ISTUG

INDEPENDENT SAGE USER NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

The only independent newsletter about Sage Enterprise related products.

April 2006

Note – this newsletter is now available online in our Members Club, where you will also find all the speaker presentations, information about enhancements, and many other useful pieces of information.

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Dates for Your Diary in 2006

25/04/06 – Committee Meeting
(Sage, Winnersh)

13/06/06 – Istug Meeting, IBM Warwick

11/07/06 – Committee Meeting
(Sage, Winnersh)

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, and where this is the case full details will be given at the time of booking.

Istug 2006 Conference

9-10 October 2006 at the Village Bournemouth Hotel & Leisure Club

"Excellent opportunity to talk to fellow users to discuss their solutions to common problems."

"A most valuable event. This is the first time I have personally attended, but I found it very useful!"

Istug AGM

The Istug Annual General Meeting was held on 9 February at Sage, Winnersh. Thank you to those of you who attended. Istug presented their 2005 business results and the 2005 Reseller of the Year was announced. More details on these presentations and some of the business figures can be seen inside this newsletter.

Congratulations to FD Systems, winners of the Istug Reseller of the Year Award for 2005. This is an important award as it measures service delivered by the Business Partners, not sales targets. Thank you to all of you who took the time to complete the survey.

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.
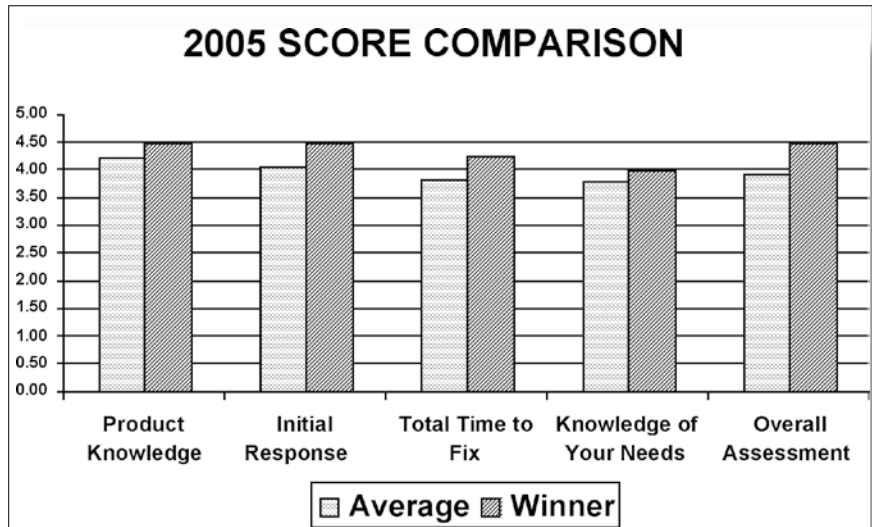
Newsletter Articles

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.
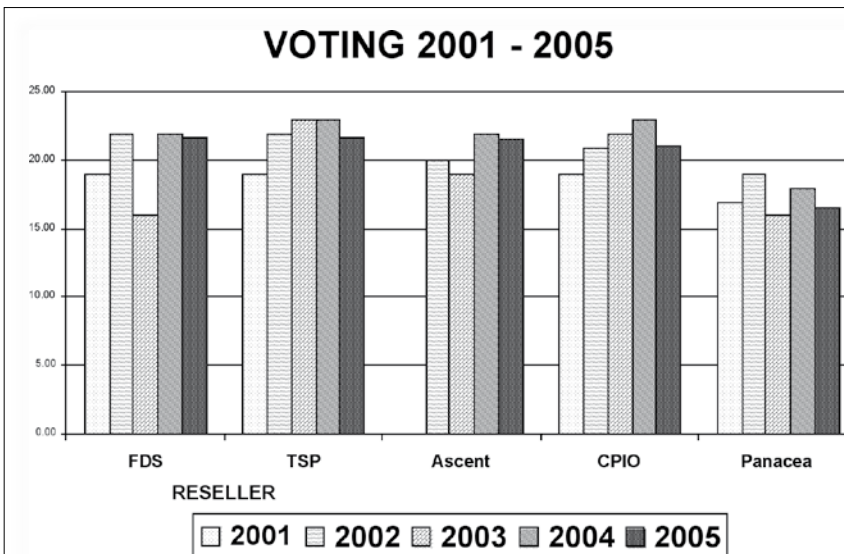
Reseller Of The Year 2005

Many congratulations to FD Systems, Istug 2005 Reseller of the Year.

FD Systems also won the award jointly in 2000 and outright in 2002.

This chart shows the differences between the average scores in each category voted for with the actual score of the winner. In most cases there is no marked difference between the average scores and those of the winner; this shows that the scores for all Business Partners were at a good level.

2005 SCORE COMPARISON

Categories: Product Knowledge, Initial Response, Total Time to Fix, Knowledge of Your Needs, Overall Assessment

☐ Average ▨ Winner

Below we can see the differences between the overall voting from 2001 to 2005. There were three very close runners up this year, TSP, Ciber and CPiO. Congratulations to all these companies for offering a high quality of support that is obviously appreciated by their customers.

VOTING 2001 - 2005

RESELLER: FDS, TSP, Ascent, CPIO, Panacea

☐ 2001 ☐ 2002 ▨ 2003 ▨ 2004 ■ 2005

The reseller community rightly prizes this award as it is given for quality of service, and not volume of sales. The award is also important because it is your opportunity as an end user to promote good quality support.

Our picture shows Nigel Griffiths thanking Istug for the award, with Bill Hill, Head of Customer Services, Sage, and Nicole James, Istug Technical Director in the background

Istug AGM

In addition to the presentations of results from Istug there were presentations from Sage and John Landreth, Thermo Electron Corporation.

I would like to thank John for taking the time to present to us; his presentation on ODBC Queries was excellent and encouraged much debate around this topic. Thermo Electron use Excel with ODBC queries as the primary means of extracting data from Sage. Just a few of the applications that these are used for are business analysis, metric calculation and customised enquiries and reports. You can download the presentation from the website to see how they utilize this simple (and free) utility.

Nick Voller took us through Line 500 Version 6. Whether you use the core financial modules, deploy Sage Line 500 in manufacturing & distribution environments, or use it to support project development, there are huge improvements that can help it work even harder for your business. Sage Line 500 v6 can help you build stronger connections between operations, finance, sales and distribution, and can ensure that your information systems support these business processes with easily accessible data.
 Sage Line 500 v6 delivers:

- 30 minor beneficial enhancements
- Extended core functionality
- Improved usability
- Enhanced integration
- Easier Upgrades

As requested by members, we also held an

"Open Forum" discussion session at the end of the day, with Sheila Brisland from Sage. It was very well received, with many comments and discussions, specifically around the System Log. Sage have taken away the comments from this session to try to incorporate them into the changes they are looking at in this area. I would like to thank Sheila for her time, and hope that we can continue to include discussions like these in the agendas for future meetings.

These presentations are all available in the Members Area of the website.

Reminder

Please can I remind you that we are run purely on member subscriptions and without them, we would not be able to provide the service that we do to our members.

Recently we have had many subscriptions paid late, or have had to send reminders to members – we do not like having to do this. If the invoice from Istug should be addressed to someone other than the Istug member, please let us know; this will prevent invoices from "going astray" or not getting through to the correct addressee.

If you have a Purchase Order system that will reject our invoice unless a PO has been raised please can you ensure that you have completed the correct documentation before passing the invoice for payment; this will reduce the number of invoices that are returned to us. If you would like reminding of your annual renewal date please contact Istug.

Many thanks for your help.

Nicole James
ISTUG Technical director

Istug Results 2005

The figures for 2005 were presented AGM on 9 February 2006 by Jonathan Lassman, Istug Administrator. The membership dropped significantly this year, with 75 resignations and 35 new members; a net reduction of 40. This was partly due to the uncertainty caused by the Sage announcement, at the end of 2004, that they were to launch a free "user community" for all Sage customers; there are no fixed plans for this as yet, that we are aware of.

Even though the subscription income was significantly lower than planned, we still ended the year with a small surplus of funds, mainly due to the success of the Conference. It is hoped this trend will continue so that we can continue to use these funds to improve the services that we provide to members.

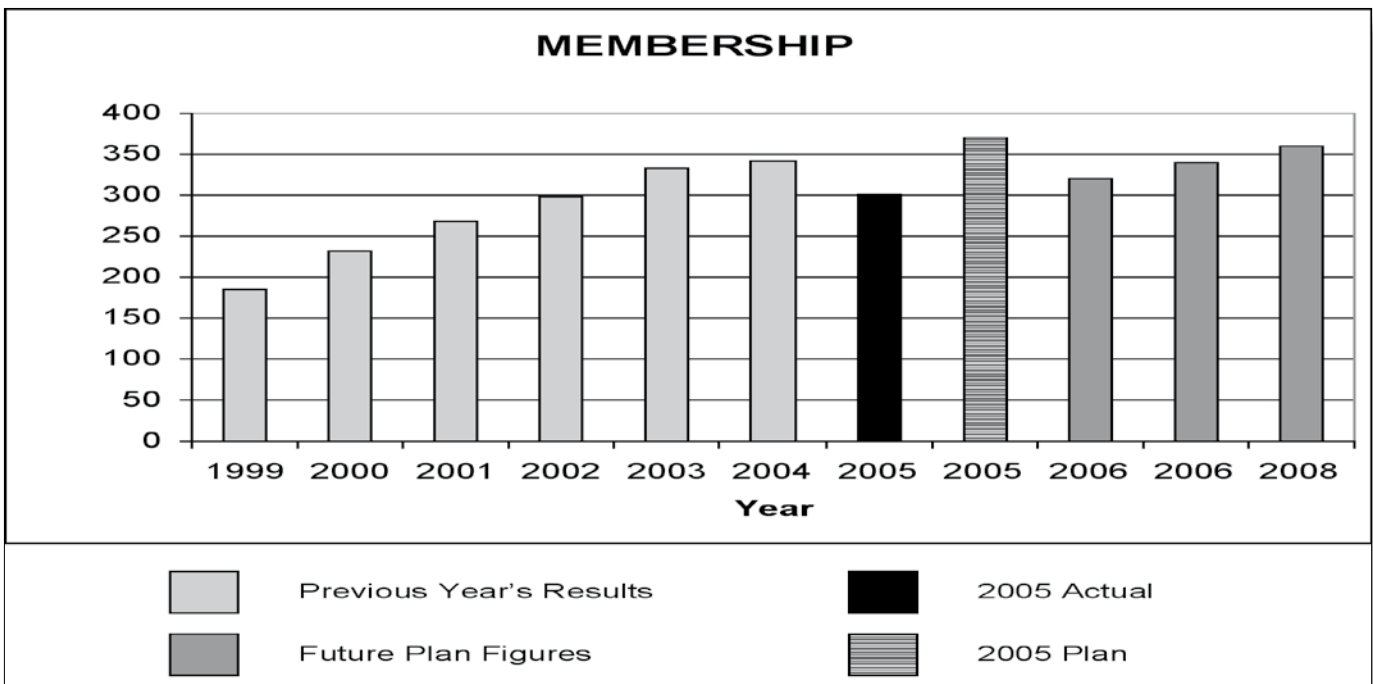The full Istug Business Plan can be seen in the Istug AGM Presentation.

All the presentations from the Istug AGM are now available in the Members Area of the website.

!! NEW !! Incentives for Istug Members

In order to work towards increasing our membership base and continuing to provide members with the material they wish to see at meetings, we have decided to introduce incentives for members to work WITH US towards these goals:

- Introduce another Sage user to Istug who subsequently joins the group and receive 10% DISCOUNT on membership fee (or vouchers to the value of, at time of payment) for the following year.

- Present at the 2006 Conference (9-10 Oct 2006, Bournemouth) and receive a FREE DELEGATE place at the Conference.

- Present at any other Istug meeting throughout the year and receive 50% DISCOUNT on your 2006 Conference delegate fee.

Contact Nicole James njames@istug.com or call on 0118 9813223 for more details.

MEMBERSHIP

Previous Year's Results	2005 Actual
Future Plan Figures	2005 Plan

Did you Know…?
CB Top Tips for Spring

Show Stock Histories Enquiries transactions in descending date order.

In order to show the transactions in the stock histories enquiry in descending date order, change the option st_history_enq to call the stkhst program with the R option, i.e.:

- Option name: st_history_enq
- Descriptions: Stock Histories
- Menu/Pause: Leave blank
- Command: stkhst R

Getting G/l Special Reports Into Excel The Easy Way

Most people think that the G/L Special Reports for P&L etc will only create text files that are extremely difficult to import into Excel. But not so!

When you run the Special Report, put a name ending ".slk" in the "Spreadsheet file" box, e.g. "istug1.slk"

The file "istug1.slk" will be written to the company directory under "csserver"."slk" files are

"Symbolic Link" files, which is an old spreadsheet format, which is still supported by Excel.

So now use windows explorer to find the file, double click and Excel will open it as a spreadsheet, with all the figures in the proper columns and all the totals as spreadsheet formulae!

Enhanced Batch Queue Sequencing

Batch tracking users will be familiar with the problem that when you do a warehouse transfer, bin transfer, dekit or customer return, Sage creates a new batch which goes to the bottom of the queue, often behind other batches that have actually been received much later. This makes a mess of trying to ensure that batches are used in date sequence or indeed on a FIFO basis.

Turning on "Enhanced Batch queue sequencing" will alleviate this problem. If you think you might need this, send me an email (cb@chrisblythe.co.uk) and I'll send you instructions how to install it, which involves a bit of forms editing and then running "batch details cleardown" so might take some time (You don't actually need to lose any data).