



Istug 2006 Conference

Thank you to all sponsors and delegates who supported this year's conference in Bournemouth. Special thanks go to all the Istug members who took the time to prepare presentations for the event. Once again the conference was a great success: we had a higher number of delegates than 2005, most of whom have been members of Istug for many years though we also welcomed a large number of new members to the event. We have had some very interesting and positive feedback; some even saying that it was the best conference yet.



*David Pinches, Head of Product Management
Sage (UK) Ltd*

Delegates have also highlighted the value of the networking that is made possible by Istug events; the opportunity to speak to other users about the system and any issues is extremely beneficial and constructive.

Some delegate comments:

"It was a really excellently run event, and very useful too."

"Thanks for another successful and enjoyable conference!"

"A quick e-mail to say thanks for a very worthwhile 2 days. Being the first Istug annual conference I've attended, I wasn't sure what to expect. I found most of the sessions I attended very useful, and well presented. Also, it was good to have an opportunity to speak with other member companies."

The sessions were all well attended and many of the speakers have commented on the success of the discussions that took place. The Sage BI and Stock Recalc workshops were especially well received and, I believe, provided some vital feedback for Sage, who have thanked us for the opportunity to talk directly to customers about these critical issues.



*Delegates at the Sage Strategy Update
Presentation*

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Istug 2006 Conference Workshops

Sage BI Workshop

The Istug Sage BI workshop provided a unique opportunity for members to learn about the opportunities that exist by leveraging a business intelligence solution. With the market rapidly growing with sales revenue forecast at \$5 billion in 2006 (www.olapreport.com) the development of BI specific products is on the rise. Gartner, the independent research analysts quotes "BI is the number one priority for CIO's in 2006". Sage has entered the market against tough competition such as Cognos and Business Objects, with Sage BI. Launched in 2005, the solution has acquired more than 500 UK customers from SME's, mid size to FTSE 100 companies.

The Sage BI workshop set out to provide a clear overview of the BI market, the solutions as well as advice on implementing. In embarking on any type of Business Intelligence solution it is important to understand the pitfalls, do's and don'ts of implementing BI solutions.

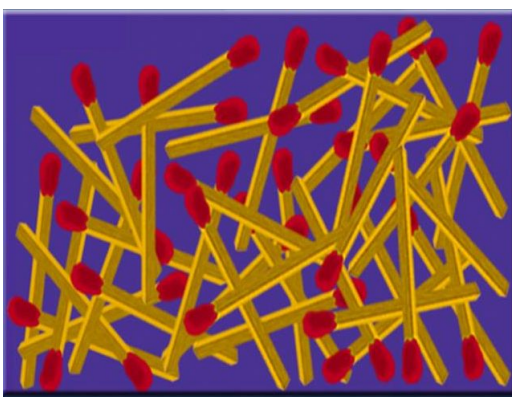
1. Ensure you have an Executive Sponsor for the need for BI
2. Define the business goals of the Business Intelligence solution
3. Define the project objectives during each step of the Business Intelligence solution
4. Ensure the vision for BI is shared with the Executive Sponsor, your Sage Business Partner and User Group
5. Define the Return on Investment, outlining the specific benefit you expect the business to achieve in the short, medium and long term
6. Focus on an integrated approach; look to deploy one integrated solution with your existing solutions to avoid an unworkable data strategy in the future
7. Make sure the underlying data in your ERP, CRM solutions is accurate and clean
8. Train users effectively and provide user groups to gain mind share and buy in
9. Deploy in phases with regular review and feedback. Deliver reports that provide the most value as early as possible to the business, then modify as your solution expands across the business

Correctly implementing Sage BI provides companies a unique opportunity to deliver true business performance management. As a case in point, Schiedel Rite-Vent has seen a 6-month return on investment by leveraging the Sales Logix and Sage Line 500 data to help identify revenue opportunities in their market place.

Sage continues to invest in Sage BI and the future will see new solutions, supporting the Sage product portfolio as well as introducing advanced analytics, taking BI to the next step in it's evolution.

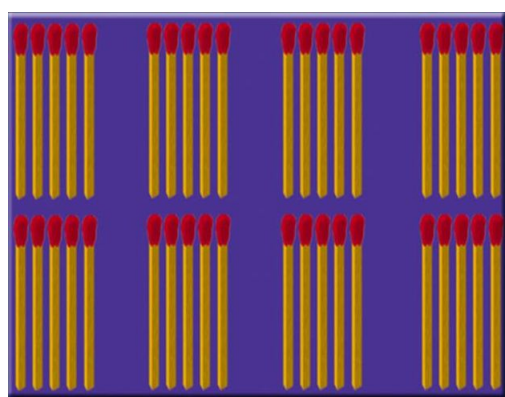
Future Istug events will see the new solutions from Sage BI as well as providing members to discuss their approaches to leveraging business data.

Data in your Accounting/CRM system



Before BI

Data presented in your BI systems



After BI

Stock Recalculation Programme

As part of the recent Istug Conference held in Bournemouth on the 9th October this year, we ran a session around the use of the stock recalculation programme. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in a very lively but constructive debate. As a result of the feedback I would like to advise everyone of our current process for dealing with issues surrounding stock allocation issues and our plans to improve the process.

Previously, the stock recalculation passwords were posted on a monthly basis to the Business Partner and the Customer web site on www.sageenterprisesolutions.com. We took a decision to remove them from the Customer web site so that if customers were experiencing issues with their stock, they would have to call their Business Partner to ask for the password, and thus register with the Business Partner that there was a problem. We thought this would stop people just running the programme and force people to report the issue, and therefore it would get reported to us for investigation.

We also amended the passwords on the Business Partner web site so that each one of them had to report the name of the customer and the problem being experienced before the password would be released to them. If we received more than 3 requests for the same customer, we would phone the Business Partner and request that investigations were carried out and a call placed with Sage.

Following the feedback from the Istug members at the conference, it was requested that we further enhance the process by implementing the following steps:

1. Put the stock recalculation passwords back on the customer web site, but force the site to only issue the passwords once a stock recalculation report has been submitted to Sage showing the errors that have occurred
2. This report will be produced by the stock recalculation programme and will be amended to include more detail around the errors to enable the Business Partner and Sage to track down the issues
3. All reports that are submitted to Sage will be ring fenced into the Distribution and Manufacturing Support team for L500 for analysis. This team will also include a member of the R&D team for L500 to assist if required

The Line 500 R&D team have reported back that amending the stock recalculation programme to provide more information is not necessarily the best way to tackle the problem. In most cases the information from that report has not assisted us with our investigations. We have found through experience of those issues reported to us, that the most efficient way to correct the problems is through Sage producing a debug programme specific to the customer site.

We have therefore decided, but this is open to debate, to tackle the problem in a different way.

1. Firstly, we will put the stock recalculation passwords back on the customer web site, but we will force an email registering the the end customer name and the problem before the password is issued. These will be logged onto our system through the linked Business Partner and investigation will commence through the support team
2. If the problem cannot be resolved by the ring fenced support team which we will provide, we will ask our R&D team to produce a debug. However, we will schedule these strictly in a priority order based on frequency of the problem, impact to the business etc. Because producing debug programmes is a very labour intensive and time consuming task, we have to prioritise these issues so that R&D can cope with the demand. We commit to investigating and fixing all issues where possible, but we need to manage the flow of calls coming to R&D for debugging as each one needs to be treated on an individual basis.

We would like to discuss further and obtain a consensus from everyone that they are happy to proceed in this way. Therefore we will be conducting a session at the next Istug meeting at Sage on the 5th December 2006. I will be leading the session and be accompanied by a member of the R&D team.

Andrea Weiss

Customer Services Manager, MMD South

Newsletter Articles

Please can you send any articles for the next newsletter to Nicole James, Istug Technical Director. Anything you would like to be published is acceptable – letters to the editor, user stories, hints and tips, comments on Istug and the way we do, or do not, fulfil members requirements. We are here for YOU and this is YOUR newsletter.

Meeting Topics

If any of you have a specific topic you would like to see covered at a future meeting, please contact Nicole James, Istug Technical Director. We are open to all suggestions. We are also in need of members who are willing to present to the group – it is YOUR user group, please get involved – if anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Nicole.

ISTUG DISCUSSION FORUM: the forum is there for the exchange of ideas and can only be an effective resource if you, the members, use it - don't forget it is there for you!

Did you Know...?

How to prevent users logging in whilst running Period End with Security Groups

At Period End I used to chmod the user file to prevent users from logging in. However since upgrading to V5 on SQL neither of our support partners were able to provide a method of achieving this.

With the introduction of Security Groups in V6 (and V5.5 I think) I have been able to overcome this.

I have a security group called hpc_allow which points to the default of system

All users have a security group of hpc_user which under normal circumstances points to hpc_allow.

If however I wish to prevent users from logging in, I change the hpc_allow to hpc_deny which has no access and therefore prevent users from logging in.

I also run two scripts which change key users from hpc_users to hpc_allow and back again to enable them to login.

Istug 2006 Business Partner of the Year

Please take the time to let us know how your Business Partner has performed this year: well, or not so well, we need to know.

Log into the Members Club and complete the survey.

Results will be announced at the February Meeting and AGM, 13 February 2007 at Sage Newcastle

Dates for your Diary 2006/7

05/12/06 - Istug Meeting, Sage Winnersh

23/01/07 - Committee Meeting, Sage Winnersh

13/02/07 - Istug Meeting & AGM, Sage Newcastle

23/04/07 - Committee Meeting, Sage Winnersh

24/05/07 - Istug Meeting / Awareness Day
Venue tba

The agenda for all the above meetings where relevant will be published on the Istug Web Site at www.istug.com. Full online booking facilities exist, non-members may be asked to pay a guest fee.

Sage Line 200 and Line 500 "Wish List"

The results of the voting are now available on the News page of the Members web site.

The next voting will take place 2Q 2007.

If you have any comments on the voting process please contact Istug

Combating Carousel VAT Fraud

Who will be affected by changes from 1st December?

HMRC is introducing a significant change to the UK VAT law on the 1st December 2006. This will affect all UK VAT-registered businesses that trade in (i.e. supply or purchase) certain electronic goods such as mobile phones, computer chips and small electronic devices. Whilst the number of customers who supply these may be relatively small, many companies purchase such items, not only for onward selling, but also for their own consumption as they increase their use of mobile working (remote e-mail, web access, portable memory etc.).

Sage has been working closely with HMRC to both understand the changes and positively shape HMRC's execution of this and will be working equally closely with you to ease the burden imposed on our customers by this change. This will take the form of recommended processes to put in place the short term along with information on resultant changes to our software in the medium term.

We will contact Partners and Direct Customers shortly about resultant changes and interim recommendations. In the meantime please visit the Sage support website for further information: <http://www.sageenterprisesolutions.com/support>

Istug 2006 Conference - A Delegate's View

Thank you for this years Istug Conference. The venue was excellent with plenty of parking and leisure facilities for use in those few minutes that weren't filled with presentations and workshops from users and sponsors. It was good to see Sage's commitment to Istug by providing Sage "Clinics" and specialist workshops. The exhibition hall was larger than last year making it easier to view stands and speak to exhibitors. The champagne reception launched the evening's entertainment, dinner followed by "A Night at the Races". Horse racing is one thing but pig racing was quite another! By the end of the Conference I had a clear vision of how the Sage product is evolving, several third party enhancements and had picked up a few tips from other users that I can implement back at the workplace to save time and effort. Looking forward to the next conference!



*Joanne Fulton and
Andy Wagner,
FD Systems Ltd,
Istug 2006 Reseller
of the Year*



*Jonathan
Lassman and
Nicole James,
Istug*

Sage Stock Recalc Workshop - Report From a Delegate

By the number of people that attended this session it was left in no doubt that this is a significant issue for many users and major clients. Sheila Brisland, Sage, hosted the session and explained that Sage are committed to resolving the Stock Recalc issue and that they had high level internal sponsorship to get this done. Sage have not been able to identify the cause of the problem and so have been unable to fix it. Attendees gave examples of when the issue occurs, the effect it has on the ability of their users to perform their jobs and the processes that they have had to implement in order to correct stock after each occurrence. Examples given were selling stock that doesn't exist and MRP users purchasing expensive materials that weren't required. These issues clarified that the Stock Recalc issue incurs real costs to businesses and degrades the integrity of the Sage system.

Sheila took note of a couple of examples where users were having repeated problems and committed to sending a Sage representative to their workplace to investigate the cause.

In the meantime various methods were discussed for the collection of feedback in order to further clarify the extent and cause of the problem. One method that will be looked into is the use of the Sage website for issuing the Stock Recalc passwords whilst allowing users to enter details of their problem. It was felt that the current method of password issue, via the reseller, left Sage without feedback on the extent of the problem or reasons for its occurrence.



Delegates networking over lunch

If you can replicate transactions that result in the need for a Stock Recalc, Sage would be interested to know.



*Sue Pritchard and Gordon Hancock (Istug
Chairman), University Hospital Birmingham*



*Andy Cunningham and Chris Blythe,
Cunningham Blythe Ltd*