ISTUG NEWSLETTER
A Sage Approved Organisation

The only independent newsletter about Sage Enterprise related products. 　　July 2003

Note - this newsletter is now available as an online view in our Members Club web site with direct links to the speaker presentations, information about enhancements, and many other useful pieces of information.

IN THIS ISSUE

Join ISTUG

If you are not yet a member of ISTUG - you are not finding out about the things that could benefit your business, and quite possibly reduce your IT costs.

Visit our Open Web Site at www.istug.com and JOIN TODAY.

A few words from your new Technical Director

By Nicole James

I would like to thank everyone who made the June ISTUG Open Day a very successful event. I believe, you will all agree, that the day was very informative and interesting, especially the new functionality and modules that were demonstrated to the group. Hopefully, this edition of the newsletter will give you a taste for these. For those of you who could not attend, the presentations are now available on the website.

The day was well attended and I know some of you are keen to see more of the new modules that were shown - look out for details of the Reporting Awareness Day.

I am also delighted to announce that Gordon Hancock, Financial Systems Manager at the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust, has accepted the position of Chairman for ISTUG, effective immediately. We all wish Gordon success in his role and thank him for his continued support of ISTUG. Gordon can be contacted via e-mail at gordon.hancock@uhb.nhs.uk.

Gordon takes on the role following Henry Waters' resignation. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Henry Waters for his dedication and support as ISTUG Chairman over the last couple of years and I hope Henry can continue to be involved as an active and influential member of the group.

Members should note that the ISTUG office has now moved to the following address PO Box 7298, Tadley, Hants RG26 3ZX telephone 0118 981 3223 and email istug@nj3.demon.co.uk.

Dates for Your Diary in 2003

14/08/03 - FSIG Meeting

14/08/03 - Committee Meeting

17/09/03 - ISTUG Meeting (venue SES)

15/10/03 - FSIG Meeting

15/10/03 - Committee Meeting

22/10/03 – Reporting Awareness Day (venue SES)

10/12/03 - ISTUG AGM (venue SES)

The agenda for all the above meetings where relevant will be published on www.istug.com. Full online booking facilities exist, non-members may be asked to pay a guest fee, where this is the case full details will be given at the time of booking.

eBusiness Awareness Day

The aim was to provide attendees with a complete understanding of integrated e-business for Sage Line 200 and Sage Line 500 users, as well as giving attendees access to demonstration systems throughout the day. The day was not as well attended as we had hoped, though those members who did attend found the day very useful.

The day concentrated on Amerigo for Sage Line 200 and Sage Line 500. There was an overview of a complete e-business solution, which demonstrated how Sage remains at the centre of the solution with data being held only once. The whole supply chain can be largely automated, reducing costs and improving efficiency.

This demonstration was backed up by a real experience of using Amerigo – John Morgan from Motorola showed how Motorola have used their e-business solution and transacted £32M of business through the system in 2002. John also explained how the e-business solution was justified in the first place and the return on investment.

Reseller of the Year 2003 – Vote Now!

The ISTUG Reseller of the Year 2003 voting facility very is now open. This, as always, is your opportunity to tell us how your reseller performs and the quality of the service he delivers.

All the members of the reseller channel watch with a great deal of interest to see the verdict you deliver on who you consider to be the winner. This is yet another area where YOUR VOICE REALLY MATTERS. The voting process is open to all companies that use the Sage Enterprise product range.
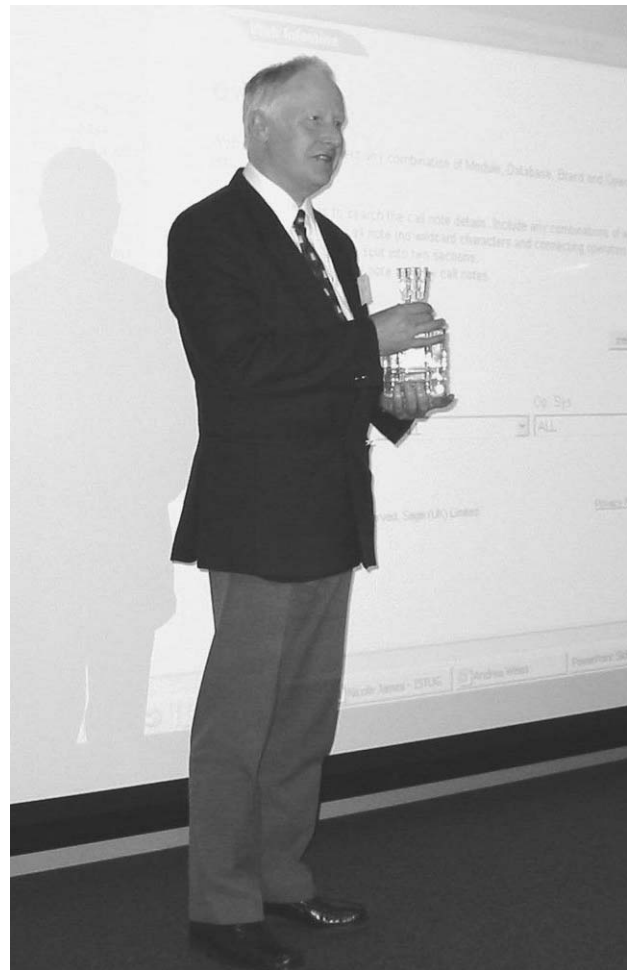
Submit your vote online in the News section of the website at www.istug.com .

ISTUG Satisfaction Survey 2003

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey – we need your views to ensure you continue to get good value from your membership.

You can also complete the survey online at www.istug.com/news.htm

Retirement of Jim Wigmore, Technical Director

Jim Wigmore, who was our first Technical Director, retired in June.

Jim has been associated with the User group for about ten years. He was one of the early members of the Group when it was known as the Tetra User Group. He played a very active role and attended most of our meetings. He subsequently became Chairman and for the last 4 years the full time Technical Director.

During his time as the Technical Director Jim developed our much acclaimed website, set up and managed the Special Interest Groups, produced and edited the Newsletter and guided the MBEs through all the stages until forwarded to Sage.

Jim did a fantastic job arranging all the quarterly meetings, Committee meetings and awareness days. He ensured that speakers turned up and that the meetings ran smoothly.

We must also thank Jim for unruffled way he helped members over the years.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with Jim over the years.

We wish Jim a long and happy retirement.

ISTUG Open Day, June 2003

Nicole James, ISTUG Technical Director

Nicole James, ISTUG Technical Director, opened the day by welcoming attendees and giving an overview of the benefits of joining ISTUG.

This was a very exciting and informative event, all those whom attended were very interested in, and impressed by, the new modules that were presented by Sage.

ISTUG also launched their ISTUG Satisfaction Survey 2003. A copy is attached to this newsletter for you to fill in, alternatively you can complete the survey online at www.istug.com/news.htm. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire – your views are important to us and with YOUR input we will be able determine where improvements are required.

Successful Supply Chain Management

Is Supply Chain Management an essential part of your business? If so, Sage can offer you a tried and tested solution to suit your business needs and requirements. Steve Tattum showed how the solution has helped customers worldwide achieve better and more effective Supply Chain Management by using XML Message Manager.

Steve Tattum, Product Manager, Sage

Integration Possibilities

- XML offers a standard format and a simple programming model
  – Wide adoption in the EAI marketplace
  – Emerging standards and bodies
- Write your own 'print renderers'
  – Produce reports in HTML for 'web' publishing
  – Integrate with email and other media for document transfer
  – Richer, plain paper printing
  – Simple XSLT transformations
  – Use Internet Explorer to view the XML file!

XML Printing - Summary

- XML Printing released in Sage Line 500 Version 5.0
- In addition to existing print spooling functionality
- Some infrastructure changes have been made
- Ability to print existing spool files in XML mode
- Richer print output formats leading to better presentations
  – Modify fonts, attributes, etc
  • The basis for excellent integration possibilities

Embracing E-business

Most enterprise customers don't want to implement new e-business software in isolation. Instead, they expect to tie the new applications into their existing IT infrastructure, which makes ERP systems essential.

Sage software is continuously evolving to embrace these new e-business opportunities:
- Sales Force Automation (SFA)
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- E-Procurement
- Supply Chain Management
- Business Intelligence

ISTUG Open Day, June 2003

What's New – Presentation of New Modules

For most people attending, this was the highlight of the day. Graham Cardwell, Head of Product Marketing, Sage Enterprise Solutions Division, presented Web Portals and the new Sage Reporting with Live Demos from Nick Voller, Tommy Hynes (VI Software) and Nico Kichenbrand (IntelligentApps).

Web Portal Overview

• An optional Sage Line 500 V5 feature which allows easy integration of Sage Enterprise applications into web-based corporate portals
• Start any Sage Enterprise application and pass arguments to those which are 'drill-down' enabled
• Launch Sage Enterprise GUI and Web Clients
• No additional logon required, based on your Windows NT user credentials
• Secure, validated access to Sage Enterprise applications using an encrypted Windows based repository

Reporting Deliverables

• Sage Line 500 Enquiries
  – Online pre-built templates with drilldown
  – Full development design your own enquiries, drilldowns and forms
• IntelligentApps4Sage
  – OLAP (on line analytical processing) functionality
  – Pre-built templates with drilldown
  – Off line but links to transactional data
  – Delivered in Excel

Graham Cardwell, Head of Product Marketing, Sage

  – Built upon a data warehouse
  – Realistic price point
  – Dynamic information

Commercial Delivery

• Web portals available in Sage Line 500 v5
• Reporting planned for full release and delivery 5.x
– End of this year
– Looking for early adopters, proof of concept
– Sage Line 500 Enquiries sooner (already 40 customers) no Analyst Services
• IntelligentApps4Sage requires SQL Server and Analyst Services

End User Support Website Launch

Andrea Weiss launched the long awaited end user support website that was announced at the Sage Customer Conference earlier this year.

The site is available at http://www.sageenterprisesolutions.com/enduser/files/default.asp and can also be accessed from the ISTUG website.

Andrea gave an in depth demo of the endless source of information available on the site, such as access to knowledge base searches, hints and tips guides, FAQ's and bulletin information.

If you require a login, please contact your reseller. Andrea also announced that the Service Pack 3 CD was now completed and currently undergoing duplication. These are

now available for you to order from your reseller. The service pack is for servers and clients and contains in excess of 150 product updates. The Service Packs are free of charge, but where a reseller has to order multiple copies then an administration charge is levied to cover the cost of the CD and duplication.

The service pack server CD contains a program called CSAUDIT. This program will read through the customers license file and generate an output file that we have asked to be sent back to Sage either from the reseller or directly from the customer. It is important that Sage receives this feedback by the end of July, because Sage needs to ensure that its records are up to date in terms of the versions that customers are running. This will help Sage review and determine the product versions that are currently supported without causing impact to the Sage customer base.

ISTUG Open Day, June 2003

Integrated Customer Relationship Management Solutions

David Pinches, Marketing Director, Sage CRM Solutions, showed how SalesLogix can fully integrate with Sage Line 500 to allow you access to timely, personal and relevant information when you need it.

David Pinches, Marketing Director, Sage CRM Solutions

Customer Relationship Management

- CRM is a business strategy to create and sustain long term profitable customer relationships
- CRM requires a customer centric business philosophy and culture to support effective marketing, sales and service processes.
- CRM applications can enable effective customer relationship management, provided that the enterprise has the right leadership, strategy and culture

Integration Benefits

- Deliver all relevant customer information to staff – Sales, Marketing, Service & Financial
- Fully enable the customer cycle through to purchase
- Improve Customer Service Levels & Loyalty
- Improve business intelligence

Bill Hill, Marketing Director, Sage Enterprise Solutions

How Sage's Success Benefits Your Business

Bill Hill, Marketing Director, Sage Enterprise Solutions Division, showed how Sage is a strong and reliable supplier that can successfully support your business as it grows. He presented the company's financial highlights for the first half of the financial year.

- Turnover increased by 4% to £282.1m (2002: £270.1m*)
- Earnings per share up 14% to 4.02p (2002: 3.53p)
- Operating cash flow up 21% to £100.6m (2002: £82.9m)
- 115,000 new customers added in the period, bringing the total to 3.1m customers (2002: 2.9m), excluding Interact

This was followed by a "Thank you!!!" to all the Sage customers who made this success possible.

Bill also announced the new promotion for customers using CISAM, wishing to move to a relational database and upgrading to Line 500 V5. For details please contact your reseller.

All the presentations are now available in the News section of the Members Site.

Throughout the afternoon, Optional sessions were held with a more in depth look at Sage Line 500 Enquiries, IntelligentApps4Sage and an overview of the Manufacturing functionality of Sage Line 500.

ISTUG

News From Our Special Interest Groups

There were no specific breakout sessions for the SIGs at the June Open Day. The next opportunity for all the SIGs to meet will be at the September meeting.

Distribution Special Interest Group (DSIG)

For those attending the June Open Day Distribution matters were well catered for. It is interesting to see that Sage is committed to providing enhanced functionality in this area. The day showed integration provided by use of Web Portals, Customer Relationship Management and Supply Chain Management, all of which can be used to enhance business processes and access to information.

The ISTUG website continues to provide a valuable resource for problem resolution and product information. With the new link to the Sage End User Support Website this should provide even further benefit for users.

Finance Special Interest Group (FSIG)

An opportunity to make a difference and really be involved in the Finance Special Interest Group. Both the current Chair and the Secretary have had to give up their roles due to work commitments, following long and substantial support to ISTUG through FSIG. FSIG will next meet at Sage on August 14th when they will be aiming to appoint both a new Chair and a Secretary. If you are interested in either of the positions above and want to make a positive contribution to the group by helping to shape the future of both FSIG and ISTUG, please contact ISTUG. Both roles require attendance at meetings (4 per year maximum), but do have support from the current Vice Chair (Kevin Flannigan). If you are interested then please contact ISTUG or the Vice Chair of FSIG direct kevin.flannigan@nhpct.nhs.uk

Manufacturing Special Interest Group (MSIG)

The ISTUG meeting at Sage on June 11th was one of the best yet in terms of Sage input. At the Manufacturing breakout session, Steve Tattum showed us the near and not-so-near future of Manufacturing within Sage Line 500. We recommend you take a look at Steve's presentation, which is posted on the ISTUG Members Site. The first phase includes the release of Product Management (Engineering Change Control and MUCH more). Here are just a couple of headings to wet your appetite on what the future holds: Works-Orderless Production, Enhanced MRP, PO/WO Automatic Issues/Allocations, but the whole package looks really useful. With the "Possibles" section, Steve is asking for feedback on what we want to see and what would be most beneficial. This is your chance to and opportunity for you to influence development. Read his presentation and email any comments to steve.tattum@sage.com. Steve is also interested in a meeting with a cross section of users from MSIG, where we could put our points across on the features we would get most benefit from. If you are a member and are interested in participating, please email Nicole James at istug@nj3.demon.co.uk with details of your industry sector and the Sage product version you are using and we will set the ball rolling.

On another issue - I never seem to have enough time to devote to MSIG, so could I ask anyone interested in taking over the chair to email Nicole or myself. Now is a really good time to get more involved (see above!)

Reporting Special Interest Group (RSIG)

The next Awareness Day to be held at Sage Winnersh on 22 October 2003, will focussing on Reporting. We will see more of the exciting new Sage modules demonstrated at the Open Day - Online Enquiries and IntelligentApps4Sage. We will also see a demonstration from Cyberscience who have recently signed a 100+ site contract with a large Public Sector department that uses Sage Line 500. Now that they are successfully running Cyberquery to do all of their reporting against Sage (and other applications) Cyberscience will be introducing themselves to other Sage 500 clients to demonstrate their capabilities.
The RSIG Chair, Dave Patterson will also be inviting Seagate to present a product demonstration at a future meeting, details to be confirmed.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"To be the Independent Organisation that represents users of Sage Enterprise products."

YOUR COMMITTEE - ISTUG Members

Administrator
Jonathan Lassman, phone 01438 717764, Fax 01438 712157 or email tetrausers@aol.com

Technical Director
Nicole James phone 0118 981 3223 or email istug@nj3.demon.co.uk

Chairman
Gordon Hancock of University Hospital Birmingham (gordon.hancock@uhb.nhs.uk)

Details all serving committee members can be found on the ISTUG web site, www.istug.com
ISTUG HELP LINE - Phone 01237 471269 or email istug@aol.com.

The ISTUG office is open daily from 09.00 to 17.30 for your calls; a message facility exists when the office is closed.