



THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

<http://www.westyorkshire.bcs.org>

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2008

JANUARY MEETING

Tuesday 22nd January 2008 at 18:15 (Light refreshments from 17:45)

ITIL - IT Infrastructure Library

Speaker: Jon Ingham, DLA Piper UK LLP

Thinking of moving on?

Speaker: Suzanne Clarke, Sales Director, 4it Recruitment Ltd

Venue: the Met (formerly Hotel Metropole), King Street, Leeds

FEBRUARY MEETING

Tuesday 19th February 2008 at 18:15 (Light refreshments from 17:45)

Data Management – past, present and future

Speakers: David Bray and John Rollason, Network Appliance Inc. (NetApp)

Venue: the Met (formerly Hotel Metropole), King Street, Leeds

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday 12th March 2008 at 18:30 (Light refreshments from 17:45)

Clinical Information Systems Enabling Clinical Excellence

Speaker: Dr Phillip Batin, Consultant Cardiologist

Venue: the Met (formerly Hotel Metropole), King Street, Leeds

SEMINAR

Thursday 10th April 2008 at 14:00 (Registration and buffet 13:30)

An introduction to Enterprise Architect

Speaker: Gillian Adens, Managing Director of Tassco

Venue: the Met (formerly Hotel Metropole), King Street, Leeds

Visit our Web site for up-to-date information on all our events, for directions to all venues and for fuller write ups of the talks.

<http://www.westyorkshire.bcs.org>

THANKS

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Keeping BCS details up to date.

To enable you to benefit from BCS communications it is important that you keep the BCS advised of any changes to your details. There are several methods:

If you have registered to use the BCS Secure Area you can update your details at <http://www.bcs.org/update> (You will need your email address and password.)

Alternatively all members can update their details using either of the following:

- Contacting Branches section on branches@hq.bcs.org.uk or by phone
- Contacting me (see above)

Members can also choose to receive branch communications via email.

Margaret Moore

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2008. We're starting the year with two topics in one evening; please let us know if you like this idea. Our March event is a joint meeting with the Health Informatics (Northern) Specialist Group that normally meets in Manchester. Both groups hope that having a meeting east of the Pennines will be of benefit to members in this area.

Looking ahead to **2009** we're considering a visit to RAF Fylingdales which is on the North Yorkshire Moors, between Pickering and Whitby. They do tours from 19:00 – 22:00 (including tea and biscuits at the end). The committee is considering providing transport so we would need to charge members to cover the entry fee (currently £2 per head) and the cost of transport. The tours need to be booked well in advance. Because of these factors *we need feedback from you to determine if it is worth pursuing this idea further. Please contact any member of the committee if you are interested.*

Welcome to our new members; we hope to see you at some of our events which are open to non-members too – so bring along friends and colleagues.

Margaret Moore, Branch Chair

MEETINGS FOR WINTER/SPRING 2008

Tuesday 22nd January 2008 17:45 for 18:15

ITIL - IT Infrastructure Library

Speaker: Jon Ingham, DLA Piper UK LLP

Thinking of moving on?

Speaker: Suzanne Clarke, 4it, Recruitment Ltd

Venue: the Met, King Street, Leeds

Firstly, Jon Ingham will talk about ITIL version 3. The release of the new version of ITIL brought with it an important change of emphasis, from an operationally focused set of processes to a mature service management set of practice guidance.

After a short break Suzanne Clarke will discuss things related to recruitment including Create a CV; Use online job sites; Common mistakes to avoid. (We expect the event to finish about 20:15.)

Brendon Higgins

Tuesday 19th February 2008 17:45 for 18:15

Data Management – past, present and future

Speakers: David Bray and John Rollason, Network Appliance, Inc.

Venue: the Met, King Street, Leeds

NetApp is a world leader in unified storage solutions for today's data intensive enterprise. The talk will explain the terms DAS, NAS and SAN, expand upon SAN technology (including shared storage, instant backups and replication). The speakers will then give us an introduction to ILC and look at the issues of explosive data growth.

Brendon Higgins

Wednesday 12th March 2008 17:45 for 18.30

Clinical Information Systems Enabling Clinical Excellence

Speaker: Dr Phillip Batin, Consultant Cardiologist

Venue: the Met, King Street, Leeds

Dr Batin qualified from Leeds University in 1985 and then trained in Leeds and Nottingham prior to being appointed as Consultant Cardiologist and honorary senior lecturer at the Mid-Yorkshire NHS Trust in 1996. As a District General Hospital Cardiologist he sees the full spectrum of cardiovascular disease but has specialist interests in interventional cardiology, heart failure and medical/patient education. Dr Batin led the successful implementation of an electronic patient record system within the department in 2001 which was the first of its kind across the region. He has also been involved in the development of multi-media, interactive patient education systems, to aid the standardisation of education and management of specific disease areas.

Dr Batin presented a case history at the prestigious health informatics HC2007 Conference.

Margaret Moore

Thursday 10th April 2008 14:00-17:00 (registration and refreshments starting at 13:30)

An introduction to Enterprise Architect

Speaker: Gillian Adens, Managing Director, Tassc

Venue: the Met, King Street, Leeds, LS1 2HQ

Following our successful evening event in November and from the feedback received at the event, the West Yorkshire branch of the British Computer Society is proud to present a half-day event on this award winning UML modelling tool in partnership with Tassc.

Tassc is a UK based company specialising in the use of object technology in software development projects and is a global training partner for Sparx Systems. Sparx Systems specializes in high performance, scalable visual modelling tools for the planning, design and construction of software intensive systems. Its product, EA, is the topic of this seminar.

Gillian Adens is an experienced software consultant with a technical career spanning 20 years. She was one of the first people in the UK to gain exposure to object technology and is considered an expert in UML.

This half-day event will be held at the Met, between 14:00 and 17:00 (with registration and refreshments starting at 13:30).

There will be three main sessions:

Session 1: UML and EA

Session 2: Team Working with EA

Session 3: Project Management and Product Integration

(A breakdown of the itinerary and contents of each session can be found on our web site <http://www.westyorkshire.bcs.org>.)

To book your place please register with BCS HQ (see below). Fees for this event are:

BCS Members	£35.00	register using online booking form
Non-Members	£45.00	register using online booking form
Students	£20.00	register by telephoning 01793-417566 (9:15-17:15)

Closing date: Tuesday 25th March 2008 09:00.

Refunds available until the closing date. Thereafter substitutions are possible. In either case please email branches@hq.bcs.org

REPORTS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS / EVENT

Thursday 27th September 2007

Applying UML and Model Driven Architecture to Team Based Software Development

Speaker: Ben Constable, Chief Operations Officer of Sparx Systems

Having found a window in Ben's very busy calendar we were pleased that the event was very well attended. The following is a brief outline of the talk; a fuller write up and slides can be found on our web site. Ben first outlined what he believes to be the challenges in modern software development, including:

- The complexity of modern systems
- Distributed development teams
- Technology obsolescence
- Heterogeneous development environments (Java + .Net).

He then gave his views on the value of modelling:

- Manage Complexity: Systems are larger, more integrated
- Plan & Mitigate Risk: Assess options before committing resources
- Facilitate Communication: Large teams of collaborating roles, often distributed – generates reports & models

Sparx Systems provide UML modelling tools; their flagship product is Enterprise Architect for UML 2 and they have Model Driven Generation (MDG) tools and MDG integration for Visual Studio 2005 & Eclipse. Model Driven Generation is a customisation framework that provides two key benefits:

- Uses the semantic information in the model to derive useful development artefacts: Code, XML fragments
- Utilizes the automation interface to provide integration to specialized tools

There then followed an introduction to team-based Unified Modelling Language (UML) modelling tools. Enterprise Architect (EA) is:

- A stand alone modelling environment which has complete support for modelling from requirements to design.
- A sophisticated Integrated Model Environment.
- Built with the team in mind.

and it supports the 13 standard UML 2 diagrams. It incorporates an Extensible Meta-data Interchange (XMI) for interoperability and model serialization. (XMI is an open standard published by the OMG, which provides great flexibility and integration options for users that need to access the underlying model data.)

EA has modelling support for SDLC

- Visual Requirements Modelling –graphical modelling of formal requirements.
- Customisable Reporting engine – Rich-text and web-based reports can be used for project deliverables, which allow teams to share and communicate with clients etc.
- Code Engineering Framework – Integrates with Visual Studio and supports 10+ languages out-of-the-box. (Users are able to define others). Importing, visualizing and analysing legacy systems facilitate migration to more modern .Net-based languages.
- Deployment and Test specification

EA has support for multiple, concurrent users. Its scalable database driven repository in the Corporate environments will use a dedicated relational DBMS Server backend allowing large scale, team-based modelling.

Version Control facilitates change management and revision history, which is important for concurrent users to manage updates.

Security and Locking mechanism – Users login with restricted access to the model, this facilitates peer collaboration, preventing accidental modification. It features database and operating system level security for protection.

MDA Transforms Review:

Next followed a brief review and demonstration of how MDA Transforms are applied. A defined abstract PIM (Platform Independent Model) is used to derive one or more PSM (Platform Specific Model). Generate Web Service Definition Language (WSDL) file then client/server code (using Visual Studio tools) to implement the web service.

Next a case study showed how porting a complex COM based API to Java is possible. Details are on our web site. It involved reverse engineering and reduced the risk of human error and increased productivity.

Closing the presentation Ben fielded the following question: "Will Modelling Tools really make our development staff redundant?" He replied: "No. MDA tools make them more productive, by automating what has previously been done manually, and thereby allow suppliers to keep pace with current industry demands on resources. It will help suppliers build better, more robust software more quickly."

Straw poll on future event.

At the end of this event we asked for a show of hands to see how many would be interested in attending a half-day event - an introduction to Enterprise Architect to be delivered by one of Sparx Systems UK Partners. We received an encouraging response of 17 showing their interest. (See April 2008 event earlier in this newsletter)

David Jenkinson

Wednesday 14th November 2007

New College, New Information Learning Technology

The format of the evening was new – to match the new college. There were two introductory presentations followed by six short presentations and each person could choose to attend three of the six. We were spoilt for choice! As it was such a full evening, the notes that follow are very brief. Please see our web site for more details.

Anne Tyrrell, the Deputy Principal, gave an overview of the new college, from the process starting in 2003 through to the handing over of the keys on 23/7/07. Everything from IT to plumbing is in one building and Information Learning Technology (ILT) is in all classrooms and learning areas.

Martin Harmer, ILT Manager, continued by explaining why they chose tablet PCs and wireless projectors. The benefits include greater flexibility during teaching, as the tablet pc can be moved around the learning area/classroom, and the fact that staff have their own tablet PC so they can do their work anywhere. The college also uses online lesson planning and has upgraded Blackboard from the Basic to Enterprise version so it now links into the MIS. The new equipment is being well used – but more equipment has stimulated further demand. The support load was huge initially and there was a lot of setup needed – but now they can check projectors remotely etc.

The six presentations were:

- Introduction to VJing! by Nick Schneider
- Using mind mapping software to produce PowerPoint presentations by Mel Fish

- Using 3-D modelling software by Ed Poxon
- Blended teaching with Blackboard by Rob Gardiner
- Producing training videos for online tutorials by Graham Hollingsworth
- Using virtual machines to simulate a corporate network by Richard Hind

Notes on three of these follow:

VJing is the video equivalent of disc-jockeying. A DJ has two decks with a fader; a VJ takes two video images (e.g. someone dancing and war footage) and uses a slider. Media students can mix and manipulate the stored videos in the "collection" live. Some VJing software can take input from other sources e.g. webcam or text. With LED walls the effects can be spectacular.

Mind mapping is one IT tool to produce output (course work). Mind mapping software can display a map in several different ways – traditional "map", linearly or hierarchically. The map can be exported into Word (with or without the diagram) and will apply "Heading" styles to the map. It will also export into PowerPoint – and both of these were demonstrated with a map the group built.

It is an alternative way to think and plan – thinking isn't linear but notes are! Using this technique, ideas can be merged or dropped. You can brainstorm then organise, sequence and expand the ideas later. It is good in a group setting e.g. one student could be developing a point when an idea occurs to another student. That idea can be noted down and fitted into place later.

Using virtual machines to simulate a corporate network

Richard Hind explained that this was done using software called VMWare which allows you to create virtual machines on individual desktops running XP. (There is also a version that can be run on a server.)

Richard explained how this is a good tool for teaching. IT students can practice setting up a variety of environments from scratch without risk of causing any problems to others. They can have full administrative controls, again without the risk of causing problems. Students can practice again and again until they are happy that they know what they are doing. For IT support the VMWare software is useful for setting up virtual environments using different specific versions of applications as required. It is also useful for setting up test environments.

Feedback was very positive with several people saying that "their" topics would fill an entire evening – and the facilities were excellent. Our thanks go to all those who presented and to Richard Hind for putting the evening together.

Margaret Moore and Wendy Townend

Tuesday 11th December 2007

Windows Vista: "Clear, Confident, Connected"?

Speaker: James O'Neill, IT Pro Evangelist, Microsoft

As his job title suggests, James was on a mission to convince everyone that Vista lived up to the Microsoft promise of being clear, confident and connected and that we should consider upgrading to it now rather than, as is the custom, to await the first service pack. Vista was released 12 months ago and take up was highest amongst home users, followed by small businesses and slow on large corporates. Only 3 of the 50 or so people in the audience were using Vista.

Clear: James gave a short demonstration of the look and feel of the Vista desktop. This included translucent windows (in order to see enough of underlying windows to be able to tell what they were - hence the "clear" tag?), a side-bar to show real-time information such as share prices or transport delays and superior graphics. Much was made of the improved search facility based on metadata. The search is all pervasive and as a result the user need worry less and less about folder structure and rely more on metadata. James's "party trick" was to show that previously deleted versions of files can be retrieved by Vista. The final proof of clarity is the "my mum test" – is Vista so intuitive that even your mother can use it?

Confident: does Vista meet the needs of all users (categorised as IT professionals, knowledge workers and consumers) and can they be sure it is reliable and it performs? Consumers expect to plug in a device and it works e.g. a Freeview USB stick – to this end if there is no driver present, Vista will request it from MS Windows Update Web site. Reliability includes such improvements as screen drivers restarting when they crash and improved "sleep and resume". On performance, Vista learns what your regularly used applications are and avoids paging them to disk. Diagnostics are provided for network and disk in addition to CPU and memory.

Deployment of Vista is simplified by having a single world-wide image (albeit a 3GB file containing the core 2.5GB plus varieties – Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate and Business). Reboots during software deployments remember the state of applications and return them to that state after reboot. James admitted that the on-line help could be better but remarked that it is better than XP! On security, the concept of virtual folders is used to get round software that requires local admin mode. Vista warns users if an application wants to do something that requires additional privileges. Enforcement of group policies e.g. USB usage, Power Management, is improved.

The current emphasis on global warming sees Vista's green credentials in the shape of power management. This allows sleep settings to be set which reduce consumption from 125 watts to 5 watts during sleep. For one PC this equates to 740kWh or one-third of a tonne of carbon dioxide per year.

Connected: The improvements here include support for DVD burners, gaming graphics, USB keys, and hybrid hard disks bootable from flash, smarter roaming for wireless networks (Vista adapts to the different networks), Bluetooth, smartphones and PDAs. On the horizon are Windows Sideshow and networked connectors.

Such was his enthusiasm for Vista, James could have continued long into the night but time prevailed and the audience were left to decide for themselves whether or not James had proven his case. Time will tell.

For those interested in more information, James can be contacted on jamesone@microsoft.com

David Whiteley