

Issue 65 www.wrti.org.uk

Inventique®

The newsletter of Wessex Round Table of Inventors

April 2006

BBC Dragons' Den CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS See page 3

Now hear this...

MUSIC SAMPLING DEVICE WINS TOP HONOUR

PRODUCT DESIGNER Morag Hutcheon has won the *British Female Inventor 2006* title with her pre.vu™ music sampling device. She was presented with the award at a British Female Inventors and Innovators Network ceremony held in February at London's Guildhall.

pre.vu™ is a 'try before you buy' product built into CD jewel cases to enable customers to hear sample songs, music and messages before making the decision to purchase.

The invention comprises the electronics, software and hardware for compressing and uploading audio files, and is aimed at the domestic retail leisure market. Its technology is now being introduced to other market sectors as a new media format for 'audio packaging' products such as instructions, direct marketing and invitations.

Designing from scratch

Morag is design director at Quadro Consultancy, which takes clients' product ideas from initial concept through engineering and tooling to manufacture.

"I've taken products to market for clients from all over the world, but pre.vu is the first product I've developed of my own," she said.

"It was sort of a 'Eureka' moment – I put personal frustrations and lateral thinking together and pre.vu was the result.

"I quickly produced a mockup to prove the principle and this was followed by a very detailed business plan and patents being filed."

The first prototypes underwent consumer trials at three Virgin Megastores – and as a result of the positive consumer feedback, £1.5m was raised from private investors to develop the technology chip, upload



devices, software and the engineering of new plastics.

"If you always do what you always did, you always get what you always got," quipped Morag, who also won an award at the BFIIN event for her significant contribution to her device's product development.

Morag, who is from Melbourn in Hertfordshire, is seeking sales partners, investors and licensing opportunities for her invention. ■

● **Morag Hutcheon, director Origgio Limited, The Cow Shed Hyde Hall Farm, Buckland Hertfordshire SG9 0RU morag@origgio.co.uk www.pre.vu www.quadro-consult.com**

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Next WRTI meeting WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL

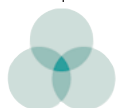
Competition for three members to win WRTI-sponsored entry to the *Innovation 2006* show at **INTECH interactive science and technology centre, Winchester** on Friday 23 June. Room HC 017, Herbert Collins Building, Southampton Solent University, commencing at 6.30pm.

● www.wrti.org.uk/events www.shealtd.co.uk
Map: www.streetmap.co.uk (SO14 0RP)

THE GOWERS REVIEW OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, which is examining the UK's intellectual property framework, has issued a public call for evidence as part of its commitment to consult with interested parties. The call for evidence forms a key part of the evidence base that the Review team will draw upon to develop its analysis.

Submissions to the call for evidence should be sent to the Gowers Review of Intellectual Property by Friday 21 April 2006.

● **Gowers Review of Intellectual Property, Zone 4/EI, HM Treasury**
1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ gowers.review@hm-treasury.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7270 4902 www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews



Gowers Review
of Intellectual Property

Wessex Round Table of Inventors meet at 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Southampton Solent University, East Park Terrace SO14 0RP

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

TRUTH TO TELL, he is a little too young at the moment – but the thought has crossed my mind that my son might one day want to do a bit of inventing himself, just like his Dad. So I've been looking around for some construction sets to help him get started.

If you search in the 'traditional shops' you can still buy wooden blocks, if you're lucky. And Lego, of course, is fabulous – although the sets do seem to be rather more prescriptive than I remember (and I'm not that old yet), in that there's not much choice in what you can make; the general set appears to have been taken over by the 'kit' to make a specific item.

There's a case to be argued that such construction sets simply limit the possibilities for a fertile imagination, but at least Lego is still out there. How many great British inventors learned their mechanics on Meccano, Exacto or Erector, or learned about angles by building with Tinkertoys, or built models with Philiform or Bayko?

It's all gone now.

What are the next generation going to experiment with? Where can you even buy a clockwork motor, for pity's sake?

Even Hornby have come to realise that small boys are no longer their market. It's the small boys of forty and more years ago who they market to today, with ever more exclusive 'limited edition' models that are for too fragile for children to play with.

Strangely enough it's that evil Pied Piper, the computer – which has lured children away to its mind-numbing games and chatrooms – that may yet prove their salvation. E-Bay is full of Meccano sets being sold off by the uninterested, who've had them in their attics for years...

Snap them up while you can – and give them to your children while they are still young enough to be saved!

Sincerely, Richard

RICHARD LITTLE, WRTI Chairman

INVENTORATOR Larry Elliott

Better design requires better products...

CREATIVE EFFORT SHOULD HELP TO IMPROVE MANUFACTURED GOODS, NOT JUST TART THEM UP

Continued from last month

ONLY 8% of [British] firms have a process for managing design, and 69% spend nothing on design. A mere 32% of companies have developed a new product or service in the past three years. The prime minister is keen on lecturing the rest of Europe on the need to save money on the common agricultural policy so that it can be diverted to research and development instead: what he rarely mentions is that Britain's R&D record is worse than that of France or Germany, let alone the United States. British R&D is concentrated in pharmaceuticals and aerospace (two in every three pounds spent).

Avant garde

Nor does the public sector set an example. The government is comfortably the biggest purchaser of goods and services, spending £125bn every year, but it is nine times more likely to base its procurement decision on cost, not quality.

All this puts into perspective the chancellor's paean to the avant garde of Britain's new knowledge-based workforce at the London Design Festival. "I don't need to tell you that our creative and design industries, from digital electronics and communications to film, design and fashion – employing two million people – already account for more of our economy than anyone else's," Brown said. In the last eight years growth had been twice as fast as the rest of the economy, exports had grown four times as fast and job creation was three times as fast.

What is also true is that Britain remains a low-skill, low-wage, low-productivity economy. The real story

of late has been the return of the Upstairs Downstairs economy, with four million domestic servants, employed by one in 10 households. There is a long way to go before Brown can fulfil his vision of a Britain 'future-proofed' for long-term success through harnessing design.

At root, it's the familiar story of Britain having a few top performers and a long tail of laggards. There's evidence a-plenty to show that as consumers become richer they place a higher premium on design, and that those companies that have cottoned on to that fact can reap a tidy reward. The Design Council found that those companies that embraced design after mentoring saw turnover rise by 14% and profits by 9%. Investment was not astronomical: the average spend was £113,000. Moreover, design-intensive publicly quoted companies outperformed on the stock exchange by a hefty 200% margin.

History is replete with examples of great British design – from the E-type Jag to the Dyson vacuum cleaner. Brown had a breakfast last November attended by Sir Terence Conran and Sir Norman Foster – exemplars of the idea that good design is good for the bottom line. But for every E-type there's been an Austin Allegro, and for every new terminal at Stansted there are 10 bland housing estates. ■

Concluded next month

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● Larry Elliott is economics editor of *The Guardian* newspaper and author of *Age of Insecurity*, ISBN 1859842259. Reprinted with the kind permission of the author from *The Guardian*, 21 November 2005. www.guardian.co.uk

DATA PROTECTION ISSUES - 3

Continued from last month

THE 'DATA CONTROLLER' is any person who (alone or jointly with others) decides the purposes for which, and the manner in which, the personal data are processed. The data controller will therefore be the legal entity which exercises ultimate control over the personal data. Individual managers or employees are not data controllers.

The data controller is responsible for:

- **Personal data about identifiable living individuals.**
- **Deciding how and why personal data are processed.**
- **Information handling: complying with the eight data protection principles.**
- **Acquiring 'data subjects' consent for processing sensitive data.**
- **Existing procedures for handling sensitive or personal data.**
- **Security measures to safeguard personal data.**
- **Notification.**

ROSANNA COOPER CLARIFIES THE LEGAL POSITION FOR INVENTORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

The 'data processor' on the other hand, is a person or organisation who processes the data on behalf of the data controller, but who is not an employee of the data controller. The data processor might be the company you pass your payroll to.

What are the obligations where data processors are used?

The Data Protection Act requires a company to ensure that all external data processors provide an appropriate level of security when processing personal data on the company's behalf.

Who is a data subject?

Let's now look at the rights of the data subject under the DPA.

A 'data subject' is any living individual who is the subject of personal data. There are no age restrictions on who qualifies as a data subject, but the definition does not extend to individuals who are deceased.

A data subject has rights including the right to access to his or her data held by a data controller. This is described as 'data access' – which is a request by an individual to be granted access to, and be provided with a copy of, any personal data which an organisation holds about him or her. This includes the right to be provided with information about the purposes for which the organisation processes those personal data, the source of the data, the identity of any person to whom the data have been disclosed and the logic behind any automated decision making processes.

A 'subject access request' is a request to be granted access to certain personal data which an organisation holds about an individual. This includes the right to be provided with information which I will describe in next month's article. ■

Continued next month

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● *Dr Rosanna Cooper is a partner at RT Coopers, a commercial law firm focusing on inventors and business start-ups.*

(RTC)

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BBC

Do **you** need **cash** for your **business idea**?

Dragons' Den gives entrepreneurs the chance to pitch their proposals to a panel of the UK's most successful business people. They have pledged to invest their own money in the best ideas.

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email: dragonsden@bbc.co.uk

call: **09011 110 825** (calls cost 25p)

or visit our website at www.bbc.co.uk/dragonsden

HUMORESQUE

- If you look up the word 'inventor' on Google, you receive "about 69,000,000" results in just 0.26 seconds.
- The word 'invention' gives you 130,000,000 results in only 0.11 seconds.
- If you start trawling through all those results now...

When you've only the walls to talk to

ROMSEY BUSINESSWOMAN Deborah Wilson has invented a product which revolutionises the way visitors assimilate cultural and historical information at art galleries, heritage sites and museums around the world – and all due to a chance conversation ten years ago.

Designed in such a way that information can be searched for and received in formats appropriate to either adults or children, The Talking Walls™ prototype is undergoing consumer trials at Dunster Castle in Somerset. The British Museum has also expressed an interest.

Televsual time travel

The idea for The Talking Walls™ evolved when a National Trust volunteer mentioned that children found it difficult to imagine what something they see today originally looked like, or how it changed.

The Talking Walls™ solves this problem by packaging history in a visually rich application devised as a 'virtual history edutainment' for kiosks, PDAs, digital TV and DVDs.

The main navigational tool is

the unique Route Matrix™, which recreates specific time-slices of a particular space, forming a virtual 4D matrix that allows users to explore different eras.

"There is no better way of enabling our young people to become better informed about their cultural heritage," Deborah said.

"I want The Talking Walls™ to be not just a learning experience for children doing history projects, but entertainment as well, for everyone."

Deborah, who is currently seeking finance or joint venture partners to take the prototype further, also runs a CAD visualisation and training consultancy, helping architects, engineers and inventors create 3D visuals of their designs to use as marketing tools, and training them in use of the software. ■

Source: www.solent.ac.uk/news

● **Deborah Wilson, managing director**
The Talking Walls (UK) Ltd
The Studio, 1 Crescent Road
North Baddesley, Southampton SO52 9HU
Tel/Fax: 023 8041 0628
enquiries@thetalkingwalls.co.uk
www.thetalkingwalls.co.uk

Deborah was presented with an Award for Commercial Viability by WRTI Patron Trevor Baylis at Innovention 2004, for her development work on The Talking Walls™ (below).



STAPLE DIET

IT IS PARTICULARLY difficult in keyhole surgery to carry out delicate manipulations such as closing off blood vessels and surgical incisions. But now, self-bending surgical staples which form an alloy suture that can hold a wound closed without pinching or damaging tissue have been developed by Professor Sir Alfred Cuschieri and colleagues in medicine, bioengineering and metallurgy at the University of Dundee.

The 5mm-long staples are made out of nickel-titanium shape-memory alloy. U-shaped at room temperature, the staples form a loop to keep a wound closed when heated to 70°C by an electric current.

● www.dundee.ac.uk

Source: *New Scientist* magazine

NEW ENGINE UNVEILED

RCV ENGINES Ltd is best known globally for its range of model aircraft engines, but the unveiling of a prototype 125cc Rotating Cylinder Valve (RCV) scooter engine could put this Dorset company on the map in a far more significant way.

The new engine is ideally suited to sub-250cc applications such as motorcycles, scooters and power tools, where it offers 100PS/litre performance and manufacturing costs akin to those of a two-stroke. International demand for small capacity motorcycle engines is huge, with markets in the far east accounting for 22m annually.

Running well on alternative fuels such as kerosene and bio-fuels, the RCV also has applications in the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle market.

The RCV shares the same induction, compression, power and

exhaust strokes found in conventional four-stroke engines, but with differences in the manner intake air and exhaust gases are induced into and expelled from the cylinder.

RCV technology overcame durability and cost limitations to offer a simple-to-manufacture, high-performance, low-emission alternative to the conventional two- and four-stroke engine.

RCV Engines Ltd was formed with the objective of developing and exploiting its patented Rotating Cylinder Valve engine technology. Current projects include a 125cc engine developed for Motive Power Industry (MPI) in Taiwan. ■

● **RCV Engines Ltd, 4 Haviland Road**
Ferndown Industrial Estate,
Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7RF
Tel: 01202 877044 Fax: 01202 871836
www.rcvengines.com

WRTI member Mick Gordon tells Inventique readers how he successfully gained a £30,000 SEEDA PoCKeT Award

I am from an IT background and ran a computer company in the Middle East for many years. My product idea came to me in 2004, when I visited my father in hospital and saw how difficult it was for staff and visitors to adhere to the required standards of hygiene.

It quickly became clear that my concept had many applications and I had soon identified 16 different markets. I tried to assess their potential by quantifying each market's size, identifying the relevant unique selling point (USP) for each one, and interviewing 70 key players under non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and soliciting their written feedback; some provided letters of support and intention to purchase, and the Health and Safety Executive wrote a letter detailing the many applications they saw for the product.

I set up a Sound Approach Ltd and began working full-time to bring the product – Klenz-pod™, a cleansing system for both the medical and commercial sectors – to market.

Knowledge PoCKeT

I was ready to start producing prototypes of both the Klenz-pod™ hardware and its consumables when I first heard about SEEDA's PoCKeT Award. It provides awards from £5,000 to £30,000 to innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for 'knowledge transfer' activities such as research and development at the proof-of-concept phase of commercialisation; the company must have a university as a partner.

Typical uses of a PoCKeT award include technical validation research, developing a prototype or demonstration, testing or reviewing the technology with experts, using university facilities or equipment, and commercial assessment (including analysis of competitor technologies). PoCKeT doesn't fund salary costs.

SEEDA allows up to 25% of the award to go towards development costs incurred with non-university contractors. If the resultant product

or service goes to market, 5% of profits it generates goes back to SEEDA until 150% of the initial amount awarded is re-paid. Should the product or service not materialise, the award amount is written off.

To save having to devise formal agreement documents between all the parties, SEEDA recommended that I use so-called Lambert agreements (model agreements supplied by the DTI to help SMEs and universities collaborate more effectively); I selected the Lambert 5 document because it appeared to me to offer the best protection.

INVENTORS LINKS

asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level3.asp?UserType=11&Level3=940

pvmc.bournemouth.ac.uk

www.cass.city.ac.uk

www.financesoutheast.com/desktopdefault.aspx?tabId=536

www.patentsandprototypes.co.uk

www.innovation.gov.uk/lambertagreements

www.seeda.co.uk

www.simfonec.co.uk/leap

www.seeda.co.uk

www.seeda.co.uk

www.seeda.co.uk

● The 'Inventors Links' page at www.wrti.org.uk contains links to these and many other useful websites.

Basing my selection criteria on attitude, perceived competency and cost – the universities' prices varied considerably – I identified those I wanted to deal with after obtaining equivalent quotations from the private sector. I ended up visiting six universities and three design companies, viewing their facilities and meeting their managers.

I finally selected Patent Plan in East Wittering for the patent drafting and product design, the Prototype and Virtual Manufacturing Centre at Bournemouth University for prototype production, and the Caparo Innovation Centre at Wolverhampton University for the market research.

Patents for Klenz-pod™ are now pending; the Patent Office performed a 'Section 17' search which confirms that Klenz-pod™ can be protected by at least 29 different claims, in addition to design patents.



The market research has been completed (including due diligence on my own research) and concludes that Klenz-pod™ could command a market of £200m per annum within three years of launch.

Keep on keeping on

The actual process of obtaining the SEEDA award was impressively fast; just six weeks from submitting the application forms to having the award confirmed, including a 20-minute presentation to the awards committee and a Christmas break.

Of course, all the work outlined above has swallowed up the £30,000 SEEDA award. However, I'm now entering the Klenz-pod™ business model into both the LEAP 2006 and Oxford University business plan competitions; such awards can provide resources and credibility to potential licensees.

My advice to anyone wishing to apply for a SEEDA PoCKeT Award (or any other kind) is as follows:

● **Provide clear, succinct but detailed information to validate your business case.**

● **Append relevant details (letters of endorsement, market analysis, patent search results etc) to your application form – the better the documentation, the less time award committees need to spend seeking retrospective clarification.**

● **View more than one university and know why you have chosen the one you intend to work with.**

It's taken a huge effort to get this far, but I'm very confident and determined this will be a success. Good luck with your own ideas. ■

© Mick Gordon 2006

● **Mick Gordon, director
Sound Approach Ltd
mickgordon@yahoo.com**



BOXING CLEVER

DOWNLOADING MUSIC FILES to your PC is all very well, but what happens if the hard drive fails, taking your entire collection with it?

Evesham Technology in Worcestershire is launching a music storage device called the MBox that has two identical 160-gigabyte hard drives. The device copies files from your PC to both drives simultaneously, and can also use a Wi-Fi transmitter to stream music to receivers around the home. ■

Source: *New Scientist magazine*, 18 Feb'06

● Evesham Technology, Vale Park, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1TD
Tel: 08707 299 785 Fax: 08707 299 796
customer.care@evesham.com
www.evesham.com

DESIGN FROM NATURE

THE WRTI IS delighted to announce that Julian Vincent, Professor of Biomimetics at the University of Bath's Department of Engineering, has agreed to write a regular column for *Inventique*. Biomimetics is the concept of taking ideas from nature and implementing them in another technology, such as design, engineering or computing.

Professor Vincent, who has published and co-authored hundreds of papers and journals on the subject, established the Centre for Biomimetic and Natural Technologies at Bath with G Jeronimidis in 1991. His work is internationally recognised and he is in demand as a lecturer and consultant to industry.

● Centre for Biomimetic and Natural Technologies, Department of Mechanical Engineering, The University of Bath, BATH BA2 7AYUK
Biomimetics@bath.ac.uk www.bath.ac.uk/mech-eng/biomimetics

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON** spin-out company Perpetuum has attracted £2.2 million in further investment. Venture capital company Quester has committed £1.4 million in funding, with additional investment coming from Top Technology Ventures and SULIS, a university challenge fund.

Perpetuum produces innovative micro-generators which harvest energy from vibrations to provide power without batteries or external electrical supplies, and has trialled pre-production units with major military, petrochemical and water utility customers. ■

www.southerntechnologynetwork.co.uk

● **INVENTIQUE SUBSCRIBER** Yuriy Skomorovskiy, general manager of the 2nd International Salon of Inventions and New Technologies invites entries to this year's trade show in Sevastopol, Ukraine. The Salon runs from 27-29 September.

Last year's show attracted over 5,000 visitors and included entries from nine countries including Belgium, Germany, Hungary, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine. The judges, chaired by Professor Pierre Fumiere, president of the international jury of Eureka in Brussels, studied almost 130 products and awarded 40 prizes. ■

● **Contact Yuri for a registration form:**
laukar1@optima.com.ua

● **THE PATENT OFFICE** is seeking the views of the business community on whether it should continue to examine trade mark applications for clashes with earlier registered marks (known as examination on 'relative' grounds). Its significance is that a new trade mark application clashing with earlier registrations can be refused by the Patent Office. ■

● **The consultation closes on 17 May:**
www.patent.gov.uk/about/consultations/relativegrounds/index.htm
For further information, contact
Louise White: relative@patent.gov.uk

ANDREW'S ALL LIT UP

WRTI MEMBER Andrew Dack's multi-coloured Water Vortex Lamp™ is now on sales at Argos stores. The Boystuff website reviewed it as "a lava lamp and bubble lamp with a touch of whirlpool".

"My Water Vortex Lamp™ looks simple enough, but the technology to make it work properly took a long time to perfect," Andrew said. Once an inventor of products for The Gadget Shop chain, he has a new product launch later this year.

Marketed through an agency in Leeds, the Water Vortex Lamp™ (patent pending) has taken only two years to get to market, although an earlier project failed after five years' development work.

Andrew has a number of his lamps available; interested readers can buy one directly from him for just £35.99+p&p. ■

● dackfamily@aol.com

www.argos.co.uk (searchword: vortex)



"I hate quotations. Tell me what you know..." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

www.wrti.org.uk

THE INVENTORS WEBSITE

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE www.inventors-showcase.co.uk

Site for sore i's...

NEW WEB-BASED SALES AND INVESTMENT PORTAL

INVENTORS-SHOWCASE has created a combined website and retail outlet for inventors to showcase their innovative ideas to investors, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, trade buyers and the general public.

The portal gives inventors the opportunity to exhibit and market their products by selling to the retail market via the direct sales page, or in bulk via the trade supply page. In addition, votes generated on the site's *Invention of the Month* page provide invaluable evidence of product popularity.

Launched in January, the company was created last year by successful businesswomen Casey Jones and Dawn Sargent, who had previously grown a training company from nothing to a £1m-turnover company employing thirty staff in just eight years: it arose out of the familiar realisation that many people have innovative ideas, but didn't know where to find help and support to turn the ideas into saleable products.

Uniquely, Inventors-showcase structures itself round performance-related profit predictions on sales of finished products, not on fees. Similarly, when arranging an

THE FIRST Inventors-showcase exhibition will be held at Ramada Penns Hall Hotel, Penns Lane, Walmley, Birmingham B76 1LH on Saturday 10 June.

Exhibition stands may be hired for £120 (2m single) and £180 (4m double), with Power Point access available for £10.

● **Further details and booking form:** www.inventors-showcase.co.uk

investment the company seeks a first option on sales and marketing rights of finished products rather than charging a fee.

Inventors-showcase is also seeking to encourage new innovators by starting a web-based Young Inventors Club.

"Things have worked incredibly well so far," said co-founder Casey Jones. "We have overcome initial resistance to gain the confidence of many inventors, who have placed their products in our hands for maximum exposure and sales. We also have investors on board." ■

● **Inventors-showcase Ltd**
12a Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield
Birmingham B73 5TD
Tel: 0044 (0) 121 355 8181
info@inventors-showcase.co.uk
www.inventors-showcase.co.uk

MAGAZINE OF THE MONTH



Hampshire Business Magazine

A monthly spin-out publication from the Daily Echo, Hampshire Business Magazine is an authoritative source of news and information covering the business, industrial and commercial issues affecting the region's economic heart. Available from newsagents across the south, it is also available online at the Daily Echo's website, www.thisisbusiness.co.uk.

The free Hampshire Business supplement is published every Tuesday with the Daily Echo.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

www.patentlyridiculous.com

A treasure trove of wacky and wonderful real-life inventions, including some of the most unique, odd and awe-inspiring patent applications seen over the last century, illustrated with the inventors' own diagrams.

WRTI PATRON Trevor Baylis OBE **CHAIRMAN** Richard Little chairman@wrti.co.uk

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