QM&T September 2003 Newsletter

Worm Infection Across the Net

It has been recently reported that a Windows' worm named MSBlast is spreading very quickly across the net. MSBlast is known as a worm because it can spread across the net by itself. Once installed on a machine MSBlast, also called Lovsan, starts scanning for other vulnerable machines and this can swamp local net connections. Affected systems include; Microsoft Windows NT 4.0, Microsoft Windows 2000, Microsoft Windows XP and Microsoft Windows Server 2003. Security firm Symantec has reported to have already found MSBlast on more than 57,000 machines. Those most likely to be affected are home users and small firms that tend not to be as meticulous about computer security as large companies. Hidden inside the worm are two messages. One refers to Microsoft's chairman, Bill Gates that reads: "Billy gates why do you make this possible? Stop making money and fix your software!" The other message reads: "I just want to say LOVE YOU SAN!" For more information please see BBC news.

BCS – Promoting Software Quality

According to an article in the British Computer Society (BCS) e-Bulletin, the BCS Quality Specialist Group have taken new measures to promote software quality by scrapping the Group's membership fees for all BCS members worldwide and transferring its magazine to an online version, making information more widely available. This means that Group membership is now free to all BCS members, regardless of grade or location worldwide, and is reduced for all non-BCS members in the UK. For more please visit www.bcs.org/sg/quality

Online Airlines

According to a series of recent surveys of different industries for website accessibility, it has been revealed that UK airlines are preventing millions of disabled people from booking flights online - and potentially losing a lot of business, due to their poor website access. None of the nine airlines examined by the charity, AbilityNet, met standards for easy access for users with visual impairments, dyslexia or a physical disability making it hard to use a mouse. The sites, including those of British Airways, EasyJet, Ryanair and Virgin Atlantic, were checked for accessibility using manual and automated methods based on standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium, the automated Bobby system, and others.

Even the top scoring sites - Air 2000, British Airways, EasyJet and Monarch Airlines, only managed a two-star rating on a five-star scale. The others who scored only one star were rated - very inaccessible. It rated Virgin Atlantic's site to be the worst, having the most serious issues of accessibility of all those tested.

From October 2004, when extensions to the Disability Discrimination Act come into force, websites will have to be accessible as a matter of law, therefore, Internet access for goods and services for the disabled people will no longer be just a commercial concern or a moral duty of care. The AbilityNet survey is the first of a planned series aimed at drawing attention to the issue of accessibility and to help disabled people find the best websites for their needs. AbilityNet intends to look at other websites such as online newspapers, supermarkets and banking services. AbilityNet is a national charity that advises on IT to support disabled people. Its trustees include the BCS, IBM and Birmingham University. For more details please visit www.abilitynet.org.uk

Unreliable German Cars

It has been reported that a survey carried out by the Which magazine of 80,000 readers, showed that German cars, once famous for their reliability, are no longer rated so. Leading brands such as Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen faired worse in the magazine's annual reliability survey. Mercedes-Benz dropped two categories from best to average reliability rating. Volkswagen, who manufactures the Golf and Polo, was downgraded by Which? readers to the poor reliability category. Two other Volkswagen-owned companies, Seat and Audi, also dropped from good to average rating. BMW achieved a disappointing average reliability rating for the fourth consecutive year. However, the less prestigious cars such as Ford performed better than in the past. Overall, Japanese cars were found to be the most reliable. In general, no

German carmaker managed to achieve either the best or good categories. For more information please see BBC news.

BCS Awards

The British Computer Society (BCS) has recently introduced some new categories for their IT Professional Awards, which also includes the BCS Management Awards. The finalists for the individual awards have been chosen, which include the Quality Manager of the Year, Sponsored by Mercury Interactive: Kevin Martin, IX Europe; Nick Mundy, Zurich Financial Services. Other Awards include categories such as, IT Director of the Year, IT Consultant of the Year, and IT Trainer of the Year. The winners will be announced at an Awards Gala Dinner at London's Park Lane Hilton in September. For further information please visit www.bcs.org/awards/professional.

Black Cabs Safety

According to a recent article, the number of unsafe black cabs on Leicester's roads is falling. Figures from the Leicester City Council show over the last two years the standard of hackney carriages has significantly improved. The City Council performs random checks on motor vehicle in order to pick up any defects. The police stop cars and accompany them to a testing station, where city council licensing officers and staff from the Vehicle Inspectorate then examine the cabs. Those with serious faults are not allowed on the roads, whilst the ones needing minor repairs are ordered to have the work carried out. According to the City Council, this has resulted in vehicles on the roads being much safer. It was discovered that in 2001 six out of 10 black cabs were not safe, but now just over one in 10 has been found to have serious defects. For more information please visit BBC news.

ISO9001:2000 Transition Deadline

Despite the slow transfer rate of organisations to the revised standard, the original deadline date for transition will remain as 15th December 2003. The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) have confirmed that the deadline will not change and ended speculation that the accredited agencies might extend the cut-off date. The latest transition figures are not available, but an ISO survey carried out last year showed that only 16% of organisations had transferred to the revised standard. If you still haven't transferred, then time is running out. For information and advice please contact your accreditation body or visit www.qmt.co.uk.

Environmental Management at the National History Museum

The Natural History Museum in London has gained registration against the ISO14001 standard. They are the first UK museum to achieve this and they have had a particular focus on waste management. All materials, including chemical wastes, electrical equipment, wood and paper are now recycled as far as possible. The figures (from BSI Press Release) for recycling at the Museum are:

- Paper and card
     85% recycled
- Wood
     65% recycled
- Toner cartridges
     95% recycled
- IT and electrical equipment
     90% reused or recycled
- Furniture
     70% sold or given to charity
- Cooking oil
     100% recycled

Misleading Data Protection Notification Advertisements

According to a recent report in The Register regarding data protection notification service, the High Court has granted an interim injunction against Christopher Yewdall preventing him from profiting from allegedly misleadingly advertised data protection notification services. This is a temporary measure pending a judgement in a lawsuit brought against Yewdall by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). It is alleged that Yewdall was involved with misleading advertisements relating to notification with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 1998. The OFT received thousands of complaints from businesses regarding these adverts which according to the OFT, are misleading. They give the impression that they are from an official body, and businesses receiving them are under a legal obligation to register with the sender and that notification costs £95. In fact, businesses that need to register under the Data Protection Act 1998 can do so, directly with the Information Commissioner for £35 only. The offending adverts also fail to properly explain that some small business that process personal data for limited purposes are exempt from notification under the 1998 Act. To find out whether or not you are required to notify under the Data Protection Act 1998 please visit Information Commissioner's Web site at dpr.gov.uk or telephone its Notification helpline on 01625 545740. For more information on this news article please visit www.theregister.co.uk

How should Banks Deal with Complaints?

The BSI has recently published a supplement to its Complaint Management Specification – CMSAS 86: 2000. The supplement should help banks and other financial institutions to deal more effectively with complaints. It is backed by the Financial Services Authority and was developed with complaints/r/great, QCi, The Leadership Factor and many leading Banks and Institutions. For more information contact BSI www.bsi-global.com

Another Updated Standard for the 9000 Family

ISO 1007: 2003 Quality Management System – Guidelines for configuration management, is aimed at providing organisations with guidelines for "configuration management". These should help them improve product quality and customer satisfaction by managing the activities related to maintenance and product design. According to ISO, "The standard provides a "road map" for applying configuration management to all stages in the life of any product, in any sector, regardless of the size, complexity and nature of the product, and its environment. It can be used by organisations to meet the requirements for product identification and traceability requirements in ISO9001:2000 – although its use is not a requirement of that standard." ISO1007:2003 replaces ISO10007:1995 and improves the alignment of the standard with ISO9001:2000. For further information please visit the ISO web-site www.iso.ch

ISO Survey Results

The ISO carry out an annual survey to look at the uptake of the best-known standards worldwide.
ISO 9001:2000 - at the end of 2002 there were 167,210 certificates of conformity. The top ten countries for growth in this standard were: China, Japan, Italy, Germany, UK, Spain, Australia, France, Switzerland and the USA.

ISO 14001:1996 – in 2002, 49,462 certificates were issued in 118 countries, an increase of nearly 35% over 2001 figures. The top ten countries for growth in ISO 14001 were: Japan, China, Spain, USA, Italy, Sweden, Brazil, France, Germany and Hungary

The survey includes data on:

- World, regional and country-by-country totals of certificates
- Breakdown of the world total by industry sector
- Country highlights – significant milestones etc
- Breakdown by country of withdrawn certificates
- For ISO9001:2000, an indication on whether this is a new certification or a transfer from the 1994 version

The survey on ISO9000 and ISO 14001 certificates is available as a combined 42 page report from the ISO national member institutes and an abridged version can be seen on the ISO web-site www.iso.org

Stress at Work

A TUC backed report has claimed that stress at work increases your chances of dying from a stroke or heart attack. Long-term stress was said to be worse for your heart than gaining 40lb in weight. For more information please see the Metro newspaper.

Taser fails

According to a news article in the Metro newspaper, the British police fired the Taser stun gun in a real incident for the first time recently. It failed to work correctly; the police want to discover if one of the darts that deliver the 50,000 Volt electric shock was defective. For more information please see the Metro newspaper.

Are Hospitals Safe?

The government agency in charge of hospitals, NHS Estates, has reported that only 50% of hospitals are fully compliant with fire safety regulations. Although most of the non-compliance is fairly low-risk and it was suggested that none were putting patients at risk, it is still a cause for concern. Last year alone more than 6,000 fires occurred in English NHS Hospitals and although most were minor, in some cases patients and staff had to be evacuated. The main problems are linked to outstanding maintenance work that is

required to close out the non-compliances. Liberal Democrat health spokesman Dr Evan Harris said that the NHS needs to spend £3.4 billion to ensure hospitals met fire safety requirements. For more information please see BBC news.

Cheap Sofas go up in Flames

Trading Standards officers have found that some cheap furniture imported from Poland has upholstery that is not fire retardant. The furniture is not being sold through reputable dealers and has fake tags indicating that UK regulations are being met. There are not enough trading standards officers to trace and inspect the sofas and so the public are being warned that this type of sofa can be dangerous. According to the Trading Standards Institute, furniture was the starting point for 2,404 fires in Britain in 2001 and contributed to 85 deaths and 887 other casualties. For more information please see BBC news.

Quality of GCSE Exams

According to the Government's exam watchdog, pupils should be able to skip GCSEs if schools think they are not useful. Dr. Ken Boston, head of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has reported to have said, "head teachers should decide if students should go straight to AS-level exams, but this would be to reduce the number of exams facing pupils - and not because of any lack of quality or lowering of standards in GCSEs." He also said he did not believe young people should have to take three examinations in three consecutive years. "It is a matter for schools to determine." Mr Hart, leader of the National Association of Head Teachers said it signalled the end of the GCSE in the long term. Schools where GCSE pass rates are close to 100% could get rid of the qualification. In response, an education department spokesman pointed to Mike Tomlinson's review of qualifications for 14 to 19 years olds and said that "GCSEs continue to prove their worth and any

reform must build on their success". Confidence in the A-levels and GCSE exams needs to be restored, for without GCSE's, pupils who leave education at the age of 16 will not have a meaningful qualification to show for their efforts in secondary school. For more information please see BBC news.

ISO 13485 - Medical Device Standards

ISO 13485:1996 & ISO 13488:1996 - The international quality management standards for the quality management system requirements for medical device manufacturers have been updated in response to the ISO 9001:2000 standard and combined into one standard - ISO 13485:2003 - Medical devices - Quality management systems - Requirements for regulatory purposes. This international standard has also been adopted by the European Community as EN ISO 13485, European standards for CE Marking, replacing EN 46001.

The new standard is now out and provides a model for a quality management systems for medical device manufacturers to meet regulatory requirements. ISO 13485:2003 includes a process model similar to that of ISO 9001:2000 but requires more documented procedures that consistently meet customer requirements and regulatory requirements applicable to medical devices and related services. The new ISO 13485:2003 will no longer reference the requirements of ISO 9001 but will provide medical device manufacturers with a standalone standard for quality management systems that need to demonstrate compliance to regulatory requirements. For more information please visit www.bsi-global.com