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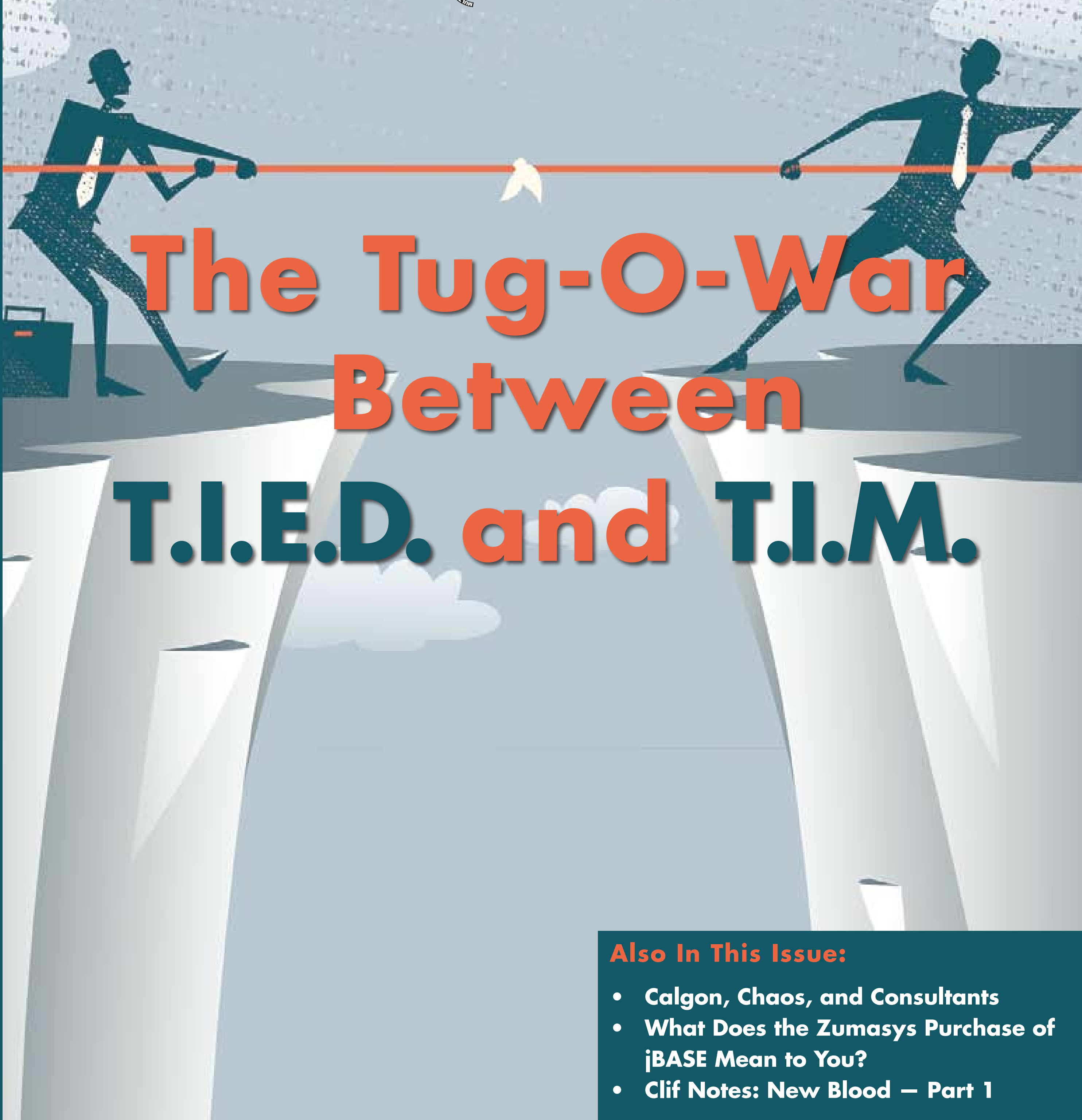
INTERNATIONAL Spectrum

THE MULTIVALUE TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015



The Tug-O-War Between T.I.E.D. and T.I.M.

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- **Calgon, Chaos, and Consultants**
- **What Does the Zumasys Purchase of jBASE Mean to You?**
- **Clif Notes: New Blood — Part 1**

INTERNATIONAL Spectrum®

THE MULTIVALUE TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

FEATURES | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

DEPARTMENTS

From the Inside

We've covered this in the past, but not recently. It's been a while since I've even given it much thought, or discussed it here. It's something many businesses use unconsciously when evaluating new software or changing their existing business software: The Business Application Paradigm.

The core concepts of the Paradigm are:

- Business Applications are large, very large, or very, very large.
- Business Applications are magnitudes of order more complex than academic computing class assignments.
- Business Applications are long-lived – 10, 20, and 30 year-old applications are common.
- Business Applications are dynamic – They grow in complexity, and evolve well beyond the original design and specification requirements.
- Business Applications are critical – They must be stable at high volume and capacity. If applications ABEND they must be fixable, and restart-able under duress.
- Business Computing Architectures evolve and change.
- *Business* comes first – Technology for technology's sake is not good business.
- Business projects will be understaffed and overworked, both on the IT side and on the business side.
- Millions of business programmers are needed to meet worldwide business application development requirements.
- Business project teams change – Individuals responsible for writing applications rarely are the ones who maintain and support them in production.
- IT departments are unique – No two shops employ the same methods/standards/practices in development, maintenance, and support of production code.
- Production requirements rule IT. If production systems fail or do not handle the monthly changes in business, IT will drop everything to address the problem, significantly killing momentum on new projects, and hamstringing the implementation of new technologies.

Many of these points will likely resonate with you, whether or not this is your first time hearing them. Having the paradigm spelled out may clarify some of what you are seeing and doing in your current enterprise applications.

There are no clear solutions, or a single silver bullet, to address all of these points at once. Business applications need to make tradeoffs between the requirements of day-to-day, month-to-month, and year-to-year business changes, on the one hand and the need to keep pace with emerging technologies on the other. There is a reason why many companies are still using green screens that were developed 20 or 30 years ago.

The same reasons explain why many companies are always three to five years behind the latest technologies, or do not plan to implement the new technologies in the near future unless something forces them.

However, there is a relatively recent change to how people think about and use technologies. It's going to throwing a wrench into this Paradigm. And we need to be ready for it.

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INTERNATIONAL
Spectrum
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

NATHAN RECTOR
President

CHARLES BAROUCH
Editor

SYDNEY BAROUCH
Editor

TRACEY RECTOR
Layout

Learn more about the MultiValue Symbol and see what MulitValue Technologies and MultiValue Communities exist to help you support and manage your business and systems. To find out more visit

http://www.intl-spectrum.com

MISSION STATEMENT *International Spectrum* magazine's editorial mission is to be the premier independent source of useful information for users, developers, and resellers of MultiValue database management systems, open systems business database solutions, and related hardware, software, and peripherals. Published bimonthly, International Spectrum provides comprehensive coverage of the products, companies, and trends that shape the MultiValue marketplace as well as the computer industry at large — helping its readers get the most out of their business computer systems.

International Spectrum is published six (6) times per year at the subscription price of $40.00 U.S. in the U.S.A.; $45.00 U.S. in Canada and Mexico; $50.00 U.S. for other countries. Single copy rates are $7.00 U.S. in the U.S.A. and Canada, and $9.00 U.S. in all other countries. International Spectrum is published by International Specturm, Inc., 3691 E. 102nd Ct., Thornton, CO 80229; Tel: 720/259-1356; Fax: 603/250-0664 E-Mail: request@intl-spectrum.com.

PRINTED IN USA

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User Interfaces (UI) and User Experience (UX) expectations have shifted and grown exponentially in the last year or so. This is not the same as in the past, where the main change to software and technology has been from one *specific* interface to another *specific* interface.

First, Windows wanted users to move to GUI desktop applications. Businesses could take or leave that. Then the web came along, and it seemed that everyone needed a website. Again, businesses could take or leave it, but as new hardware started to come into play, the website and web interfaces became more important, turning it into requirements. However, this was only a small, well-defined section of the overall business software.

Since developing an alternative presentation could be isolated into one aspect of doing business, companies were willing to create the interfaces needed, but the remaining 90% of the software stayed the same.

Mobile and Tablet interfaces grew from the websites and web interfaces into something all their own, but many business are still trying to decide if this is required.

These interfaces helped replace some of the older hand-held data collection devices, but those devices only had a specific purpose, much like the websites. Again, the core 80% to 90% of the software was not affected.

Now comes the shift in software development from User Interfaces (GUI, web, mobile app, etc.) to User Experience, which does not use one specific technology, but instead focuses on the way we use our data in all of the available technologies.

This shift will throw a wrench into your everyday Line-Of-Business applications and the Paradigm which is used to maintain them. Since the User Experience approach doesn't mandate a specific technology, you might think I'm saying, "use the green screen application and you will be okay." That is not quite correct.

User Experience is all about providing the user the ability to enter and modify information in any environment and with any tool they choose. It is about empowering the user to get their job done, but it is NOT about dictating to the user the best way in which to do this.

If a user decides that Excel is the best way to get data into the system, then give them that option. If a Mobile device is the best way for a user to access and update information, then that is what they should be able to use.

If a user is away from their desk, then what is the best experience for them? *The one they want to use*.

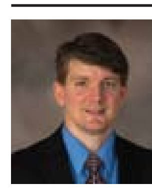
If a user is at their desk, what is the best experience for them? *The one they want to use*.

For Line-Of-Business applications to survive, they must provide more than one way to get the same information into the system. Our systems must be able to adapt to the user and the user requirement, rather than us telling the user to adapt to them.

One of the main reasons that most upper management has always pushed for GUIs, or some kind of GUI interface, like dashboards and drill-down reports, is because they want to access the data when, where, and how they are familiar. It has never really been about the "pretty interfaces" and "mouse" or "touch" entry, but about how easy it is to access that information.

Line-Of-Business software needs to evolve beyond UI thinking and into UX thinking. More and more application companies will come to your management to try to sell them their UX – and many will succeed – unless you can provide some of the basics that a good UX requires.

Join me at my Welcome Address at the Spectrum 2015 Conference this year where I will be more talking about this. IS



NATHAN RECTOR
President
International Spectrum
nathan@intl-spectrum.com

The Tug-O-War Between

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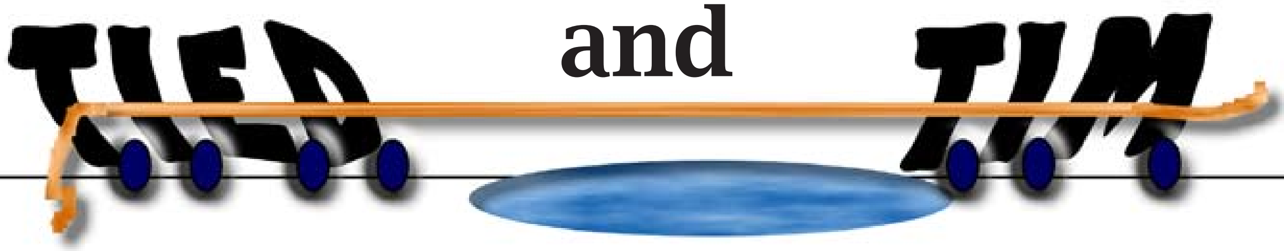


BY CHARLES BAROUCH

Today is a good day because I'm suffering from T.I.E.D. – Technologically Induced Euphoria Disorder. That's what I call it when something tech makes me happier than it reasonably should. Sometimes it's a whole category, like smart phones and tablets, sometimes it's learning a new language or methodology. I've been known to get giddy over a single command occasionally.

T.I.M. is another matter entirely.

Knock Knock

When the NCR Tower was being sold as the ADDS Mentor 7000, a company I worked for tasked me with proving that the new machine could handle the load. To meet the challenge, I wrote an mvBASIC program called Knock Knock, which ran from a login script. I started it by logging port 0 onto the test account. The first thing the script did was check if the next highest port existed and, if it did, it logged that port onto the test account as well, triggering another instance of Knock Knock. Then it ran a series of tests.

> ***The programmer did an excellent job of avoiding any use of the existing MultiValue database by tying themselves in knots.***

This allowed me to go to one port and issue one login, triggering 100% of the ports to stress test the machine. On the second pass, I did the same thing again, but this time, instead of running the tests in sequence -- to prove the machine could queue up demand and satisfy it -- I ran the tests at random. This simulated the more realistic case of varying activities on multiple ports.

By adding elapsed time reporting to each test, I was able to prove out the machine in one day. It gave me a serious case of T.I.E.D. to realize the automation capabilities inherent in the LOGON command.

Oh Boy

A few months ago, I was working on a PHP program which needed a serious speed up. So I found ways to avoid MySQL (the server it was on had some pay-to-play constraints which made MySQL under perform). Then I started looking at ways to make the pages work in PHP (to randomize certain content — sort of a *no one gets top billing issue* — periodically) and work as straight HTML the rest of the time. My normal tricks, like using AJAX, weren't viable for reasons too stupid to repeat here.

I found a command in PHP which not only saved me a lot of steps, but it also told me someone else thinks enough like I do for this command to exist. Technically, OB is not a command, it's a set of commands: . What they do is allow you to write PHP which runs like normal PHP but also captures an HTML-only version of the resulting page.

It was a weird, niche need, and finding out that someone else had hit that obscure wall hard enough that they extended PHP to cover the case... pure T.I.E.D.

Nothing but .NET

Even more recently, I ran into a piece of well-intentioned .Net which sent me into T.I.M — Technologically Induced Melancholy — instead. The programmer did an excellent job of avoiding any use of the existing MultiValue database by tying themselves in knots.

When I unraveled the mess, I found my T.I.E.D. Most of the .Net code survived unaltered. Just re-ordering it, so that the security checks moved to MultiValue, instead of ninety percent of the data shipping up from MultiValue to meet the ten percent in SQL so that .Net could do them, resolved the issues. It actually made me feel good when I realized that the code that was there didn‘t need to be trashed, it just needed minor surgery. The .Net programmer hadn't handled MultiValue very well, but he had done a decent job with the parts of the project he understood.

One More T.I.E.D.

There are people in this industry whom I've known for years but I've never had a chance to use their products. Recently work has brought me in contact with PRC and MV.NET. I haven't had a deep dive into either one, but the I'm having a good time learning them as projects permit.

One More T.I.M.

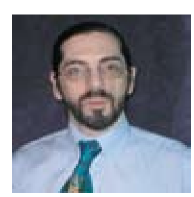
I recently had the one millionth (give or take) person tell me that MultiValue is dead. Having heard this for nearly thirty-five years, I have to tell you that it doesn't make me sad for us — because we're all still here — it makes me sad for them. What most of them really seem to be saying is "I don't want to learn anything else, so this stuff has to go." For me, learning is the point. Delphi, PHP, mvBASIC, PROC, JavaScript, Java… even when they make me wince, I still find value in acquiring new languages and in refining my skills with each.

Why So Delirious?

It‘s easy to feel alone in this profession. Even for those of us who work in teams, the opportunity to share an idea in a receptive environment can be rare. My favorite hiring ad was one Microsoft ran a few years ago: Come work for Microsoft. Your Family still won't know what you do for a living, but they'll know where you work. When I find some bit of tech which whispers "Hey, the folks who wrote and/or built me have seen what you've seen!" That's when I feel connected. When I go on U2-Users, or have a chat at the Spectrum conference, that's my link.

T.I.E.D. Up

Tell us about your T.I.E.D. moments at editor@intl-spectrum.com. **IS**



CHARLES BAROUCH is the CTO of HDWP, Inc. and the Publisher at HDWPbooks. You can read his writing in International Spectrum, Theme-Thology, Novo Pulp, PerehelionSF, and the Interrogative series, which begins with Tiago and the Masterless.

Calgon, Chaos, and Consultants

BY KEVIN KING

Remember that old commercial where the kids are screaming, the phone is ringing, someone's at the door, the dog is barking... and the all-too-harried star is just about to lose it? Moments before the inevitable, as if chanting some secret religious incantation, she exclaims "Calgon! Take me away!" An instant later she is dramatically transformed into a calm, relaxed and — dare I say? — happy woman; the bubbles from her bath eliminating all her stress and strain. For all she knows, little Timmy is setting fire to the dog and letting in the strange-looking "repairman" that had mysteriously and unexpectedly shown up at the door. No, those things don't matter, not while she's having her "Calgon Moment".

The day to day life of a business can sometimes seem like that commercial. The phone can seem to ring endlessly. Streams of customers come and go all day, every day. And every now and again, there may even be a bit of screaming (you know who you are). To make matters worse, there are few — if any — Calgon moments in business.

If you can't reach someone before the project starts, there's a pretty good chance you won't be able to reach them after the project is completed.

In the last several years, we've seen how advances in computer technology can help businesses manage that sort of chaos. Even a garden-variety personal computer is capable of great things, and seemingly greater things each year. New networking technologies are making our offices more connected than ever. And with the incredible resources and connectivity available on the internet, there has never been a greater opportunity to work smarter instead of harder.

If only it were that simple.

Unless your business is technology, there's probably very little time or energy available to keep up-to-date with all the advances that can help your business. Like most people, you expect to turn on the computer and *it just works*. Anything less makes the computer less of a servant and more of "one more thing to deal with." As if you didn't have enough to do already.

Perhaps you've considered hiring technical staff to keep all your business systems running smoothly. But adding personnel is expensive! Not only is there the cost of basic salary and benefits (which can be substantial), there's also the potential for considerable setup expenses. Each person you hire needs a desk, space for that desk, a phone, most likely a computer, numerous software titles... the list goes on and on. And what about training? How much money is available to get a new person oriented to your way of doing business?

Then there's the issue of your time. How much time do you have available to review resumes, call prospects, conduct interviews, fill out all the regulatory paperwork, and get everything set so your new employee can hit the ground running? Following that, how much time will be needed to ensure your new employee is really being productive? Stated another way, if the problem is that you're too busy, is adding more items to your To Do list really the best solution?

Wouldn't it be great to have an employee who comes to you with extensive training? Someone with experience solving a variety of issues? Someone who doesn't require a mountain of paperwork or human resources effort, and can just go away quietly when you don't need them anymore? And what if that person came to you with their own desk, phone, computer, and software? And if that's not enough, what if you could completely forget about paying for benefits? Would that not be an excellent hire?

Fortunately, there are thousands of people just like this all over the world, operating under titles like Technology Consultant, Software Consultant, or even Software Solutions Provider. Like employees, consultants are available with a wide variety of training and experience. However, unlike employees, consultants don't typically require a long term commitment. Instead, as an employer you have the freedom to add or subtract consultants as needed. And you can do it without a lot of paperwork, regulatory issues, and complex interpersonal dynamics.

Perhaps you're thinking, "But... consultants are even more expensive than employees!" Looking only at the hourly rate of a consultant vs. an employee, this can appear to be true. However, for most companies, you have to look deeper than simple hourly rates. When you better understand the return on your investment, it becomes clear that a consultant can save you money — sometimes a great deal of money.

When deciding between adding an employee or a consultant, the first issue to be resolved is *need*. Do you need someone *every* working day of the year? Or do you need a person *only* when there are things to be done? If the answer is "every day", then you may be better served by an employee. On the other hand, if your needs are more task-oriented, a consultant may be the better option. To help clarify this issue, a number of questions can be asked, such as:

- What — specifically — will this person be doing?
- What will the person do after the assigned tasks are complete?
- Will that list of tasks require a full time, indeterminate-length investment?

The goal of these questions is simply to arrive at a full understanding of where this person will fit into your organization, and for how long. If you find yourself thinking "I don't know what this person will do all the time, but I'm sure we'll find something," a big red flag should go up. You see, over time the most significant cost of an employee isn't the salary, or the benefits, or the training, or the setup, etc. Rather, the most significant cost of the employee comes from paying all of these amounts in perpetuity — even after the need has passed.

Of course, you could make it a practice to periodically fire employees when they're no longer needed, but this carries its own costs, liability potential, and morale issues. Fired employees may be eligible for severance monies, unemployment benefits, extended health insurance, or other benefits. And what if the employee feels he or she has been wrongly terminated? Corporate reputation notwithstanding, legal costs to defend the company can be significant.

In contrast, consultants simply move on when the job is complete. As long as a company has things to be done and is happy with the results being produced, the consultant provides services. When there's nothing left to do, the consultant moves on to serve the next company and the cycle continues. This not only reduces the company's liability and termination costs, but the annualized cost of the consultant is reduced as the company pays nothing for a consultant who is serving someone else.

But what about loyalty and confidentiality? Can consultants be trusted with the intellectual assets of the corporation? In a word, absolutely. And if a word isn't enough, you can get it in writing.

Most consultants will agree to sign proper agreements limiting their use of the intellectual assets of the company. Commonly, a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is used which defines the intellectual property boundaries and usage guidelines for the consultant-company relationship. NDA guidelines may also be incorporated into a standardized consulting contract. Incidentally, only rarely will companies require these types of agreements with employees. Often this oversight is a more significant risk.

What about accountability? How can the company ensure the consultant is maintaining an adequate level of productivity?

Any project, whether assigned to an employee or a consultant, should have measurable benchmarks strategically located along the project timeline. If a person isn't meeting or exceeding those basic milestones, you're free to find someone else who can. The difference between an employee and consultant is that the consultant recognizes that they are easily terminated, in contrast to the difficulty commonly associated with terminating an employee. For this reason, many consultants invest a portion of their non-working time to learning new methodologies or techniques to help them achieve the greatest productivity possible. As the hiring company, you then reap the benefits of all this extra training with zero financial investment.

The final question often raised by people considering hiring a consultant is one of support. How can a company get adequate support for the work done by a consultant after that person has moved on?

Most consultants will offer support for their work long after the original contract is ended IF the consultant is still available. While this may seem like an obvious distinction, it's a pivotal one. New consulting companies seem to rise and fall on a nearly continual basis. And, oddly enough, one principle factor in whether a consultant will be around to answer your questions is - believe it or not - their hourly rate.

As you review the sea of consultants looking for opportunities to serve, you'll probably find some with rates that are next to nothing, others with rates that could make your eyes water, and all shades of gray between the two extremes. With such wide disparity, it may seem natural to jump at the lowest bidder with the expectation that you'll save money by the decreased rate. While it can happen, a low rate is no guarantee of savings. In some cases, someone who charges even three times as much may be the better investment.

Consider this: Which is better — a consultant that produces three times the results, or a consultant that charges one-third the rate? While it may seem like a wash, the consultant producing triple results is actually a better investment. Consider:

- Projects that are in development for a longer period are more likely to be changed before the project is complete. As more changes are added, the project becomes less likely to be finished on time and/or on target. When a person produces more rapid results, the project is more likely to be completed and in use before change requests become issues. These changes can then be addressed as separate and distinct tasks. Or they can even become separate products for the company, *which can provide new profit opportunities for companies who sell those products.*
- Consultants who produce results in less time tend to have more experience across various fields, which can benefit your projects both directly and indirectly.

Consultants who are consistently in the middle ground of rates also tend to have been in business longer, which means they are more likely to be around to support their work months or years after the original deployment. Those who charge too little tend not to last very long, which can be problematic for long-term support. Furthermore, those who charge too much tend to have high overhead costs that may provide no real benefit to your company. Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask for justification of the rate; the answer may tell you much more about the consultant than you could get from any other source.

Finally, as you would with an employee, be sure to check references for any consultant you hire. If a consultant says they can produce rapid results, or that they are consistently completing products on time and on budget, get some independent verification. After all, it is your limited money and time that will be invested in the effort. Also, consider cold-calling the consultant to see how easily they can be reached. If you can't reach someone before the project starts, there's a pretty good chance you won't be able to reach them after the project is completed.

Bottom line, regardless of all the advances in technology, there will always be a need for people to make it all work. Sometimes an employee is a good fit. Other times, a consultant is a better fit. With careful consideration of all of the issues with each option, you'll be better prepared to make the best decision for you and your company. IS

KEVIN KING is the President and Chief Technologist with Precision Solutions, Inc., a leading technology solutions provider in Longmont, Colorado. He can be reached by email at Kevin@PrecisOnline.com or by voice at 303/651-7050.

From the Press Room

Entrinsik Informer Named a Top Rated Business Intelligence Platform by TrustRadius

Entrinsik Inc. (www.entrinsik.com), developer of award-winning data management software, announced its inclusion in the Data Discovery & Visualization Business Intelligence TrustMap ™ published by TrustRadius (www.trustradius.com).

TrustRadius is the leading online community for professionals to exchange candid insights and opinions about business software through in-depth user reviews. Unveiled in its first Buyer's Guide to Business Intelligence (BI) software, the Data Discovery & Visualization BI TrustMap ™ quickly helps software buyers to locate the solutions most highly rated and adopted by their direct peer group.

The Buyer's Guide is curated from over 500 user reviews of top-performing business intelligence software. The Guide includes an introduction to BI software for those new to the field, descriptions of the various types of BI solutions, charts analyzing the leading solutions by BI category, product ratings based on real user reviews, and advice on how choose a BI solution based on business needs and requirements.

Entrinsik Informer ranks highly among other providers in the Data Discovery & Visualization category. Informer addresses an ever-growing need to manage disparate sources of operational data and allow non-technical users to access, visualize and analyze their data without the support of IT.

"Entrinsik Informer is used by customers in a variety of industries where there is a strong need to manage large volumes of operational data. Typical customers have limited IT support and a relatively non-technical user base," said Alan Cooke, Research Director, TrustRadius. "Informer is particularly pervasive in community colleges and universities, and is very highly rated on TrustRadius."

The TrustRadius Buyer's Guide to BI Software can be downloaded at www.entrinsik.com/BI-Buyers-Guide.

About Entrinsik

Entrinsik develops, implements, and supports Information Management Solutions that enable organizations to maximize performance and improve bottom lines. Entrinsik Informer is an innovative, award-winning agile reporting and business intelligence solution used by tens of thousands around the world. Entrinsik Enrole Registration & Course Management software drives many of the nation's largest continuing education profit centers and seminar event planning industries. Over 1,500 organizations around the world use Entrinsik's software every day. For a demonstration or a free trial, call 888-703 0016 or email sales@entrinsik.com. Visit www.entrinsik.com. ■

Ladybridge Systems Announces Zumasys as Worldwide Reseller for the OpenQM MultiValue Database Product

Ladybridge Systems is pleased to announce that Zumasys, based in Irvine, California, has been appointed as worldwide reseller for the OpenQM MultiValue database product.

Martin Phillips, Technical Director of Ladybridge Systems said "This is an exciting relationship which brings the strength of the Zumasys sales, marketing and support teams to the OpenQM product, considerably enhancing the position of OpenQM in the MultiValue market."

Design and development responsibilities for OpenQM remain with UK based Ladybridge Systems.

Other OpenQM resellers are largely unaffected by this move except that they will, in most cases, obtain licenses via Zumasys.

QM users should contact Ladybridge Systems if they need clarification of the situation regarding their license. ■

Zumasys Acquires jBASE Database

Zumasys, a leading provider of cloud computing solutions for business-critical software applications and ERP systems, announced today that it has completed the acquisition of the jBASE database from Temenos, based in Geneva Switzerland. Temenos will continue to support its customers running jBASE.

Paul Giobbi, President of Zumasys, says, "jBASE was the industry's first database-independent solution. Its more contemporary architecture allows Pick-based applications to natively interact with the underlying Windows or Unix operating system, and store data in SQL Server, Oracle and the cloud, which fits perfectly with our vision for the future. We love that jBASE gets out of the way and lets the operating system do what it does best."

"As an original co-founder of jBASE and manager of jBASE for Temenos, I am pleased to see this technology continue to evolve under Paul Giobbi and the very capable team at Zumasys," says Clive Ketteridge of Temenos.

"For nearly 15 years, Pick MultiValue customers have relied on Zumasys to support, stabilize, and modernize their applications, within the context of their mainstream IT environments, and we are thrilled to welcome jBASE to the family," says Giobbi. "MultiValue matters to us because it matters to our customers."

Zumasys has acquired a string of MultiValue software technologies in recent months including:

- AccuTerm™ – In mid-2014, Zumasys acquired AccuTerm™, the leading Windows/Mobile connectivity solution for the Pick Market with more than 16,000 customers worldwide. Pete Schellenbach is now Zumasys' Director of Product Development.
- MultiValue Dashboard – Originally developed by The Nerdery and recently re-launched on Zumasys.com, MultiValue Dashboard also became part of the Zumasys portfolio in 2014. MultiValue Dashboard allows you to quickly and easily build web-based dashboards using traditional Pick programming methods.
- OpenQM – Zumasys is pleased to announce an Exclusive Worldwide Distribution and domestic support/maintenance arrangement for OpenQM, a cost effective, high-performance database to run Pick applications. OpenQM, developed by Ladybridge Systems of Northampton, England is an extremely efficient MultiValue database, with a small footprint. The deployment and operational costs for OpenQM is a fraction of other MultiValue databases providing organizations with a lower total cost of ownership for their MultiValue applications.

With the largest team of MultiValue application developers and engineers in the market, Zumasys is in a unique position to help Pick users (D3, UniVerse, UniData, jBASE & OpenQM) enhance and modernize their Pick applications. With Zumasys, customers gain an enthusiastic partner and an extensive bench of Pick engineers, each with an average of more than 30 years of experience with MultiValue systems. We help customers achieve major cost savings, gain flexibility, improve performance with their core applications, and to obtain the features they've always wanted but didn't think were possible.

About Temenos

Founded in 1993 and listed on the Swiss Stock Exchange (SIX: TEMN), Temenos Group AG is the market leading provider of banking software systems to retail, corporate, universal, private, Islamic, microfinance and community banks, wealth managers, and financial institutions. Headquartered in Geneva and with 58 offices worldwide, Temenos software is proven in over 1,600 customer deployments in more than 150 countries across the world. For more information please visit www.temenos.com.

About Zumasys

Zumasys helps companies of every size transition their infrastructure and applications to the cloud. With Zumasys cloud services, customers can easily access the latest software and hardware technologies over the Web, allowing them to focus on growing their core business instead of managing their IT infrastructures. Zumasys delivers personalized service, integrated disaster recovery and the confidence companies need to outsource the hosting of all their databases including SQL, Oracle and Pick MultiValue systems. For more information, visit www.zumasys.com ■

What Does the Zumasys Purchase of jBASE Mean to You?

Nathan Rector spoke to Paul Giobbi, President of Zumasys, about jBASE. Here's what we learned.

IS: ***How does your purchase relate to the Temenos version of jBASE?***

PAUL: Zumasys purchased the version of jBASE targeted to the MultiValue marketplace. Temenos retained the banking version of the jBASE database, called Temenos Application Framework for C, also known as TAFC. With the Zumasys acquisition of jBASE, Temenos will retain ownership of TAFC, which they will continue to market to the banking industry.

IS: ***What are Zumasys' future plans for jBASE?***

PAUL: We firmly believe that jBASE is light years ahead of the competition. It has an extremely forward-thinking design, and we intend to leverage that to the market's benefit.

For example, we are looking to expand jBASE further into our cloud offering now that we have the flexibility that comes with owning the intellectual property. We are in the process of launching a multi-tenanted, public cloud offering called jBASE as a Service (jBaaS). Customers will be able to access the database from our enterprise-class cloud infrastructure for a set monthly fee. We can take advantage of economies of scale to offer very competitive prices.

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We also are in the process of porting the MultiValue Dashboard to jBASE in addition to exploring ways to integrate our other software tools with the database. Our goal is to provide more value for the dollar with jBASE.

IS: ***Did Zumasys purchase the rights to continue development and enhancement of jBASE, or is Temenos still the primary developer?***

PAUL: Yes, Zumasys has purchased the rights to jBASE and we are the primary developer.

IS: ***How are you handling support?***

PAUL: The support team from jBASE joined the Zumasys team to form one expanded, global support network, reporting to Mike Coelho, General Manager, MultiValue Division. We are adding support for jBASE to our already broad support for D3 as well as OpenQM. In addition to expanding the depth of our support capabilities, we are also increasing our focus on providing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and industry-leading responsiveness.

IS: ***How will jBASE tie into Zumasys' Cloud solutions?***

PAUL: Instead of simply hosting jBASE in a VMware-based virtual machine as we've done for years, we are directly integrating the database into our cloud platform to enable our customers to move their applications to a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model with hypervisor integration and eased provisioning. We are in the process of using the source code to do many other interesting things in the cloud, so stay tuned for more updates soon.

IS: ***What will the release schedule be like? What future enhancements are you looking to include?***

Paul: Zumasys just issued jBASE, v5.2.30, the first release since the ownership change. We wanted to send a strong message to the market that we are serious about being more aggressive about releasing new versions of jBASE in the future. We are actively seeking customer feedback on functionality they would like to see added to jBASE. Customers can email us at listening@jbase.com.

IS: ***What is Zumasys' history with jBase, and how did that affect the purchase?***

PAUL: I've been friends with the co-founders of jBASE since they started the business, and in recent years, we've reconnected. When we decided to purchase a database in the MultiValue space, we went for the most architecturally elegant product available.

jBASE provides the functionality you would expect in a MultiValue database including language support (BASIC, Proc, Query), database support, and a MultiValue product spooler, editor, admin commands, etc. However, while you continue to develop in BASIC, your BASIC code, when compiled, is actually translated to C and then turned into native executables (.exe file extensions for Windows and binary files for Unix). In jBASE, there really isn't any shell required to interpret the BASIC as is the case with other MultiValue databases. You can write a BASIC program and compile it, and the resulting binary/exe ends up in the operating system path. It can be run directly from the operating system. That's exciting.

Another major differentiator with jBASE is the ability to connect with other databases such as SQL and Oracle. jBASE's file I/O runs through a layer called the jBASE External Database Interface or jEDI. jEDI allows you to write BASIC code using conventional OPEN/READ/WRITE commands that actually access and manipulate information stored in virtually any data store including relational databases, XML sources, etc. For companies looking to achieve improved integration with external systems, jBASE offers some very advanced and interesting options.

And because you can still program in BASIC (or C or whatever), you have a lot of flexibility in development and deployment.

IS: ***How does the purchase of jBase affect Zumasys' other customers who are using other MultiValue Databases?***

PAUL: Zumasys offers databases from Rocket including D3, UniVerse, and UniData. Some of the largest D3 sites rely on Zumasys for database and infrastructure support. We intend to honor our nearly 15-year partnership with TigerLogic/Rocket Software and we remain committed to the technology and our customers that utilize it. Our expertise in the MultiValue market, combined with our ability to provide total solutions, will allow us to truly provide our customers with what is best for them, based on their needs. IS

Feed**back**

What came first, the letters or the letters-to-the-editor department?

International Spectrum Magazine has a Feedback Department, sometimes known as Letters to the Editor.

We want to hear your comments, your reactions, your agreement or disagreement with what you see. Also, do not hesitate to let us know about things happening in the MultiValue Community we may not have heard about yet.

Please send your comments by e-mail to:
editor@intl-spectrum.com

Clif Notes

New Blood — Part 1

BY CLIF OLIVER

Ah, another year behind us. A new year ahead of us. Time to see what lessons we may have learned and look to the year ahead; at how we might apply those lessons. What things can we do differently? And what things can we avoid doing at all.

I'm not going to propose a set of resolutions we all agree to try to implement – and fail the second week. No manifesto for us all to argue about, water down, and then, seething with dissatisfaction, sign and then ignore. I just want to talk a bit about some of my observations, interpretations, and suggestions of actions we consider.

Us. We.

Not Them. They.

Us. The community of MultiValue Developers. Some of us are lower level programmers. Some are analyst programmers. Some are managers of MultiValue development groups.

It appears to me that whenever the discussion turns to "What can be done to promote MultiValue in the marketplace?" invariably people start chiming in with, "They (the database Vendors) need to put tons of money into advertising." "They need to be more aggressive about convincing everyone else of the superiority of the MultiValue Model." All the way from "They need to do more marketing" to really off-the-wall demands like, "They need to spend thousands of development dollars reinventing .NET / Java / Eclipse / whatever in the MultiValue environment so we don't have to learn anything new and can do *everything* from inside our isolated environment.

It always seems to be about Them and what They need to do. Well, We don't have any control – and very little influence, frankly – over Them and what They do. So let's drop that discussion this year, could we? Let's concentrate on what We can do to promote MultiValue and help it not only survive but thrive.

First, let's talk about the issue of the aging of the MultiValue community. This seems to be "common knowledge," though I've never seen any data supporting that conclusion. Being one of the "old-timers," I can understand how a lot of people have come to that impression. If you attend the International Spectrum Conference regularly, some people will focus on the fact they are seeing some of the same faces over and over. They don't even notice the new attendees (or have discussions with them). If the same-old same-old is what you are expecting to see, that's pretty much just what you will see. It's part of how our brains filter things for our attention. Go get a scuba diving certification. You will be amazed at how many cars and trucks on the road suddenly have "dive flag" decals on them.

So while I will accept the premise that we are losing experienced MultiValue developers to retirement, I'm not sure we're all getting ready to leave the community in a mass exodus.

Still, I think it is imperative that if we are to survive as a community, we need new blood — not only to increase our numbers but to bring in new ideas, new knowledge, and avoid stagnation. Stagnation will, I think, guarantee that MultiValue fades away.

So we need new, younger, dedicated developers. Agreed. Now, how do we get them? Organizations like International Spectrum serve a role. If you join those of us who are going to attend the Conference this year, I think you will see some interesting sessions targeted directly at new developers and non-MultiValue developers to introduce and educate them on the key concepts, abilities, and use of the MultiValue platforms. Of course, you could help in that effort by volunteering to give a presentation, conduct a technical session, or contribute an article or two to Spectrum Magazine.

But I don’t think that simply supporting an organization’s efforts is enough. It’s going to take individual efforts to keep this thing going. What can you, as individual, do to attract new blood?

Participate in Internet discussions. Social media. Comment on technical blogs. Discussion groups on platforms like LinkedIn, Google, and the like. Twitter, Facebook, and others.

When we talk of “new blood” we are usually talking about developers who fall into the vague generational classification of “Millennials.” So if you want to attract Millennials, you need to hang out where the Millennials hang out. That means the Internet.

But please be careful what you say and how you say it!

As I followed discussions on some of the groups last year, I was dismayed at some of the comments I saw. Comments that stated things that were obviously false, such as “There hasn’t been any changes to MultiValue in 20 years,” to raging against having to learn anything outside of MultiValue. Some of the threads were very negative, critical, and belittling of the MultiValue platform and vendors.

I cringe when I think of what the Millennials in IT will think of MultiValue when they see that. These forums are, of course, wide open for the world to read.

Imagine for the moment you were 23 years old, bright, enthusiastic, technically savvy with a broad skill set — the very type of new blood we are looking for. You have two job offers. One is with a company using a well-known database, .NET, Ajax, etc. The other is for a company using something called MultiValue (or the old term PICK). Not having heard of the latter, you head out to the Internet and start browsing around. You find message threads full of longtime MultiValue developers “discussing” the horrid state of affairs — “Nothing new in 20 years,” “The vendors don’t care and aren’t enhancing the product,” and arguing about being forced to use non-MV products like .NET / Java / Python because of the deficiencies of the MultiValue platform. And the list of negatives go on.

Which job are you going to accept? You think you are going to be attracted to what appears to be a dead-end job using a dead-end product while your hard-earned skill-set atrophies, leaving you behind all your IT colleagues? Not likely.

I am not suggesting we censor the MultiValue discussion lists! Even if it were possible. Forbid any negative postings about vendors? Wash your mouth out with libertarian soap. There are, however, two things we as individual developers can do to help the situation.

First, think before you post. Simply ask yourself if what you are going to say is factual, stated fairly, and does it really need to be said. How would a prospective young developer react to MultiValue if they read this?

Second, if you are one of the modern MultiValue developers using modern tools like .NET, PHP, Python, JavaScript, etc., PLEASE get more active in the online discussions! Lead by example. Talk about what you are doing, how your shop uses a certain tool to build applications. How a certain coding technique has helped your shop speed up development of new applications and how you adapted that technique to MultiValue.

There are always going to be negative threads in a discussion group. But as long as they don't become the majority of the group's content, they won't hurt much. The new crop of IT professionals are as good at spotting a "holy war" or rant as anyone else. But if they are going to be reading about our MultiValue environment, let's make it interesting. Make it something someone might want to spend some time working in.

So we've enticed our hypothetical 23 year old developer to give us a shot, and they have accepted our job offer. Now, how do we keep them?

That's where we will pick up in the next issue. IS

WANT TO SEE A SPECIFIC TOPIC?

International Spectrum is looking for writers, feedback, and topic ideas. We all have specific topics and issues that we need answers to find solutions for. Send us an E-mail with topics you would like to have covered in the magazine or on the website.

E-mail: nathan@intl-spectrum.com

WANT TO WRITE?

Expand your professional credentials, and provide us with an article.

Give us a rough and ugly outline, and we will help you refine it, proof it, and make it press ready. Or you can give us something polished, proofed, and press ready to publish.

Share your thoughts and expertise with over 10,000 fellow MultiValue developers and users.

E-mail: editor@intl-spectrum.com