are that this will get worse in 2008," said Steve Parker, managing director of Unisys Australia and New Zealand.

Unisys has mapped out three important strategies to keep good staff:

- Accept that staff don't want the same job forever – find out what challenges stimulate them and develop a tailored progressive career path within the organisation.
- Identify and groom best performers . Work out what technical and business skills will develop the individual and ensure they access the training and experience to attain them.
- Support work-life balance. Offer mobile tools and flexible work arrangements to better manage time and encourage programs which support a healthy lifestyle.

"Now is the time for businesses to examine their employees' needs and expectations in order to create an environment to retain, not just attract, the right staff. Once they've joined the company, you need to be able to offer career development through training, experience, and exposure to the challenges and opportunities that excite them. The employer needs to take an active role," Parker said.

Unisys' analysis showed the cost of replacing a worker is around 1.5 times that person's yearly salary. Based on ABS figures, 1.2 million people changed jobs in the 12 months to February 2006. Using average weekly earnings, that ended up costing the Australian economy more than \$A100 billion a year.

A study by the Australian Chamber of Commerce found that 69.9 per cent of businesses were concerned about wage levels increasing without a corresponding increase in productivity.

"The Australian labour environment is challenging: we have the lowest level of unemployment in more than 33 years, around 21 per cent of Australians have a bachelor degree or higher, and almost one in five aren't in a traditional full-time role. In other words, employees are qualified, they are getting younger, they are on the move and they don't expect to stay with the same employer for the life of their career," Parker said.

"Instead of offering potential staff champagne and iPods when they join, as some companies are reported to be doing, Australian businesses need robust talent management programs which will nurture staff, provide the right long-term rewards and show workers a real career path."

US edges towards mobile banking

The US seems to be moving closer to a goal of using mobile handsets to accomplish financial transactions and make purchases as several competing market players align on both technology and objectives, according to research company In-Stat. Although 2008 will not be "the year of mobile payments" in the US, some progress is likely, the high-tech market research firm predicted.

"There is evidence that the US market may overcome a crucial technology incompatibility and make progress during 2008 toward contactless payments using cellphones," said David Chamberlain, In-Stat analyst.

"Companies in several different sectors all ultimately want to deploy near field communications (NFC), the key enabling technology, into handsets as well as in merchant payment terminals." There is also general agreement that the current generation of mobile banking services is an important first step toward accomplishing that goal.

Recent research by In-Stat found:

- Depending on several technologies, commercial, and marketing factors, between eight million and 30 million customers in North America will be using NFC-based contactless payments by 2012.
- More than 34 million cell phones could be used for other financial applications like online banking by 2012.

Rust e-Research continued on page 7 >

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RUST e-RESEARCH

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Personal navigation the way to go

Over the next few years, mobile handsets will play an increasingly important role in portable navigation markets, with handset-based navigation devices reaching an annual sales volume of more than 96 million units by 2012. ABI Research has forecast that navigation device sales will continue to outperform the industry's expectations and forecasts, with the 2007 holiday season illustrating that the US market is quickly catching up to Europe in its embrace of navigation, particularly personal navigation devices (PND).

Handset-based navigation will not challenge the PND navigation form factor in the near future; and despite the relative success of off-board navigation in the US — with more than four million paying subscribers — PNDs remain the most user-friendly in-car navigation device.

Handsets will complement, rather than displace, PNDs, with a number of users owning more than one navigation device. Important barriers such as the lack of GPS handsets, especially in Europe (and the issue of indoor coverage), will have to be removed before handset-based location services can be adopted on a broader scale.

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BY ASSOCIATION

Growing your business in 2008

By Heather Ridout*

WELCOME to 2008, a year that will present many challenges and opportunities for businesses in the high technology manufacturing sector.

2007 saw a remarkably resilient performance from the manufacturing sector, which occurred on the back of the strong domestic economy.

In late 2007, the *Australian Industry Group - PricewaterhouseCoopers Australian Performance of Manufacturing Index* revealed that manufacturing growth continued to rise in December, increasing 3.8 points to 57.6 (remaining above the key 50.0 level separating expansion from contraction).

While the nation's manufacturing sector continues to perform well, strong competitive pressures facing the industry mean that maintaining and enhancing profitability is heavily reliant on effective cost control and increasing efficiency in manufacturers' operations.

In 2008, experts are predicting that the way your company builds market growth will depend on your business innovation model, accessing global supply chains, and adopting lean production techniques.

Ai Group recognises that building a sustainable business in today's tough economy needs more than hard work and longevity — you need a broad understanding of business drivers and constraints as well.

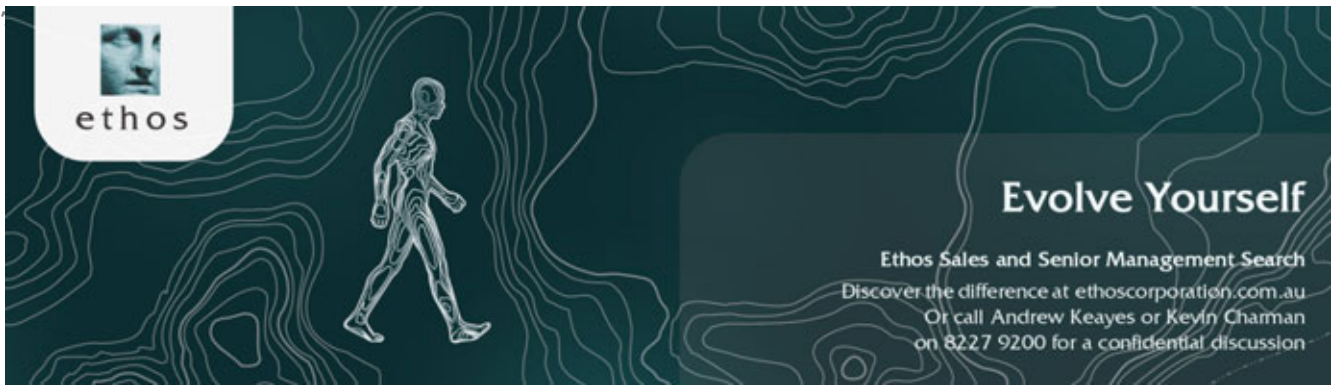
With that in mind, we will be hosting a series of workshops in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne in March to explore the opportunities and risks for business growth in 2008.

Growing Your Business in 2008 will present a number of chief executives and leading economists who will share their views on the best business prospects in 2008.

Each workshop will explore whether business profits will be driven by consumer demand, new investments, or through business cost reductions and efficiencies. Export opportunities will also be featured and the way the Australian dollar and the US sub-prime housing market may affect Australian businesses.

Growing Your Business in 2008 will be held in Brisbane on Tuesday March 4, Sydney on Wednesday March 5, and Melbourne on Thursday March 6. More information is available from the Ai Group website http://pdf.aigroup.asn.au/events/2008/economicbriefing_march08.pdf

* Heather Ridout is chief executive of the Australian Industry Group. www.aigroup.asn.au



REVOLVING DOORS

Leanne Ramsay takes VP role

Leanne Ramsay has joined Opengear, a provider of out-of-band management solutions, as vice president of sales for Asia/Pacific. She will be based in Sydney.

Ramsay was most recently A/NZ managing director for Avocent, which she joined following its acquisition of Cyclades in 2006. She has also worked for Allied Technologies Group, Clarent Corporation, Eclipse Communications, Fujitsu Australia, Scitec Communications, LAN Systems, and CASE Communications.

Kim Denham appointed ACS CEO

The Australian Computer Society has appointed Kim Denham CEO, taking over the reins from acting CEO Sam Burrell. Denham will relocate from Western Australia to Sydney to take up the position.

A 20-year industry veteran Denham has worked for Ericsson Australia, West Australian Newspapers, Tourism Western Australia and CSBP. www.acs.org.au

Fisher heads Sybase channels

Stuart Fisher has been appointed Sybase's director of channel sales and alliances, Asia/Pacific, based in Singapore. Fisher's background includes IT infrastructure and ERP software solutions, selective IT outsourcing, project management, mobility, and mobile banking. His work experience includes five years with SAP.

Mitrais manager for offshore clients

Mitrais, the Bali-based developer with Australian connections, has appointed Gusti Putu Kompiang (Kompi) senior manager for international clients. He previously managed a team of 20 who provided services to Mitrais' Australian client Mincom. He also managed the inaugural training program launched by Mitrais in 2006 to recruit and train graduates.

— Around the Traps —

- Ian Smith has taken the role of chairman of Australian broadband phone company Engin. He has extensive experience of the industry after roles as CEO of Yahoo!7, CEO of the Communications Group, president international of Bates Worldwide, and a director of Cordiant.

- Ross Ballard has departed CA Pacific, where he was sales manager, and is now providing sales and marketing services through his business Rebus Consulting.

- Ilya Karachevtsev has been promoted to commercial product manager for Australia and NZ at D-Link. He joined the company in 1999.

- Clair Deevy has left her job as corporate PR manager of Microsoft Australia to become Microsoft's Asia citizenship communications manager in Singapore. She will be replaced by Ben Tan, who was previously PR and marketing manager at CNET.

- The Storage Networking Industry Association for Australia and NZ has appointed a user to its board in Graham Rothwell, head of client management, technology operations, at National Australia Bank.

All hail the chief!

2008 is proving to be a difficult time for a number of industry executives, with changes occurring already at BlueFreeway, Vignette, SAP, and NEC.

- **This week digital marketing specialist BlueFreeway announced that its CEO Richard Webb had departed "following a reassessment of the company's strategic direction". To fill the gap, Greg Daniel, one of the company's founders, has taken the role of interim executive chairman and Steve Fanale and Shane Murray have been appointed joint COOs. Fanale is chief executive of MassMedia Studios and Murray is chief executive of Viva9.**

- **Last week Graham Pullen made an unexpected departure from Vignette, where he had been head of the company's Asia/Pacific operations. He had previously worked briefly for Vignette until leaving to join Documentum. He then returned to Vignette in 2005 (*Rust Report*, Apr 8 2005, p8). Vignette has not yet named a replacement for Pullen.**

- **Amid a few recent changes, Alan Hyde has left SAP, where he was A/NZ CEO. He has been replaced as an interim measure by Tim Ebbeck, who is now senior vice president and chief commercial officer for Asia/Pacific and Japan.**

- **NEC Australia has welcomed Wataru Takeuchi as managing director, replacing Toshihara Iwasa, who has returned to the parent company in Tokyo. Takeuchi has worked for NEC in Japan for 30 years.**

Sam Tan joins Sun in product role

Sam Tan has been promoted to systems product manager for Australia and New Zealand at Sun Microsystems. He will handle hardware ranging from x86 AMD and Intel systems to blade servers and CoolThreads systems, as well as the Solaris operating system. Tan was most recently business development manager.