

# Inventique®

The newsletter of Wessex Round Table of Inventors December 2005

**Congratulations to LifeLock.co.uk, JenAct.co.uk, TalkingProducts.co.uk**

## The triple echo...

WRTI'S ENTREPRENEURS FIND THEIR SILVER LINING

**T**HE WRTI made it three out of three at the British Invention Show, Alexandra Palace in October, when innovative businessmen Richard Little, Joe Silver and Brian Stickley were each awarded Silver Medals in the *British Invention of the Year* category for the excellence of their products.

Richard's microwave-powered UV sanitisation technology, Joe's

pocket-sized room security device and Brian's range of audio labels – which include promotional products that really do speak to the customer – are now being marketed both at home and abroad through their own companies' websites.

The trio's success follows that of WRTI member Brian Flynn, who was joint *Overall Winner* at last year's show with his AutoCone. ■

Next WRTI meeting  
**WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER**

Dr Andrew Upton of Southampton Solent University and Graham Walker of Southampton Business School will present: *'Inventions to Businesses – how can supporting organisations help you?'* This will be followed by an *Inventor's Clinic*.

Room HC 017, Herbert Collins Building, Southampton Solent University, commencing at 6.30pm. Guests welcome.

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

## SYMETRICA RADIATES CASH

SOUTHAMPTON COMPANY Symetrica Limited has gained a £500,000 second round investment from the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), Sulis Seedcorn Fund and Tennants Ventures.

NESTA was the seed investor in Symetrica last year with an *Invention and Innovation Award* of £99,000 to aid the development of a unique 'drive-through' scanner, capable of screening vehicles and cargo for radioactive material at speed in order to improve security at ports and airports (*Inventique*, Nov'04 issue).

Symetrica has rapidly established a technology leadership position for advanced radioactive detection devices with defence and security applications. Direct comparisons of the company's technology has

demonstrated a 10x improvement in capability over existing products.

This performance has won Symetrica a place in a consortium bidding for the Advanced Spectroscopic Portal development programme currently under evaluation by the US Department of Homeland Security on a dedicated test site in the Nevada Desert.

Other products incorporating Symetrica's technology – from hand-held devices to active interrogation 'walls' for suspect cargo screening – are under discussion with various major partners.

To put these discussions into perspective, the estimated potential market for hand-held detectors in the USA alone is £250m over a 5-year period, and £500m for Advanced Spectroscopic Portals.

Symetrica's advanced radioactive detection technology was developed by Dr David Ramsden, a physicist with an international reputation in radiation imaging techniques, while at the University of Southampton's Department of Physics & Astronomy.

The University have been founder shareholders since Symetrica was spun out in 2002 by SETsquared, a collaboration between the universities of Bath, Bristol, Southampton and Surrey to facilitate the establishment and growth of technology-based companies. ■

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Source: [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)

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

THIS MONTH'S column is dedicated to Ken, a lovely man who helped the small team at my company (JenAct Ltd) turn our ideas into prototypes.

All inventors – or at least, all inventors who are more theoretical than practical – need someone like Ken. He was one of those unsung heroes, 'The Man Who Can'.

Ken would listen to our "what if..." conversations and come back a few days later with an example of exactly what we thought we wanted. Then he would patiently watch as it was tested and its faults revealed and a new "what if..." wish-list was prepared. He would then dismantle the whole thing and make another version, and then (you guessed it) yet another without any complaints, simply because he knew how 'his inventors' operated.

But here comes the sting in this particular tale. Ken spent several years helping us develop an innovative technology that could – if the NHS ever considered giving it a chance – cut down on hospital cross-infections (as documented pretty convincingly in *The Lancet*).

Ken died last month from a hospital-acquired infection in a Southampton hospital which had turned the same invention down flat two years ago – on the basis that it was unproven. It's the ultimate, awful irony.

How terrible that this solution was rejected due to a total lack of foresight and common-sense, while we have lost a good friend whose efforts will, one day, help others in this situation.

I am convinced that Frank Whittle's Jet Engine, the Bouncing Bomb and Hovercraft could not have happened without a whole army of Kens. We're devastated to have lost ours, and send our most sincere condolences to his family.

Sincerely, Richard

**RICHARD LITTLE, WRTI Chairman**

**INVENTORATOR** Mark Jaques

# Diagnose that...

RESULTS OF THE WRTI'S IDEA DIAGNOSTIC TRIAL

**L**AST JUNE, I asked WRTI members to take part in the trial of a new online assessment tool developed for the Innovation and Technology Team at Business Link Wessex, *writes Mark Jaques*.

The objective of the IDEA Diagnostic is to assess both the business support surrounding innovative ideas and to provide advice and guidance for those wishing to commercially exploit their idea.

The trial was in three stages, the first being the registration phase, which was combined with a skills assessment survey. 43 WRTI members registered to take part in the trial, of whom 34 completed the skills assessment survey.

The second stage was to use the online diagnostic, which 22 members completed.

The third stage of the trial was to complete a feedback form and to make suggestions for improving the relevance of the diagnostic: 20 members completed this task.

(In retrospect, separating the trial into three stages over-complicated matters; combining them into a single task which could be completed on a single visit to the diagnostics website appears a more user-friendly solution.)

## Positive negatives

75% of those completing the trial were positive about the structure, sequence and relevance of the diagnostic questions; almost two-thirds of the respondents thought the fact-sheets and links useful.

However, although the diagnostic itself appears to have been well received, the feedback on its output was less favourable: although only 11% of the sample thought that the results were not useful to them, 67% were neither positive nor negative. Respondents

also suggested that more examples or case studies were required, and that the re-direction to other websites was neither specific nor relevant enough.

When asked about the benchmark Pass Mark, 11% considered it too high while 22% considered it too low. Although the concept of a Pass Mark is not a positive one (because you can fall below it), and despite several respondents suggesting that one idea cannot be compared against another, the overwhelming majority (90%) did feel that their received score was a fair measure of the amount of work remaining to commercialise their idea.

## On a high

Nine WRTI members scored above the benchmark on the diagnostic, representing 41% – an extremely high figure when compared to results for a similar trial carried out on general enquires to Business Link Wessex, which showed that only 5% to 10% of those with an idea were at a stage where support could be offered.

The conclusions from the IDEA Diagnostic trial are that the measure of the maturity of an idea seems fair, although the diagnostic needs more useful output.

It can also be safely asserted that members of an inventors club are four times more likely to produce a well-supported idea than the general enquiry population. ■

© Mark Jaques 2005

● *Mark Jaques is an enterprise researcher at the Centre for Enterprise Research and Innovation, Portsmouth Business School.*

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# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS-4

Continued from last month...

**C**OPYRIGHT protection in the UK arises by an automatic operation of law. There is no system of registration (although copyright registration can be obtained in the USA for certain copyright works).

Copyright protection can be afforded to various aspects of work such as literary, dramatic and artistic works, including research notes, books, recipes, computer programs, typographical arrangements of published works including articles or lecture notes. For copyright to subsist in a work there has to be some element of originality and the test is the degree of skill, labour and judgement expended by the author in the creation of the work.

The author of the work owns copyright, unless the work was created during the course of employment, in which case the copyright belongs to the employer. Copyright lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years.

A company should, as part of its good housekeeping rules, place copyright notices on all original, texts, scripts, sketches and diagrams and other copyright work. For e-businesses, a copyright notice should also be placed on a website.

If a third party infringes copyright material – whether it is the copying of text from a website or a published article – the owner of the copyright has the right to bring an infringement action to stop the copying of such material. The remedies are the same as described in previous months.

## ROSANNA COOPER CLARIFIES THE LEGAL POSITION FOR INVENTORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

### Brands

Goodwill and reputation protect the brand of a business. A company can bring an injunction for the unauthorised use of its unregistered trade mark to stop a third party from passing off its name.

In order to succeed in a passing off action, a company must have the necessary goodwill and reputation and satisfy certain other criteria. One of the most important of these is that the company bringing the claim must be able to show confusion on the part of the public (usually achieved by using survey evidence, which is generally expensive to collate).

The remedies available are the same as for a trade mark infringement action. (For a recent case on brands see: [www.rtcoopers.com/deception\\_or\\_confusion.php](http://www.rtcoopers.com/deception_or_confusion.php).)

### Confidentiality/Know-How

Confidentiality protects other information not capable of IP protection, such as an invention before a patent application is filed, know-how (including commercial information), recipes, trade secrets, processes and product improvements.

In order for an invention to be protected by the law of confidential information, the information must have the necessary quality of confidence. It is therefore crucial for the owner of an invention to enter into a confidentiality agreement at the outset of any negotiations relating to an invention.

Such an agreement must specify:

- What information has to be kept confidential.
- How long for.
- The purpose for which the information is to be disclosed.
- Any other limitations placed on the use of the information.

The remedies for breach of confidential information are the same as for IP infringement.

### Insurance

IPRs are valuable assets and as such should be protected to the fullest extent. Litigation can be very expensive whether a company is bringing or defending an action.

There are specialist types of legal expenses insurance policies available for safeguarding or defending against:

- Infringement of IPRs.
- Actual or alleged breach of contract.
- Defending a challenge to the validity of the insured's IPRs (e.g. the validity of a patent). ■

### Concluded 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.

### HUMORESQUE from Dave Challice [dchallice@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:dchallice@bournemouth.ac.uk)

GARY AND WAYNE, day-release students on an engineering course, were staring up at a flagpole. A female tutor asked what they were doing.

"We're supposed to find out what the height of this flagpole is," said Gary. "But the trouble is, we don't have a ladder."

The tutor took a spanner from her pocket, quickly loosened a few bolts and laid the pole down. Then she pulled a tape measure from her handbag, took a measurement, announced: "Six metres exactly," and walked off.

Wayne shook his head in disgust. "That's just like a woman," he sneered. "We ask for the height, and she goes and gives us the length!"

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## £7.5m ULTra boost

**I**T TAKES A certain kind of courage to address a huge and growing problem that has consistently baffled everyone and is now common across the world. But that didn't stop Professor Martin Lowson and his team at Bristol University's Advanced Transport Group from setting out in 1995 to find "the best form of public transport for the 21st century".

Now the British Airports Authority (BAA) has chosen the ULTra Personal Rapid Transit system – developed by Bristol-based Advanced Transport Systems (ATS), a company spun out of the university group – to provide a pilot system linking passenger car parks to the terminal areas at Heathrow. The deal includes a BAA investment of £7.5million into ATS in return for 25% of the equity.

Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) provides on-demand driverless travel



An ULTra Personal Rapid Transit module gleams in the late Autumn sunshine. Bristol's Advanced Transport Systems has received a £7.5m investment from BAA.

using its own guideway network. ULTra offers an advanced form of PRT which offers effective, low-cost, sustainable transport for airports, cities and developments worldwide.

Mike Clasper, CEO of BAA, said: "We believe that PRT offers an opportunity to improve the local environment and provide better service quality for our passengers. BAA are delighted to take the opportunity to invest in the ULTra PRT system, which is clearly leading the world in this exciting and innovative technology".

Martin Lowson, CEO of ATS,

said: "The idea is that it will become the dominant form of transport for this century, just as the car was for the 20th century."

ATS was one of first awardees of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), gaining an *Invention and Innovation* Award of £75,000 in 2000 followed by a further £125,000 Award in 2003. ■

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Tel: 01454 414700 [www.atsltd.co.uk](http://www.atsltd.co.uk)  
Source: [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)

PHOTO: DAVID BURGESS

### GHOST IN THE MACHINE

**THE RUNNER** of the first 4-minute mile, Roger Bannister, can be seen racing alongside today's athletes thanks to software being developed by Roke Manor Research of Romsey, near Southampton.

By calculating the camera angles in vintage footage, RMR's *Ghost Runner* system lets broadcasters project runners of old onto today's athletics events.

Founded in 1956, Roke Manor Research is a Siemens-owned contract R&D company developing electronic sensor technologies and radio communication systems (including 4G research into bandwidth-efficient multiple access technology).

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Source: *New Scientist* magazine, 26 Nov'05

## UR n@ is in the trap

**RETRIEVING DEAD** or injured vermin from traps – surely one of the most unsavoury of housekeeping tasks – is set for a high-tech makeover.

Instead of someone having to make regular check of traps to see they if contain a dead rat or mouse, the novel trap sends out a text message to summon a pest controller. By ensuring the trap is emptied as soon as the animal is caught, it can be reset quickly, so ensuring more vermin are caught.

The idea comes from pest control firm Rentokil, which commissioned Wyless of London and Radio-Tech of Epping, Essex, to build the trap.

Nigel Binns, Rentokil's chief biologist, wanted a trap that would kill only target animals, and do so humanely. It would then alert a pest controller that the trap needed attention.

Inside its white plastic enclosure, a pressure pad senses the weight of an animal's paw, and closes the door if the footfall matches the weight of a rat or mouse. Squirrels or small rabbits are spared, he says. Gas released from a carbon dioxide capsule then kills the vermin humanely.

Once the capsule has been set off, a built-in cellphone unit – in effect a mobile minus its microphone, display and speaker – sends a text to the nearest pest controller.

Binns reckons computer data centres will be among the major users of the new system, as vermin often chew the warm cables running under the floors. "The rats have caused massive network failures in such places," Binns says. "Constant monitoring will lessen the chance of that happening." ■

Source: *New Scientist* magazine, 17 Nov'05

## INNOVATION CLINICS

Are you thinking about developing a new product or process? Have you invented something and don't know what to do next?

Through its series of free Innovation Clinics, Business Link Wessex provides confidential and impartial guidance on such subjects as investigating an innovative idea, developing a new product or process, working with universities, exploiting inventions and intellectual property rights.

Innovation clinics are held in the Bournemouth, Portsmouth and Southampton regions each Wednesday from 4pm to 6pm.

● Events Hotline: 08454 58 85 57  
Book online at:  
[www.businesslinkwessex.co.uk/events](http://www.businesslinkwessex.co.uk/events)

## ITV show looking for inventive Mums

**ITV 1 IS LAUNCHING** a new daily one-hour live and interactive entertainment show that celebrates the extraordinary things that British people do in their lives.

One area that the show will be promoting is 'mums and their inventions'. Since necessity is the mother of invention, more and more mums are coming up with solutions to every-day living, inspired by their own experiences.

Every week the show will invite three mums into the studio to pitch their idea. All the ideas featured will have solid commercial potential.

The producers will then ask the audience (or viewers at home) to vote on which they think is the

best idea, help the winner present her idea and pitch to manufacturers, and follow their progress through the series.

In addition to these new ideas, we are also keen to talk to mums who have already had an invention patented, who can offer advice to the other mums pitching their ideas on the show.

If this is something that would interest any of the female members of the WRTI, or female readers of *Inventique*, they should immediately get in touch on the number below. ■

● Meryl Yankelson  
Assistant Producer,  
So Television  
Tel: 020 7960 2034

## EUROSTATIC?

THE 153-PAGE *Science and technology in Europe: a statistical pocketbook*, published by the EU's statistical arm, Eurostat, reveals that the 25 members of the EU are investing proportionally less in research (1.93% of their combined GDP in 2001) than their main rivals – the USA (2.64% in 2002) and Japan (3.12% in 2002).

The EU is also falling short of its own targets of investing 3% of combined GDP into research and of

financing two-thirds of R&D expenditure through the private sector (the 2001 figure stood at 55% of the total).

The EU's overall research investment more than doubled in the space of a decade. The trouble is, so did that of its major competitors. So, following a review earlier this year of the EU's 2000 Lisbon Strategy to turn Europe into the world's most competitive knowledge economy within the space of a decade, EU leaders have decided to re-launch the strategy, vowing to reach the 3% target. **Source: R&D magazine**

## Funded research opportunities with US Department of Defence

A FREE WORKSHOP for UK companies and academic institutions is to be held on 9 December at Cody Technology Park, Farnborough from 9am to 4pm.

Large and small companies and academics with a successful track record in innovative scientific research and development may have a critical contribution to make to the defence and security requirements of the US government.

This free one-day workshop will explain the opportunities and mechanisms for applying for funding in response to solicitations from the US Department of Defense (DoD).

You will hear about the Boeing assistance programme for UK companies and academic

institutions, which can offer guidance on the process of bidding for funded research contracts with the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). It will also offer an introduction to other DoD research procurements, focusing on typical tender documents and presenting examples from successful applications.

DARPA is the central research and development organization of US DoD, managing and directing selected basic and applied research and development projects. Risk and payoff are both very high, and success may provide dramatic advances for traditional military roles and missions. DARPA's budget for 2005 was some \$3bn.

Both large and small companies, and academics are eligible to apply for DoD R&D funding.

The Workshop is run by the DDA – part of the MOD promoting knowledge transfer between the defence and civil sectors – in conjunction with Boeing, SEEDA and Farnborough Enterprise Hub. It will be presented by a US-based expert from Boeing through the MOD's Industrial Participation Programme, and there will be opportunities to network during and after the event. ■

● To register for the workshop, contact Anne Norman by 2 December giving full details and areas of interest.  
Fax: 01980 614518  
[a1norman@dda.gov.uk](mailto:a1norman@dda.gov.uk)

# www.wrti.org.uk

THE INVENTORS WEBSITE

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE** UK Trade & Investment Team

## Trading places...

HELPING UK BUSINESSES TO EXPAND OVERSEAS

**T**HE UK TRADE & Investment Team South East is a government organisation dedicated to helping companies in southeast England (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex) to trade overseas. The service is government subsidised; some elements are free of charge.

For companies already exporting (or simply contemplating it), UKTI Southeast combines the expertise of local international trade advisers with the national resources of the DTI and the global network of trade development officers at the Foreign Office to help win overseas business.

They also provide bespoke research into the potential markets for your goods and services, carried out by a commercial officer based in the target market. Companies can research particular sectors in different countries, including aerospace, automotive, bioscience, business support services, creative industries, education & training, environment, healthcare, information and marine technology.

The UKTI Southeast's *Passport to Export* programme brings many services together in a cost-effective

package designed for new or less experienced exporters. It provides all the relevant tools to help develop an export strategy, and assists in accessing any training required, be it in administration, documentation or cultural awareness. It also provides help before a visit to an overseas market and evaluates the findings on return.

Companies will be in direct online contact with the team, who help devise a plan for breaking into a market, schedule meetings with potential customers, agents or distributors, give advice on the local business culture, and even help find a reliable interpreter.

Other advantages include networking with key market contacts in the impressive surroundings of UK Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, attending major international trade shows or taking part in the many British trade missions that visit overseas markets each year: UKTI Southeast will be there to assist you every step of the way. ■

● **Local international trade adviser**  
**UK Trade & Investment Team South East**  
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**www.uktisoutheast.com**

### WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

**www.inventorsdigest.com**

Publishers of the USA's only inventors magazine, *Inventors' Digest* also produce a free e-newsletter.

### BOOK OF THE MONTH

**The Fellowship:  
the story of a revolution**

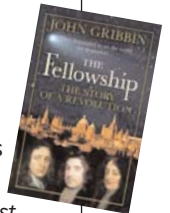
by John Gribbin

Allen Lane £20.00

ISBN 0713997451 352 pages

"A study of the beginnings of Britain's most famous brains trust, the Royal Society... This a crowded story of politics, science and opportunism. Like all good books, it provokes more curiosity than it can sate."

– Tim Radford, *The Guardian*.



### TOP OF THE CLASS

The most creative countries, derived from the Global Creativity Index compiled by Richard Florida and Irene Tingah, which ranks countries according to factors such as R&D expenditure, number of patents, and how tolerant a country is.

● Source: *New Scientist* magazine  
29 October 2005

1 Sweden	9 Norway
2 Japan	10 Germany
3 Finland	11 Canada
4 USA	12 Australia
5 Switzerland	13 Belgium
6 Denmark	14 Israel
7 Iceland	15 UK
8 Netherlands	

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