

GIBSON INDEX NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011 – JANUARY 2012: Combined Issue No. 77

Your Monthly e-Newsletter on British Enterprise and Innovation

Welcome to the UK's most comprehensive and best-read Newsletter on Small Technology Companies, Academic Enterprise and Latest Innovation

The new head of the **Technology Strategy Board** is to be **Phil Smith**, former head of technology supplier **Cisco**, who has been appointed chair of the TSB.

Mr Smith will hold the four-year post from the start of December 2011, receiving an honorary salary for his duties of just over £15,000 a year. Now Mr Smith may well be the ideal man for the job, or the best man who applied, or he may just be the cheapest option.

However, why did the **UK Government** ensure that an experience executive with *serial startup* and *SME commercialization experience* was recruited to the post? Once again the Government recruited a candidate from the safe 'Big Company or University' sector.

Unfortunately the TSB has not served the needs of the SME community as well as it should. The recent release of the full list of its grants revealed many worrying gaps in its assistance to high risk, high technology startup companies.

The TSB has re-launched the famous and much-admired DTI '**SMART**' award scheme for SMEs, but the amount of funding available is likely to be too small to make a difference. In addition, the TSB is unlikely to have the first-rate technology experts and networks that were once a prized feature of the old, unfairly maligned DTI.

The award scheme was responsible for helping to launch hundreds of brilliant SMEs. We should know – our database contains profiles of all 3000+ Smart Award SMEs for two decades from the late 1980s onwards. It includes successes such as **Brinker Technology** in Scotland, **Cardionetics Ltd** in Hampshire, **Destiny Pharma**, **Farfield Sensors**, **Nanoco plc**, **RF Engines** and **Ubisense plc**.

Recently the TSB gave grants to more than 200 'digital media' companies – many of them highly dubious – which often had no website, or contact detail, and destined to fail.

How this strategic error was made demands an enquiry. The many 'real-tech' SMEs that missed out on gaining a grant would certainly like to know..

www.gibson-index.com

The Newsletter is compiled and edited by **Marcus Gibson**, former *Financial Times* technology correspondent, who has been covering enterprise and innovation for more than 20 years. The Newsletter aims to highlight developments in at least 100+ companies each month. It is derived from the wide-ranging news-gathering operation that produces the [Gibson Index SME database](#), which now contains profiles on more than 47,000 UK-based technology SMEs.

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COMPANY OF THE MONTH

Camcon Oil Ltd develops 'intelligent tools' for oil and gas industry engineers

Having the formidable **Lord Young of Graffham** as non-executive chairman is no bad thing for a startup company and Camcon Oil, which has developed a gas lift tool called Apollo that can regulate the flow of injection gas downhole and enables changes without intervention, looks set for a solid future.

Its first product, **Apollo**, is a 'Digital Intelligent Artificial Lift' unit, launched to the market in November 2010. Gas injection is regularly used to help oil production – gas is injected into the production fluid as it enters the well, because an oil / gas mixture is less dense than just oil.

This makes it easier for the surrounding formation fluid pressure to push the production fluid up to the surface. The injection gas is pumped from the surface to the bottom of the well through the gap between the inner production tubing (where fluids go up) and the outer casing. Usually the downhole gas valves are passive – ie they cannot be opened and closed and are set before being fitted. They can only be adjusted using wireline tools, an expensive and complex process.

With Camcon's gas lift tool the flow of gas into the production tubing can be adjusted electronically, with controls from the surface. It is useful to be able to adjust the flow of gas downhole, so you can make much more precise and faster adjustments, as you try to optimise the production rate using the minimum amount of injection gas.

The company has distribution agreements with **Al Mansouri Group** (for most of the Gulf States, Oman, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait); **Amrtur Corporation Sdn Bhd** (for Brunei) and **Special Oilfield Services Co LLC** (SOS) for Oman.

Danny Chapchal, ex-CEO of **Cambridge Display Technology** (CDT), a spin-off from Cambridge University until its 'successful sale', is CEO of Camcon Oil. Post-CDT he served as CEO of **Bit Arts**, a developer of software security systems and served as a non-executive director of **Scipher plc** and **Trace plc**.

Contact: www.camcon-oil.com

SME NEWS – ENGINEERING, ELECTRONICS, TELECOMS

Mining scan technology firm wins £3 million investment

Edinburgh-based **Adrok**, run by father and son duo **Colin** and **Gordon Stove**, has developed high quality equipment to scan for oil and minerals below the ground.

It has secured £3m from Canadian mining company **Teck Resources**, which has brought in to help expand the business. Instead of selling their own shares, the pair agreed to their stake being diluted, issuing fresh shares to give the Canadian firm a 17.5 per cent holding in the company.

Adrok MD Gordon Stove said: "We intend to grow the company rapidly next year. That this investment has come from one of our existing customers is a testimony to Adrok's technical ability and expertise."

The firm aims to recruit ten staff as part of its expansion, growing its headcount from the present five. In January 2007 Adrok completed its first round investment.

Contact: www.adrokgroup.com

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Founder-MD of EA Technology Analytical wins Women in Business title

Anne McIntosh set up EA Technology Analytical as part of the **EA Technology Group** in 2009 and has established two successful brands, providing specialist services to electricity companies worldwide: Power Forensics and OilData.

She recently won the title in the Cheshire Business Awards. **EA Technology Group** chief executive **Robert Davis** said: "Anne is a talented engineer and scientist who has built a profitable business with a world reputation for excellence. She is an asset to the group and richly deserves this award."

Dubbed 'the CIS of the power industry', Power Forensics gathers evidence from the scenes of failures and employs advanced laboratory techniques to establish their causes. The OilData laboratory analyses samples of oil used to insulate power assets, providing an accurate assessment of their condition and predictions of when they are likely to fail.

Anne joined EA Technology in 1989 as a technical officer after graduating in the Science of Engineering Materials from the **University of Newcastle**. She was appointed head of the **Materials & Failure Investigations** team in 2000.

Anne is an accredited trainer and lecturer and an expert speaker on a range of power technology subjects, including failure investigations and condition-based asset management. She also chairs **EA Technology's Company Council** and the Strategic Inclusion Pillar, which ensures that all members of staff feel involved and valued.

Anne has chaired, co-chaired and been a contributing member to several international technical conferences, forums and events. She has authored numerous technical papers which have been presented at international power industry event.

Contact: EA Technology: 0800 028 7243 – www.eatechnology.com

Flatscreen Arms make stylish range of useful, highly ergonomic monitor units

Flatscreen Arms, based in Sussex, is still run by founders **Bob Lindfield** and son **Dan Lindfield**. Just as flatscreen monitors evolved, so did the company. They were soon fulfilling the needs of a range of business and commerce clients, from airports and dealing rooms to offices and shops and even the **NASA** control room.

In December 2011 the Mantis stand for iPad and iPad 2 was released and is now available through the firm's online shop. Cooks following recipes in the kitchen, people watching movies in the lounge, playing games in the den or getting weather reports in the garden will find the screen arms very useful. Its unique, high precision iPad stand is excellent for functionality.

Their Mantis 30 monitor arm brings together good looks with high-performance engineering. With gas-assisted joints to allow precise positioning, this cutting-edge monitor arm has been designed for larger screens. Flatscreen Ltd are constantly designing new products and also offer a bespoke design service. All products are manufactured at their factory in **Newhaven**.

The Mantis 30 is manufactured from tarnish-resistant solid aluminium and built to last a lifetime. Compatible with the iMac 27-inch monitor, this sophisticated-yet-sturdy arm is the ultimate accessory for the ultimate computer. Users include the **Imperial War Museum, Companies House, Aviva, BBC, NASA**, and **French railways operator SNCF**.

Contact: www.flatscreenarms.co.uk

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Hi-tech firm BPP-TECH provides flow of new engineering innovations

With 20 years experience in the offshore energy sector BPP-TECH has delivered innovation to the offshore industries in a variety of engineering sub-sectors. In recent years, they have brought novel, patented solutions from design through development to market.

After over five years of development, BPP-TECH, in cooperation with **BHP Billiton** and **Dantec**, has developed a ground breaking, high pressure cryogenic hose suitable for practical applications such as the ship-to-ship transfer of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). BPP-TECH has launched a new company, **BPP-Cables**, to capitalise on their expertise in cable technology. BPP-Cables is a company that provides cable technology – from design and analysis, through to procurement, installation and service support. The need to transfer electrical power in arduous marine conditions is growing, as are the desirable water depths, service lives and power ratings. As power cable engineers, they ask: “how can we confidently deliver power cables that will survive the required service life without over-engineering?”

In 2011 BPP-TECH won a contract to investigate specific failures of wind turbine gearboxes and bearings using our engineering and specialist metallurgical expertise. This work comes after recently providing technical support to investigate an onshore gas line failure. BPP-TECH's independent forensic analyses ensure failure causation is understood, and allows the occurrence frequency and consequence of future incidents to be reduced.

Minoo Patel, the firm's director of strategy, is a professional engineer and is a Fellow of the **Royal Academy of Engineering**. He has been with BPP-TECH since 1989. He specialises in the analysis and design of floating and flexible production structures, risers, tethers and pipelines. He is the originator of eight Patents.

Contact: www.bpp-tech.com

Mid-sized mechanical engineering services company EnerMech Ltd gets even bigger

The firm ended 2011 with a 100% increase in sales, with 2011 revenue expected to top £103m compared to £49.5m in 2010.

The Aberdeen-based company forecast for 2011 will deliver a £10 million profit and said revenue next year would increase to £142 million with profits expected to double to £20 million.

The company also announced that **Lloyds Banking Group** has agreed to provide additional funding of £20 million, which will be used to support further investment in more equipment and facilities.

EnerMech MD **Doug Duguid** said: “We have invested over £60 million in facilities, equipment and five acquisitions since mid 2008 and that investment will deliver £10 million of EBITDA this year. This included acquiring and refurbishing our Aberdeen headquarters, and establishing an international footprint with 17 additional facilities across the Eastern Hemisphere, all of which is now beginning to deliver significant growth and profitability.”

Mr Duguid added: “Not surprisingly, for a business with some start-up business lines and rapid growth in overseas territories, it has taken time to become profitable, but it is encouraging to see that since early 2011 the business is now delivering sustainable profitability consistently in excess of £1 million EBITDA a month.”

Across its 18 international bases more than 580 new positions have been created in 2011 alone, 340 of them in the UK. In addition to the further capital the firm is mulling over a number of potential acquisitions, both in the UK and elsewhere, which will take EnerMech to a ‘whole new level’.

Contact: www.enermech.com

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Joint achievement by Plessey Semiconductors Ltd and Sussex University in sensors

An electrical potential sensor was triumphant in the 'Measurement in Action' category of the **Institution of Engineering and Technology** Innovation Awards. The award is for the best innovation this year in the field of measurement science and technology.

The EPS technology has a wide range of interdisciplinary applications, from being able to monitor a patient's heart rate remotely through a handheld sensor, to measuring the electrical imprint of fingerprints.

It was developed by a team based in Sussex University's **Department of Engineering and Design**, led by **Professor Robert Prance**, and is being licensed and manufactured as the Electric Potential IC (EPIC) sensor by **Plessey Semiconductors Ltd**.

Professor Bob Allison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), said: "This technology could impact widely on quality of life, safety and security, wealth generation and new research tools by providing: affordable healthcare solutions for the ageing population; passive sensors for the security and safety markets; and a new generation of test and measurement equipment for physical, biological and medical research and for the semiconductor and materials manufacturing sectors."

Apparently the sensor could help forensics teams date and identify prints left at a crime scene – by capturing their electrical imprint; traditional methods of fingerprinting do not allow forensics experts to differentiate between prints at a crime scene left before and after the crime has been committed.

The sensor also received the R&D Achievement Award from the **NMI**, the UK trade association for semiconductor, microelectronics and electronic systems. The judges praised the 'exemplary collaboration' between Plessey and Sussex and recognised that the new technology 'opens up a huge range of possible applications and new markets'.

Their proven ability to detect movement and acquire biophysiological signals without contact offers the security and safety sectors an exciting opportunity to develop innovative solutions. Electric Potential Sensor technology could also enhance MRI scanning techniques in hospitals as well as offer new approaches to analytical NMR.

Contacts: www.plesseysemiconductors.com – www.sussex.ac.uk

The Expanded Metal Company secures the EEF North East Region Export Award

The Hartlepool-based business manufactures expanded metal mesh and finished components made from mesh and other materials. Due to recession in the UK and traditional European markets, **The Expanded Metal Company** (EMC) sought to expand its international trade. Export and marketing teams worked closely with colleagues in Germany towards the end of 2008 to develop a 'campaign map' for overseas growth.

EMC's overseas sales figures were impressive – forming 28% of EMC's total turnover in 2008. Double-digit growth year-on-year in export saw this figure grow to almost 35% of total sales by the end of 2010, despite the difficult trading conditions at the end of 2008 into 2009. This is predicted to rise again to 40% by the end of 2011.

As the pioneer of expanded metal mesh production, and established for over 120 years, The Expanded Metal Company has in-depth understanding of expanded metal production techniques, capabilities and applications. New products and markets are driven by dedicated sales and marketing teams.

Contact: www.expandedmetalcompany.co.uk

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Pre-pack administration 're-launches' medical robotics firm Freehand Surgical

The assets of the company have been bought by a consortium led by the directors, who will continue to develop this highly innovative technology, opening up new markets for the **Freehand** laparoscopic camera controller. New investment has been raised from existing investors and the management team remains in place. Business continues as usual for customers, suppliers and staff.

The company was founded in 2010 to acquire the assets of surgical robotics company **Prosurgics** and **Freehand Surgical plc**. Headquartered in the UK, it also has offices in the USA and a growing network of international distributors.

Freehand 2010's focus is on the rapid commercialisation of FreeHand, the innovative robotic camera controller for laparoscopic or 'keyhole' surgery. Launched in 2009 it has won international acclaim and awards, and a rapidly growing international community of 'FreeHand Surgeons'. Every year, over 2.5m laparoscopic procedures are carried out across the EU and USA, with this number growing at an annual rate of approximately 5%. FreeHand takes only seconds to set up for each case. The single use sterile zoom module and sleeve are pre-sterilised, meaning that no reprocessing is required between cases.

In November 2011 EU-funded researchers – including **Freehand 2010 Ltd** – from Germany, Italy, Israel and the UK were involved in robotic neurosurgery. The **Robocast** project, has developed a new type of robot that gives two important advantages to surgeons: 13 degrees (types) of movement, compared to the four available to human hands during minimally invasive surgery, and 'haptic feedback', the physical cues which allow surgeons to assess tissue and perceive the amount of force applied during surgery. The robot has performed accurate keyhole neurosurgery on dummies, and when ready for humans, could ease the suffering of millions of Europeans diagnosed with tumours, and conditions such as epilepsy, Parkinson's disease and Tourette syndrome.

Contact: www.robocast.eu

Widney Manufacturing gets £1.6m from Lloyds TSB Commercial Finance

The Aston, **Birmingham**-based company underwent a management buyout six months ago when it required funding from Lloyds totalling £1.6m to bridge the gap between settling its own bills and receiving payment from its customers.

In 2012, the company was given access to a £200,000 hire purchase facility to support its expansion within the UK and internationally. The manufacturer, which has been based on **Plume Street** since 1970, employs 130 people and produces a range of vehicle windows, sun blinds and telescopic slides.

Its products are used in devices including off-road construction vehicles, ATMs and aeroplane seating. Customers include Staffordshire-based digger manufacturer **JCB** and car giant **Volvo**.

The £200,000 hire purchase enables will allow Widney to buy equipment and vehicles upfront. **Matt Devers**, financial director at Widney Manufacturing, said: "We have worked hard to remain true to Widney's rich heritage and this funding from Lloyds TSB Commercial Finance will ensure we can continue to lead the market both at home and abroad, with freed-up working capital to invest in new products and expand into new countries.

"While the market in the UK remains volatile we are keen to expand our export offering, with our products increasingly being shipped to India and Asia."

Widney currently has a £10m turnover, 65 per cent of which is made up from export sales. It ships products to 30 countries, including much of Europe, China and the USA.

Contact: www.widney.co.uk

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New Contracts for transmission specialist Magnomatics

Magnetic transmission specialist **Magnomatics** said it had secured contracts to work on projects with **Ford** and **Caterpillar**. The grant funding for the two projects, which is in excess of £500,000, will advance Magnomatics' novel magnetic power-split technology for hybrid electric vehicles. The project with Ford has the support of the **Technology Strategy Board's** Low Carbon Vehicles Innovation Platform, and will develop the technology for use in hybrid passenger vehicles.

The work with Caterpillar is also assisted through the TSB in its recent investment to support innovation and growth for businesses looking to keep the UK at the forefront of high value manufacturing. A particular emphasis has been placed on the development of 'enabling technologies', which can lead to the creation of other products or processes able to support future development.

Magnomatics will collaborate with Caterpillar Engines, and Sheffield-based, and now US-owned, magnetic material and magnet assembly supplier **Arnold Magnet Technologies**, to scale-up the magnetic power-split technology for larger hybrid vehicles.

Chris Kirby, MD at Magnomatics, said: "We are experiencing sustained rising demand for our products, as industries across the world seek to introduce new technologies to enhance their own solutions and to meet growing worldwide expectations for more efficient and sustainable products."

Contact: www.magnomatics.com

Air purification specialist Plasma Clean forms links with manufacturer Meiko

The new alliance will see Stockport-based **Plasma Clean's** technology, which charges air with high voltage electricity to eradicate odours, included as a standard in **Meiko's** products.

As a result Plasma Clean will see its technology used in commercial kitchens around the world. Meiko makes waste food disposal storage systems for hotels and restaurants. The waste can be kept in a tank for several weeks. Bad smells are traditionally vented through the roof but the infrastructure can be difficult to accommodate, especially in old buildings.

As part of the partnership Plasma Clean, led by MD **David Glover**, will also provide installation and maintenance support. Plasma Clean's technology was successfully trialled on a Meiko food waste management system serving the **Langham Hotel** in Central London.

Foul smells emitted from the Meiko system were contaminating the loading bay and ball room areas of the hotel, but Plasma Clean's technology eradicated the problem. Slough-based Meiko MD **Bill Downie** said: "It's a truly cost-effective way for our customers to combat food waste odours."

Plasma Clean, was founded in 2002 and was spun out of the **University of Manchester**.

With the help of £600,000 of investment from the **University of Manchester, Manchester Technology Fund** and **YFM Group**, its products were launched in 2008.

Clients include **KFC** and **Tesco**, and the company is now pursuing opportunities in the healthcare and waste processing sectors

Contact: www.plasmaclean.com

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Trio of awards given to corrosion control specialists BAC Corrosion Control Ltd

Back in May 2011, an innovative corrosion treatment system **LATreat** – developed and patented by **BAC** and **Mott MacDonald** – won the Research, Studies and Consulting Award at the **Association for Consultancy and Engineering** (ACE) Engineering Excellence Awards. ACE represents the interests of the UK consultancy and engineering industry and is the leading business association in this sector, with around 650 members. Their Engineering Excellence Awards showcase the finest achievements of consultancy and engineering firms and ‘the innovation that makes the industry crucial to local, national and global economies’.

LATreat is an innovative treatment that uses only the components of seawater to sterilise and then deposit a protective coating to marine steel structures affected by **Accelerated Low Water Corrosion** (ALWC). ALWC can cause premature perforation of unprotected steel and if untreated can lead to premature failure of a structure.

The process uses phased electrical currents passed through seawater to protect marine steel structures against ALWC. This affects marine structures by eating away steel at up to 25 times the rate of normal corrosion. LATreat uses electro-chemistry to derive all the chemical agents from seawater itself, the process is highly environmentally friendly.

At the **British Expertise International Awards**, at the Institute of Directors, London, LATreat followed this at the beginning of November 2011 with its second award – Innovation of the Year. The judging panel acknowledged that “the process demonstrated outstanding physical or intellectual innovation which has either taken place overseas, or in the UK with international significance and the innovation may be freestanding or as part of a project”.

Also in November, at the **EEF Future Manufacturing Awards 2011**, at the Heritage Motor Museum in Gaydon, Warwickshire, the final award was runner up for the ‘Climate Change Opportunity Award’ – ignoring the idiotic title it was worth winning anyway.

Contact: www.bacgroup.com

SME NEWS – IT, SOFTWARE, SERVICES & INTERNET

Online system of CCTV pics by Littoralis will help ID more unidentified shoplifters

Called CRPix, the new system is free to use for anyone involved in crime reduction or prevention. Christmas is the busiest time of the year for retailers – and shoplifters too, who stole goods worth around £2.1bn in the last year.

CRPix – **Crime Reduction Partnership Intelligence Exchange** – enables shops, police and local shop watch schemes to post images on a secure website. Each week the site – at www.littoralis.info/crpix – automatically sends out an email newsletter to anyone who signs up for it, displaying the latest images.

Any recipient who recognises an image displayed on the e-newsletter can immediately access the website itself and, through it, submit their information direct to the individual who is appealing for information.

CRPix is free to use for both those who post images and those who submit information about them, and is entirely funded by **Littoralis Ltd**, the UK’s leading supplier of secure information-sharing systems for crime reduction. It is supported by the **Association of Business Crime Partnerships**.

Dave Platten of Littoralis said “retail-related crime such as shoplifting, card theft and fraud is one of the biggest categories of crime in the country, and generates a vast amount of intelligence in the form of good-

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quality CCTV images of offenders. But putting names to them is a huge challenge because of the sheer volume of images, and pressure on police budgets and resources means that too much of this valuable material is going to waste.”

CRPix enables people involved in retail crime reduction, such as security staff in shopping centres, CCTV suite operators and retailers themselves, to peruse the images and put names to those they recognise.

CRPix will be especially useful in helping identify travelling, persistent offenders such as ‘professional’ shoplifters who may be well-known to retailers and crime reduction partnerships in one part of the country, but unknown in another. “Until now there has been no efficient way of displaying these images to people who might be able to identify them,” said Platten. “We believe CRPix will change that.”

Because CRPix handles only unidentified CCTV images – which are not classified as ‘Personal Data’ under the **Data Protection Act** – they can be distributed widely among people who are actively involved in retail crime and fraud reduction.

Another feature of CRPix is a growing library of new or novel theft or fraud methods. A ‘modus operandi’ may be new in one part of the country but may be well-known to retailers in another. CRPix enables retailers throughout the country to share information about a new MO among themselves so that they are prepared for it when a perpetrator tries it in their own store.

Contact: www.littoralis.info/crpix

IT services firm Onyx Group has its sights on acquiring more Scottish IT companies

After building a £15 million war chest the Teesside-based business broke into Scotland in 2008 by taking over Edinburgh’s **Dundas IT** and **Campbell Lee** in Glasgow. The company is targeting further acquisitions north of the Border after **ISIS Equity Partners** backed a £27m management buyout of the firm in October.

Hugh Gillen, MD of Onyx’s infrastructure division, is already running the rule over opportunities in Aberdeen but is also on the lookout for businesses in the Central Belt.

He said: “We’ll be investing heavily in expanding our cloud computing business early in the New Year. Our data centre in Edinburgh is already two-thirds full and we’ve got plans to expand our existing site in Glasgow. After that, we’ll be on the lookout for more takeover opportunities to help grow the business.”

Onyx has about 50 staff in Scotland – half its UK total – and generates a third of its £17m turnover north of the Border. A third of its £3m profit is generated in Scotland thanks to a number of lucrative contracts.

The firm counts sausage-skin maker **Devro**, **Robert Wiseman Dairies**, law firm **Harper Macleod**, haulier **Eddie Stobbart** and the **Scottish Friendly Assurance** among its clients. The group competes directly with indigenous Scottish firms such as Inchinnan-based **Amor Group** and Aim-quoted **Iomart**, which have also been expanding.

IT companies have benefited from the move to “cloud computing” – instead of storing programs and data on individual terminals in an office, cloud computing allows users to access information on any machine via the internet.

But Gillen says that cloud computing isn’t for everyone. “About one in four of our customers are looking at cloud computing but it’s not a case of one-size fits all. Many work in highly regulated areas in which the information they store needs to be secured, but others could use cloud computing networks in order to cut costs”.

Contact: www.onyx.net

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Memset was awarded Best Small IT Supplier at the UK IT Industry Awards 2011

The **UK IT Industry Awards**, presented by the **BCS**, the Chartered Institute for IT, in association with **Computing** magazine, represent the benchmark for excellence for the entire IT profession, showcasing best practice and innovation.

MD **Kate Craig-Wood** said “The Memset team have worked tirelessly in the pursuit of excellence and we’re delighted that our small business has shone out amongst much larger enterprise heavyweights at these awards.”

The judges were impressed with Memset’s innovative use of Open Source technology.

Memset is an IT hosting company based in **Guildford**, Surrey. It provides managed hosting and cloud computing solutions for businesses (Infrastructure-as-a-Service). Services range from individual **Miniserver** VM virtual servers to enterprise-class dedicated server clusters with multi-site fail-over, all without long-term contracts or up-front costs. Customers range from start-ups to large corporates (eg. **Debenhams**, **Hilton Hotels** and **Hanson**), and are spread across all industry sectors. A large segment of customers are IT companies using it as their infrastructure platform for providing web-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS).

Contact: www.memset.com

Text-to-speech firm CereProc benefits from 3.0 version of core technology

The Edinburgh-based company, the only major UK player in the global \$5.2 billion market, looks set to achieve a seven-figure turnover next year on the back of the new version of its newly patented technology.

The technology is compatible for the first time with iPhone and other mobile devices and allows customers to turn written text automatically into an increased range of expressive styles and languages.

Paul Welham, chief executive, said “Voices with character and personality have been included in more languages than ever before, while the introduction of support for iOS brings the technology to mobile phones and tablets for the first time.”

He added: “We’re talking with potential new partners in France and Italy who are interested in deploying or distributing high-quality text-to-speech systems in their local markets.”

CereProc has added French, Spanish and Italian to the existing language portfolio of English and German, while also increasing the number of English language accents to include US male and ‘very popular’ Scottish male voices.

The company employs eight people and is the successor company to **Rhetorical**, a spin-out from **Edinburgh University’s School of Informatics** sold in 2005 to an international competitor.

The new patent is for emotional speech synthesis and the aim is to look towards the future and see where the technologies might be going with better artificial animation. The firm has voices that are able to be sad or happy or annoyed or chilled out, so it can be a useful tool for avatars.

Although the new English, US and Scottish voices have been added to CereProc’s commercial library, CereProc’s advanced speech technology experts have made the Scottish male voice available free to schools in Scotland

Contact: www.cereproc.com

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Language CD and apps maker Earworms enjoys first export success

Presented with the SME award at the **UKTI International Trade Awards 2011**, the Earworms technique – ‘accelerated language learning through music’ – quickly became a No1 best seller on **iTunes USA** audible books.

The Norfolk company **Earworms** is teaching the iPod generation how to speak a foreign language painlessly. The company started after co-founder **Andrew Lodge** submitted a grant application to help develop a new product that his brother **Marlon**, a language teacher, had been talking about for years.

Andrew says: “Marlon had told me this story about how when his Japanese students had been struggling to say ‘irrevocable letter of credit’ and other arcane English words, he had brought in his guitar to lighten their mood. He found that by using a rhythm to help them with their intonation they picked up the words easily and they could remember them better in vocab tests.”

Music has been shown to improve memory; it is easier to remember text in verse and certain songs can trigger recollections of happy and sad events. Earworms language learning technique captures this ‘musical memory’ to embed useful words and phrases deep in the brain ready for instant recall when required. All the learner has to do is sit back and relax.

Andrew and Marlon, and their wives Maria and Renate, started their company in 2004, creating a recording studio in Andrew’s house near Great Yarmouth. In addition to selling direct from its web site, the company created strategic partnerships with major international publishing houses such as **Berlitz**, **Langenscheidt** and organisations such as **Apple** and **Android** and kept ahead of the game by adopting digital media delivery in the form of MP3 downloads and Apps.

The Earworms course is now available in 23 languages and in different combinations, and through its network of distributors the company has a strong presence in Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Contact: www.earwormslearning.com

Online ‘crowdfunding’ site Crowdcube raises £300,000 in 10 days

The company behind an online crowdfunding solution for growing businesses, Crowdcube, has used its own website to secure a £300,000 investment. The investment was raised in 10 days and was made up of contributions from 162 investors.

Crowdcube allows members of the public to invest in UK-based companies online in exchange for equity. Since launching in February, Crowdcube has raised £1.7 million in finance for nine businesses and the online service now has 37 registered businesses.

Darren Westlake, co-founder and CEO of Crowdcube says: “Traditional methods of funding are often a barrier for entrepreneurial growth and the emergence of alternative sources of business finance, like crowdfunding, is proving to be a very effective for investors.”

Financing provider **Edge Forecast Software** started funding on the same day as Crowdcube, raising £15,000 in return for 20 per cent of the business, becoming the ninth biggest investment on the site.

Westlake adds: “Crowdcube now has over 6,700 registered members seeking investment opportunities and we are delighted to have used our own website to raise the money we need to accelerate our own growth.”

Contact: www.crowdcube.com

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Networking site for Scots diaspora secures third round of funding

Scottish social networking firm **Kiltr** has secured sufficient funding to trigger an international launch and reach out to the estimated 40 million people of Scots descent around the world.

The fresh round of funding from existing investors brings to roughly £1m the total raised by Glasgow-based Kiltr since its inception in 2007. Backers in this latest cash-call include lead investor **Par Equity**, **Scottish Investment Bank** and Glasgow-based venture capital group **Barwell**.

The deal comes amid an acceleration in the number of users registering with Kiltr. It took a year for the company to secure its first 10,000 registered members, but that figure has doubled in the last four months to nearly 20,000.

“We are growing – things are definitely moving in the right direction,” Kiltr co-founder **Brian Hughes** said. “A lot of people are getting comfortable with it, and a lot of them are pushing it out virally to their own contacts.” Kiltr members have to date invited some 95,000 of their contacts to join the network. New members are said to be signing up at a rate of roughly 100 per day. “We are ahead of the curve at the moment,” Hughes added. “When you look at it plotted out, you can actually see where it speeds up.”

Hughes and co-founder **Stewart Fraser**, Kiltr’s chief technology officer, met while they were students at **Glasgow Caledonian University**. They stayed in touch as their career paths took them in different directions, eventually coming back together to set up a professional business network catering to Scots and those of Scottish affinity.

The new version of Kiltr will include a number of additional features that should boost income. Hughes said the focus would be on “giving businesses a purpose to be on the system”, and added that recruitment tools would “play a large part in the future”.

Contact: www.kiltr.com

Augmented reality firm GoAugmented ‘catch imagination of Scottish football fans’

The Manchester firm’s technology is being used by **Adidas** to create a campaign for the launch of the Scottish national football kit. **GoAugmented** specialises in using technology to combine computer-generated content with real life. It worked with London-based marketing company **More Creative** to The GoAugmented team created a system where football fans who stood in front of a camera could then see themselves on screen with players from the Scottish squad.

It used motion-capture technology so users could pretend to take a penalty or defend a free-kick alongside players. The system was installed in a Scottish shopping centre for the public to use, and the results were filmed for a viral video which was then published on YouTube, where it has had more than 12,500 hits.

The company, based in **Manchester Metropolitan University’s** business incubator **Innospace**, has already worked on projects with Manchester City and is looking to develop a niche in the sports sector.

Commercial manager **Dan Sodergren** said: “The idea with this project was to engage with Scottish football fans and give them an experience they had never had before. The system fools the brain into thinking that you are standing there with the players. Everyone in the marketing industry is talking about augmented reality. Very soon we will start to see the same kind of experience available through mobile phone apps.”

GoAugmented is also exploring many other uses for the technology which might include being able to transpose items of clothing onto themselves using web cams and phones.

Contact: www.goaugmented.com

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Two US malls track visitors' movements by monitoring mobiles' signals

Starting on Black Friday and running through New Year's Day, the shopping centre pair – Promenade Temecula in southern California and Short Pump Town Center in Richmond, Virginia – will collect anonymous data from shoppers' cell phones – as it can follow shoppers' paths from store to store.

Created by a British company **Path Intelligence**, this technology has already been used in shopping centres in Europe and Australia. And according to Path Intelligence CEO **Sharon Biggar**, hardly any shoppers decide to opt out. "It's just not invasive of privacy," she said. "There are no risks to privacy, so I don't see why anyone would opt out."

The goal is for stores to answer questions like: How many Nordstrom shoppers also stop at Starbucks? How long do most customers linger in Victoria's Secret? Are there unpopular spots in the mall that aren't being visited?

While US malls have long tracked how crowds move throughout their stores, this is the first time they've used cell phones. But obtaining that information comes with privacy concerns.

The management company of both malls, **Forest City Commercial Management**, says personal data is not being tracked. "We won't be looking at singular shoppers," said **Stephanie Shriver-Engdahl**, vice president of digital strategy for Forest City. "The system monitors patterns of movement. We can see, like migrating birds, where people are going to." Still, the company is preemptively notifying customers by hanging small signs around the shopping centres. Consumers can opt out by turning off their phones.

Contact: www.pathintelligence.com

Paterson Data Management snapped up by data security firm Restore plc

In September 2011 one of Scotland's largest document management companies was bought by an Aim-quoted business in a £662,000 deal. Paterson Data Management, based in Glasgow, was acquired by London-headquartered office services business **Restore** in a transaction which was funded from existing bank facilities and the issue of new shares.

Restore's chief executive **Charles Skinner** said the deal, which will see the Paterson family who founded the company receive £496,000, represented a 'leap forward' for the records management activities of the group.

"It has long been the board's aim for Restore to become a national provider of records management services across the UK and we have now realised that goal. Not only will Paterson enable us to increase our records management activity across Scotland, but it will enable us to win valuable national contracts and continue to compete with the other market leaders in this space across the UK," he said.

In the year to 30 June 2010, Paterson, which is led by MD **Robert Paterson**, reported profits before tax and interest of £110,000 on a turnover of £502,000. The Paterson family has been involved in businesses providing storage and safekeeping services since 1848.

Restore's existing document storage facilities include a 70-acre underground, high-security facility in **Wiltshire**. The acquisition of Paterson Data Management represents its fourth buy-out in the office services market in the past year. The company also owns **Peter Cox**, a Manchester-based timber treatment business.

Contacts: www.patersondata.com – www.restoreplc.com

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SME NEWS – BIOTECH, PHARMA & MEDICAL SCIENCES

'Novel magnetic protein solutions on offer to the life science community', says IMSL

Integrated Magnetic Systems Ltd (IMSL), a biotech company developing magnetic proteins, has secured a licence with **New Century Pharmaceuticals** (NCP), allowing IMSL a worldwide exclusive license to use NCP's ferritin-fusion IP for production of magnetic proteins.

Under the Agreement, IMSL will develop and market NCP's patented ferritin-fusion proteins, made magnetic and engineered to bind specific molecules using IMSL's proprietary techniques. IMSL also has rights to sublicense the technology.

These fusion proteins comprise a binding portion and a magnetic portion. The external binding portion can be made from any targeting protein (scFv, streptavidin, Protein A, growth factor receptor) capable of binding to specific ligands of interest (antigens, biotin, IgG, growth factor).

The interior magnetic portion is a proprietary ferritin construct, assembled into a fully biological dodecahedron, less than 20 nanometres in diameter, with a core containing paramagnetic iron ions.

Dr Dan Carter, CEO of NCP, said "We have confidence that the IMSL management and science team will advance this technology to new levels, both scientifically and commercially. **Dr Eddie Blair**, IMSL's CEO, said "I am very happy to have access not only to NCP's patented technology, but also to the know-how and trade secrets NCP have acquired over many years of working with ferritin fusion proteins. I believe the synergy of our two companies will revolutionise the way biomolecules are processed and detected."

IMSL plans to launch its first ferritin-based magnetic protein in 2012 and to begin building a catalogue of magnetic proteins. Integrated Magnetics was founded in 2010 to offer novel magnetic protein solutions to the life science community for research and bio-processing. IMSL also offers the customization of its proprietary technology for licensing and partnering opportunities in medicine.

Contact: <http://integratedmagnetics.co.uk>

Pharma firm Aesica opens new £3m manufacturing plant on the Isle of Sheppey

The **Potent Manufacturing Facility** (PMF) in Queenborough boosts the company's drug production capacity and packaging facilities. The company is a leader in formulated products, especially those offering severe pain relief.

The Queenborough site already manufactures potent active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and has extensive expertise in formulation and handling controlled drugs.

It is developing a narcotic analgesic that relieves pain for people with serious illness.

The new plant should accelerate the firm's share of the contract manufacturing market.

MD **Simon Clough** said: "Aesica's service offering and capability is the most advanced in the UK and the addition of the new facility will be of huge benefit to our current clients and indeed all pharmaceutical companies who require potent drug product production."

Aesica employs around 320 staff in Queenborough among a total workforce of 1,300 at offices in Newcastle, the US and China, and factories in the UK, Germany and Italy.

Contact: www.aesica-pharma.co.uk

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Strong mosquito spray provides '100% protection against any mosquito'

Incognito Ltd, started by CEO **Howard Carter**, is a west London company that has developed a strong mosquito repellent that is 'clinically proven to provide 100% protection'.

The spray has taken over 10 years to develop, is a totally natural insect repellent, and is manufactured entirely in the UK. The new active ingredient in the newly formulated incognito anti mosquito repellent spray, *eucalyptus maculata citriodora*, has been 'rigorously tested under extreme conditions'.

This statement is supported by tests carried out in May 2011 by **Insect Research & Development**. These showed incognito that even in intense laboratory conditions, incognito will offer the user 100% protection against *Aedes aegyptii* mosquitoes (those responsible for the transmission of Dengue Fever which bite during the day). This means incognito offers 100% protection all day and night long.

Further research, funded by the **Gates Malarial Partnership** and published in the **British Medical Journal**, states that its active ingredient is clinically proven to protect against malaria when used in conjunction with an impregnated mosquito net. 'No other mosquito repellent has been authorised to make this claim', say the founders of Incognito Ltd.

Mr Carter said: "In its first formulation, its efficacy in repelling mosquitoes was measured at 82% by the **London School of Tropical Medicine**, which is around the norm for most high-street insect repellents."

Sales in the UK are still growing, but are set to be dwarfed as new overseas territories are opened up with assistance from **UKTI London**. Howard commissioned an OMIS (Overseas Market Introduction Service) report on Hong Kong from UKTI staff. This confirmed the demand for a high-end mosquito repellent, supplying market statistics and details of local competitors. It also confirmed that, with the absence of regulatory hurdles in Hong Kong for a natural insect repellent, incognito could go direct to distributors, and provided introductions to a number of prospective partners.

After it attended **Natural Products Expo Asia** it identified distributors for **Hong Kong, Indonesia** and **Japan**, and also picked up another UK distributor, **The Health Store**.

Howard said "Although production costs may be lower overseas, manufacturing here offers a level of quality that can't be guaranteed elsewhere and which is essential to maintain the reputation and effectiveness of the product in export markets. Our spray is produced at a factory in **Luton** that would have gone under without this work. It is now in profit and producing 40,000 bottles a month."

Contact: www.lessmosquito.com

Antibiotic screening firm Demuris buys major collection of actinomycete bacteria

The collection was collected over a 40 year period, involving several hundred people years of effort, by the world leading expert on the systematics of these organisms, **Prof Mike Goodfellow**. These are a huge and diverse group of microorganisms that produce many natural product molecules with therapeutic and industrial importance.

Actinomycetes are one of the largest and most diverse groups of bacteria. They are found in practically every environmental niche on the planet, notably in a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic habitats. One reason for their success is their ability to produce a vast range of "natural product" molecules, which help them adapt to their environment and inhibit their competitors. Many well-known drugs are made by actinomycetes, especially antibiotics, as exemplified by kanamycin and streptomycin.

Newcastle-based Demuris is using its world leading expertise in antibiotic screening technologies, developed over many years by **Prof Jeff Errington** and colleagues, to search the collection for novel antibiotic leads.

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The Goodfellow collection is also being made available to potential partners and collaborators as a valuable screening resource applicable to a wide range of therapeutic and industrial problems.

In February 2011 Demuris secured grant funding of £86,847 from the **TSB** for a feasibility study in which Demuris, who is the lead (and only) partner, will develop and commercialise novel antibiotic compounds. The project aims to develop selected compounds from the early stages of discovery through to a point where the compounds can be evaluated for viability of commercialisation and pre-clinical development.

The **National Industrial Biotechnology Facility**, based in Redcar, will provide the resources to enable the production of sufficient quantities of purified compounds for testing and development purposes.

Back in 2009 Demuris received €489,700 as a partner in the **EU FP7** project **DIVINOCELL**, which runs until 2013. In a consortium of 11 partners, the challenge is to develop new compounds to treat the infections caused by Gram-negative pathogens. Demuris' role in the project is to carry out systematic screening and hit identification – identifying and prioritising new targets and opportunities for productive screening assays.

Professor Jeff Errington is an eminent cell and molecular biologist with an interest in fundamental biological problems in the general areas of the cell cycle and cell morphogenesis. He also has a strong track record in the exploitation of basic science as founder, Chief Scientific Officer and Board member of **Prolysis Ltd**, a spinout from the **University of Oxford** in 1998, which focused on antibiotic drug discovery and development. Prolysis was acquired by the Australian anti-infective biotechnology company Biota in 2009.

Contact: www.demuris.co.uk

Contact lens maker Daysoft sees £1.4m in profits – and a CBE for the founder

Claiming to be the 'only volume manufacturer of contact lenses in the world which only makes daily disposable contact lenses', the Scottish based firm has developed systems that allow it to deliver lenses produced in Scotland to consumers across the world.

Founded in 1999 by **Dr Ronald Hamilton, Moya Hamilton** and **Mark Hegarty**, the Blantyre-based Daysoft expects to post pre-tax profits of around £1.4m this year following dramatic growth in sales of its lenses.

Dr Hamilton, who co-founded **Daysoft** after pioneering the production of one-day disposable lenses at his Award business, said revenues are set to exceed £9m this year. That figure is 23% up on last year – and the increase was driven by strong online sales.

It also sells to optical groups in 26 countries and to independent opticians in the UK.

The company follows a strategy that Mr Hamilton said sets it apart from both major retailers and multinational lens makers like **Bausch & Lomb**. Mr Hamilton sold **Award Ltd**, the world's first company dedicated to making one-day disposable lenses, to Bausch & Lomb for £30m in 1996.

Mr Hamilton said "Our strategy was to position ourselves in the middle. We built a highly efficient manufacturing capability the equal of our manufacturing competitor and a highly efficient ordering and supply system taking product straight into wearers' homes anywhere in the world including **China**, and even **Afghanistan**. We have advanced e-commerce networks with human customer service."

Daysoft has invested more than £1m on developing new products and increasing manufacturing capacity this year. The company has just launched a new lens called Silk, which contains a material that occurs naturally inside the eye and in the film of tears which hydrates and lubricates the surface of the eye.

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The company has recruited 35 additional employees this year to help keep pace with demand. It employs 210 people. By contrast, New York-based Bausch & Lomb called time on lens manufacturing in Scotland in 2009. The company announced plans to close its site in **Livingston**, with the loss of 500 jobs, to move production to Ireland.

Contact: www.daysoft.com

FUNDING & INVESTMENTS

Microscopy company Phase Focus raises £865,000 in equity investment

The Sheffield-based firm will use the cash to expand its operations, to grow sales, and to conclude commercial deals with its commercial partners. The **Credit Protection Association** (CPA) led a syndicate of investors that contributed £550,000, with **Fusion IP plc** and the **White Rose Technology Seedcorn Fund** following on their prior investments with contributions of £90,000 and £75,000 respectively. Fusion IP plc simultaneously converted a £150,000 loan.

Sales of products incorporating the Phase Focus Virtual Lens have commenced for life science and ophthalmic metrology applications, and evaluations are being conducted with potential OEM partners in markets including semiconductor process control and analytical electron microscopy. The technology is also increasingly being applied in X-Ray microscopy applications.

Ian Pykett, CEO of Phase Focus, said: "Our technology continues to fulfil its promise with product sales having now commenced in multiple sectors, and with potentially market-changing capabilities in electron microscopy. This new investment will enable us to consolidate these opportunities and develop further applications from stain-free live cell imaging to semiconductor metrology."

Contact: www.phasefocus.com

Fibre optics developer Conjunct gains £340,000 from Braveheart Investment Group

Braveheart, the AIM-listed growth capital manager, says other investors in the round include the **Scottish Investment Bank** and several individuals in the Braveheart investor network.

Livingston-based Conjunct, which is developing a high-speed internet transceiver called 'Fibre-Lyte', will use the £340,000 investment to complete development and distribution of the product. Conjunct sees the Fibre-Lyte transceiver, which boasts speeds of 300 gigabytes per second, as an answer to growing demands for faster internet data transfer and has confirmed the investment will also help to development a new version of the product.

Ken Allstaff, CEO of Conjunct says: "We are keen to move to the next stage of the company's growth and Braveheart's investment allows us to offer Fibre-Lyte at costs and quantities which will enable continued market traction."

Geoffrey Thomson, chief executive of Braveheart, said "With this investment Conjunct is now well placed to take advantage of the high industry demand for innovative electronic solutions such as Fibre-Lyte. Since the investment, Conjunct is now in advanced discussions with all the leading market players in optical systems."

Contact: <http://conjunct.co.uk>

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Clean technology Clarizon accepts £615,000 ahead of market launch

Founded in 2005 after spinning-out from **Newcastle University**, Clarizon scientists have developed an electrochemical cell technology that generates ozone directly into water – a technology that has the potential to be used in large-scale water treatment and industrial cleaning processes.

Clarizon's electrochemical technology claims to be a cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternative to the industry-standard method of cold corona discharge (CCD).

The company aims to launch the technology, which reduces the discharge of chemicals into the environment, onto the market within the next 12 months. The company has been given an initial £115,000 from the **Finance for Business North East Technology Fund**, which is managed by the **IP Group**, with the rest to be invested in two tranches after certain goals are reached.

The investment follows a £100,000 financing round from the **North East Equity Matching Fund (NEEMF)** in early 2008. During that round, Clarizon also secured a further six-figure funding from other financial sources including a private investor, **Robin Rae**, MD of Edinburgh-based investment company **Jaroscope** and the company directors.

In late 2011 Clarizon received a £615,000 phased investment from the **Finance for Business North East Technology Fund** to bring its water treatment and cleaning technology to market.

Led by Clarizon MD **Clive Dyson**, the company says its patented technology will initially be targeted for use in small applications, white goods, drinks line cleaning and sterilisation, and surface and water sanitisation for the food and medical industries.

Contact: www.clarizon.co.uk

OION set to join new £50m Business Angel Co-investment Fund

Oxford Investment Opportunity Network, Europe's leading technology business angel network, is to participate in the Business Angel Co-investment Fund (Angel CoFund) announced by the government that will provide £50m to invest in high growth companies alongside business angels.

The Angel CoFund's objectives are to boost the quality and quantity of business angel investing in England, and to support long-term, high quality jobs in high growth companies. The Angel CoFund will not be open to direct approaches from individual businesses who will be encouraged to put forward their investment propositions through business angel networks.

Chris Baker, head of investment services at the OION Network, said: "The scheme is partly modelled on a highly successful co-investment programme that OION operated with **Bank of Scotland** during 2008 and we know from experience that the availability of government capital to match funds committed by angel investors will significantly boost angel investment, enabling high quality companies to grow and create employment.

"We look forward to working with our partners and **Capital for Enterprise** to facilitate deals and ensure that the Angel CoFund is an outstanding success."

During the past three years, OION has helped over 40 companies raise more than £27m. They include **Microvisk Technologies**, the developer of the first reliable handheld device that patients on Warfarin can use to test their blood clotting status at home; **Bladon Jets**, which is developing micro gas turbine engines for cars and power generation; and **OrganOx**, an **Oxford University** spinout, developing a device that will be used to prolong the preservation of livers before transplantation.

Contact: www.oion.co.uk

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YFM Equity Partners puts £4.5m growth funding into PowerOasis Ltd

PowerOasis CEO **John O'Donohue** said "Our energy storage solutions cut diesel consumption by at least 50% and further reduce power operating expenses by integrating our solar and wind components."

John added "Our wireless network power management technology is available at the right time to help mobile telecom operators reduce power costs, lower carbon emissions, increase site up time and improve the operational and business management of power while delivering a return on investment in 18 months or less".

YFM Equity Partners through three of their managed funds – **Chandos Fund** and **British Smaller Companies VCTs** are joining existing investors including **Oxford Capital Partners, MTI Partners, OCP Angels** and a number of private investors in an all equity finance deal.

PowerOasis is a leader in power management and energy efficiency solutions for wireless operators. It has developed an innovative wireless network power management platform that remotely monitors, controls and manages the supply of power to base stations sites that lack a reliable electricity grid in the Middle East and Africa and where diesel generators have historically been the primary power source.

PowerOasis is an energy partner for two of the world's largest network equipment providers and some of the world's largest mobile telecom operators, which use its technology to reduce the operating cost of power while improving network availability.

The investment will primarily be used for accelerating sales and product development. PowerOasis has launched their latest innovation the PowerOasis **SmartHub**, which introduces Smart Grid capability to their solution portfolio and also introduced a next generation Power OSS platform which gives total network power visibility at the network operations centre.

Contact: www.power-oasis.com

GENERAL NEWS

UKTI launches 'Exporting for Growth Prize Competition' for SMEs

The deadline for the receipt of applications is 13 January 2012. The new Exporting for Growth Prize Competition aims to encourage more small businesses in the UK to take their products to overseas markets by offering a comprehensive package of support to the company with the best export idea.

Winners will receive UKTI support worth up to £5,000 and three grants for overseas travel to their target markets, plus expert business knowledge and insight from sponsor companies. Additionally, UKTI will provide access to a range of free services. Runners-up and shortlisted companies will also benefit from access to UKTI service offers.

All eligible companies will have access to professional mentoring support to develop their audition pitch, time with an international trade adviser and, subject to eligibility and resource, an opportunity to be considered for UKTI's Passport to Export programme (with £1,000 of Business Development Credits) or Gateway to Global Growth programmes and other UKTI initiatives.

The competition is open to UK-based SMEs. To be considered for entry, applicants must be eligible for UKTI services and be an SME according to the EU definition. UKTI is particularly interested to hear from first time or novice exporters.

Contact: www.ukti.gov.uk/exportingforgrowthprize

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Wind power 'woefully insufficient' says new report on energy

A landmark report on renewable energy by the independent group **Scientific Alliance** in conjunction with the **Adam Smith Institute** entitled '*Renewable Energy – Vision or Mirage?*', sets out to review available renewable energy technologies and analyse what contribution they could realistically make to a secure and affordable future energy supply.

Its main conclusion, states **Martin Livermore**, of the Scientific Alliance, is that wind power cannot fulfil the expectations which policymakers have for it. Wind 'is the only technology which could be deployed on a large enough scale to have a chance of meeting the UK Government's targets'.

The primary objective of the present UK and EU energy policy is to reduce fossil fuel use, and hence also carbon dioxide emissions. This is in an attempt to fulfil the EU 20-20-15 targets: a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and 15% of energy from renewables by 2020. Because, in practice, most of the renewables would be used to generate electricity rather than be used for transport or heating – which together represent about two thirds of our fossil fuel use – the target actually requires a very large switch away from coal and gas in this sector. *The challenge is immense.*

There are periods when the wind hardly blows, and each year we experience some of these at times of high demand, particularly in winter evenings. The worst situation is to have a stable area of high pressure over the country. In winter, this leads to calm, very cold conditions, while in summer it is equally calm, but very hot. In the UK, peak demand comes in winter but, in countries further south, there will also be increased demand for air-conditioning during summer heat waves. In both cases, power would have to come from sources other than wind.

The report is scathing about the **Scottish Government's** plans for replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources. Experience from **Ireland**, which already has a higher proportion of wind energy capacity than the UK, shows that installing new capacity produces diminishing returns in terms of fuel savings; beyond a certain point, erecting more wind turbines saves no more gas or coal and merely adds cost and insecurity to the system.

The report concludes: 'As technologies develop, the situation will undoubtedly change, but for now a reliable, affordable, low-carbon electricity grid has to rely much more on a mix of efficient nuclear and combined cycle gas turbine generation.'

Contact: www.scientific-alliance.org

TSB's £75 million for SMEs among incentives 'for growth through innovation'

Publication of the Government's *Innovation and Research Strategy* follows the inclusion in the Government's Autumn Statement of additional funding to support technology innovation.

Additional funding will be made available for the **SMART scheme** – previously Grant for Research and Development. Smart offers funding to small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in R&D projects from which successful new products, processes and services could emerge.

The **SBRI** programme, which uses the power of government procurement to drive innovation by providing opportunities for innovative companies to engage with the public sector to solve specific problems, will also receive additional funding.

The **Technology Strategy Board** will extend its **Launchpad** initiative, following the success of the Launchpad pilot supporting the development of the Tech City cluster in London. This provides base funding for approved R&D projects and then acts as a catalyst to help the companies behind the projects to attract more investment. Launchpad will be extended to support new and emerging clusters in other

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parts of the UK.

The Technology Strategy Board will also plan a new innovation voucher programme to support collaboration between SMEs and external knowledge providers, such as universities and the **Catapult centres** – the new technology and innovation centres.

- Investment in R&D in emerging technologies, with an initial focus on synthetic biology, energy efficient computing and energy harvesting;
- Working with BIS and the **Research Councils** to establish a joint fund with the **Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology** to pilot co-funded bilateral research;
- Additional assistance to help UK businesses to secure greater levels of EU finance to support R&D. This will include a review of the support system for potential UK proposers to EU funding programmes.
- Working with the **NESTA** to establish a Centre of Expertise for running innovation inducement prizes, and a new Innovation Prize Fund, in which the government will invest £250,000 a year.
- Supporting SMEs by doubling the size of the Designing Demand Programme by £650,000 to £1.3 million a year. This is a mentoring programme run by the **Design Council** to help SMEs deliver improved products, services and brands to enhance their growth potential.
- Piloting a new innovation vouchers scheme delivered by the Technology Strategy Board that will give SMEs the opportunity to get free academic support from universities.
- Contributing to the development of a **Graphene Global Research and Technology Hub**, to be fully operational by 2015.

Contact: www.innovateuk.org

UNIVERSITY NEWS

Spinout Cambridge CMOS Sensors Ltd wins help from Warwick Ventures

Warwick Ventures helped launch the company in 2008, as a spinout from the **University of Cambridge's Department of Engineering** and with licensed technology from the **University of Warwick**. **Professor Julian Gardner**, Discipline Stream Leader for Electrical and Electronics at the **School of Engineering**, is one of the co-founders of the business.

The firm was a runner-up in this year's **British Engineering Excellence Awards** and was highly commended by the competition's judges. The company, nominated for 'Start-up of the Year' in the awards, is developing innovative gas-sensing technology, that can be used in a range of residential, commercial and academic applications, including gas detectors, industrial safety, explosive detection and medical diagnostics.

Cambridge CMOS sensors was pipped at the post by **NEUL**, an innovative wireless network developer. Other companies on the shortlist included **Redtail Telematics**, a manufacturer of fleet management products, and engineering design company **TBS Cubed**.

Quentin Compton-Bishop, CEO of Warwick Ventures, says: "Warwick Ventures is proud to support Cambridge CMOS Sensors and to have assisted with this successful company which has gone from strength to strength since its launch in 2008."

Contact: www.ccmoss.com

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Leeds University spinout Encos Ltd pioneers construction materials out of waste

Developing fully sustainable and carbon-negative construction materials is the goal at **Encos Ltd**, a University of Leeds spinout. The company's patented method for manufacturing carbon-negative masonry products from waste materials is the result of research carried out by **Dr John Forth** and his team in the **School of Civil Engineering**.

The process uses a combination of vegetable oil-based binders which are mixed with graded waste aggregates. The mixture is then shaped into bricks and blocks and cured using low temperature heat. During the curing process the oil undergoes a number of complex chemical reactions which transforms it from a viscous liquid into a solid binding matrix. Producing the products uses no water, and creates no waste.

Laboratory-produced samples have already passed crucial industry tests including fire, freeze-thaw and compressive strength. A third-party report produced by **Best Foot Forward Ltd** estimates that manufacture of the Encos masonry blocks and bricks can be created from a wide range of waste aggregates and binders.

Encos recently commissioned a £200,000 demonstration manufacturing plant at **Yorkshire Water's** Knostrop site in Leeds and will shortly be commissioning the necessary tests required before it brings its first product – a brick made of Furnace Bottom Ash (FBA) and Pulverised Fuel Ash (PFA) aggregates – to market. Another focus of the company's activities, being carried out in collaboration with Yorkshire Water, is the use of Incinerated Sewage Sludge Ash (ISSA) as the aggregate. Encos is also investigating the use of other waste aggregates, including rice husk ash. The process could significantly reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Encos chief executive **Mark Nichols** said "Not only does every tonne of bricks we create prevent about the same weight of waste material going to landfill, it also prevents an equivalent amount of primary resource being used. We've got a revolutionary product, we use very little energy in making our products and use a binder which actually stores CO2 as opposed to emitting it."

Jon Brigg, Innovation Development Manager at Yorkshire Water, said "Partnering with Encos may allow us to beneficially utilise a waste stream formed when producing high quality drinking water and treating waste water on behalf of our customers, moving us toward towards our zero waste aspiration."

Contact: <http://encosltd.com>

LATE DATES FOR JANUARY 2012

19 January 2012 – UK Public Sector Digital Awards

The Guildhall, London.

Excellence in public sector ICT delivery can be clearly seen in the finalists for this year's awards. The finalists were selected by an expert panel of judges across 11 categories following a record number of entries to the awards – which are backed by the Cabinet Office and recognise excellence and innovation in digital initiatives in national and local government, the NHS, education and the third sector.

This year's list of finalists includes best practice entries from the NHS and education sectors, and demonstrates the outstanding commitment to innovation and operational improvement across the public sector, under difficult circumstances.

Contacts: www.ukpublicsectordigitalawards.co.uk – Rita Andrews, Head of Events, Sift Media, rita.andrews@siftmedia.co.uk – +44 (0)117 915 8632.

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23-26 January 2012 – Arab Health Exhibition and Congress

Dubai.

The healthcare congress will be the largest of its type in the world in 2012. Included in the programme are 15 separate conferences on key healthcare issues with over 500 internationally acclaimed speakers.

11 companies will be showcased from Northern Ireland – among the 3,000 exhibitors from 60 countries. The show will also feature 32 country pavilions including new presentations from Japan, Hong Kong, Argentina and Singapore. The show attracts leading manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors from the Middle East and further afield. Three NI companies – Radox Laboratories, Crumlin, Armstrong Medical, Coleraine and Fortress Diagnostics, Antrim – have their own stands at the exhibition.

Contact: www.arabhealthonline.com

24 January 2012 – Finding Petroleum conference

Aberdeen Marriott Hotel, Aberdeen, Scotland.

New technologies for accessing, listening to, and producing from, your reservoir.

Finding Petroleum and Energy Ventures are bringing together Aberdeen's reservoir experts (geophysics, drilling, completions), technology buyers and investors, to talk about ways to get a better understanding of the reservoir.

It is no secret that a better working relationship with your reservoir is the key to improved production, but how can this be achieved?

The event is chaired and produced by David Bamford, a past head of exploration with BP, and the lead sponsor is Energy Ventures, one of the oil and gas industry's top investment houses.

Contact: www.findingpetroleum.com

AND FINALLY...

>> 'Westapo' backs down from 'ruinous' new parking controls in central London

In a devastating blow to the parking industry and 'anti-car Taliban' **Westminster Council** was forced by **Downing St**, the **Mayor of London's Office**, and tens of thousands of protests from **SMEs**, **churches** and **street traders** to halt its plans to ban free parking in central London at evenings and weekends starting December 9th.

The council's much diminished leader, hedge fund manager **Colin Barrow**, acknowledged that the policy had been a total disaster. Worse, it embodied a personal professional failure of epic proportions – greater than any suffered by a British town hall leader since the war – even the humiliating blow incurred by **Sir Howard Bernstein**, **Manchester's** chief executive, when he attempted to introduce the congestion charge to the city back in 2008. Neither has seen fit to resign.

As the protests grew – and thousands of businesses threatened to stop paying **Business Rates** – the council's tiny number of councillors in favour of the scheme admitted defeat.

Most of all, the parking charges would have hit the lowest paid workers in London hardest – cleaners, casino workers, cooks and waiters, doormen, security guards – many of whom are on the minimum wage. Westminster was aiming to charge £4.80 an hour after 6.30pm.

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The backdown may be a watershed in the battle to curb the rising tide of parking restrictions in the UK – a murky, often quasi-criminal alliance between councillors, shady parking companies, civil engineering contractors, hundreds of bailiffs with criminal records over-charging motorist ‘debtors’, and any number of dodgy solicitor firms around the UK.

‘Barrow’s backlash’ wasn’t long in coming. In January 2012 the council suddenly announced it would change **five miles** of single line parking to double lines – for ‘safety reasons’ – removing thousands of free spaces on which the capital’s SME community depends. This fooled no one..

Westminster Council – which once handed out 1m parking tickets a year – continues to spend millions trying to trap motorists for petty offences with a battery of new CCTV camera networks, sneakily changed parking hours, and a fleet of surveillance cars. For example, dozens of infuriating ‘no left/right turn’ signs are introduced each year. For years several wardens hung around the council’s waste plant in Farm St, Mayfair, pouncing on any car that was stupid enough to stop and use its facilities.

It is high time a ‘petty fine strike’ was organised throughout the UK to force a very slow Government to take real action on this issue..

>> Britain has lost its spot as the world’s sixth largest economy to **Brazil**, according to the **Centre for Economics and Business Research**.

The resource-rich South American economy has surged on exports to China, unhampered by the 2008 financial crisis that has hit growth in the UK. CEBR chief executive **Douglas McWilliams** said: “Brazil has beaten the European countries at soccer for a long time, but beating them at economics is a new phenomenon. Our world economic league table shows how the economic map is changing, with Asian countries and commodity-producing economies climbing up the league while we in Europe fall back.”

>> The **DfT** and **Transport Scotland** want to trial using heavy goods vehicles to clear snow.

The proposal would require the DfT to relax weights and dimensions legislation and was suggested by industry during a supply chain resilience workshop at a DfT ‘listening to industry’ event. Meanwhile, **Stirling Council** has invested £100,000 in new winter service equipment including 20 snow ploughs, 14 snow blowers and footway snow clearing machines. The snow ploughs will be fitted to farmers’ tractors to help keep more lightly-trafficked routes passable during severe winter weather.

>> **NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST – SMEs, Technology and Enterprise**

Jonathan Ive has been made a KBE. The dashing knight, **Apple’s** Senior Vice President of Industrial Design, has equipped so many of us with our modern shining armour: the iMac, the iPod, the iPhone, and so on. He was given a CBE in 2005, but earned the promotion this year for “services to design and enterprise.”

Ive told the **BBC** the honour was “absolutely thrilling” and that he was “keenly aware that I benefit from a wonderful tradition in the UK of designing and making.” His father was a silversmith, which may be where his love of “making stuff” originated.

Ive attended Newcastle Polytechnic, now **Northumbria University**. He and a few friends founded a design agency, **Tangerine**, which went on to have Apple as a client. When Cupertino was floored by a prototype notebook Ive turned in, they hired him.

The recent outpouring of **Steve Jobs** tributes has at times cast reflected light on Ive, whom Jobs called a “spiritual partner.” Arguably one of Jobs’s greatest moments at Apple was simply discovering and promoting the talent of Ive.

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Other significant recipients include graphene founders **Professor Andre Geim** and colleague **Professor Konstantin Novoselov**. Professors at Manchester University.

Sir George Iacobescu CBE (born 9 November 1945 in Bucharest) is the chairman of **Canary Wharf Group**, the London-based owners and developers of the Canary Wharf estate in London Docklands. During his time at Canary Wharf, Iacobescu has participated in the development and construction of more than 30 buildings, and saw the district through its bankruptcy phase to eventual success.

CBEs: Professor Madeleine Julia Atkins, Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University; Professor Alan Bundy, Professor of Automated Reasoning, University of Edinburgh; Denise Coates, founder and chief executive **bet365 plc**; David Jonathan Flint, Chief Executive, **Oxford Instruments plc**; Dr Ronald Hamilton, chairman, contact lens firm **Daysoft Ltd**; the excellent Trevor Mann, VP for Manufacturing, **Nissan Europe**.

Other notable CBEs include John McAslan, founder, **John McAslan & Partners**. For services to Architecture; Professor Keith Ridgway, OBE. Research director, **Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre**, Sheffield; Mrs Ruby McGregor-Smith, CEO, **MITIE Group plc**; John Syvret, CEO **Cammell Laird Ltd**; Professor Lionel Tarassenko, University of Oxford; **Vanni Treves**, Chair, National College for School Leadership.

OBEs: Zahoor Ahmed, Chairman, **Gifts International**; William Dennison, CEO of **Dennison Commercials Ltd**, Northern Ireland; Professor Mohamed El-Gomati, Professor of Electronics, University of York; James Grazebrook, MD of marine exhaust systems firm **Halyard Ltd**; Peter Latham. Chairman, **James Latham plc**; Mrs Mary Mead, co-founder, **Yeo Valley Organics**; Timothy Wakeman, chief executive, **Performance Timber Products Group**; Lincolnshire.

MBEs: David Harris, MD, **Cowlin Construction**; Keith Lambourne, Director of Export, ACO Group; Jayne Law, sales manager, **DOW Building Solutions**; Patrick McGonagle, MD, **Pakflatt Ltd**; Ingrid Pears, founder, **Ingrid Pears hot glass**; Professor Richard Roberts, SME Market Analysis director, Barclays Business; Dr Ian Smith, founder **Synexus**, Lancashire.

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