



Still in business

It appears that the 1st edition of this newsletter was generally well received by the Blennerhassett Systems customer base judging by the emails I received.

“Very good looking forward to next month’s newsletter” said Bob of East Molesey, “Brilliant idea - even if I don’t use some of your tips and hints, I still like knowing what’s available” said Liz of Teddington and “It’s a cracker!” said Bill of Seattle. So here goes with #2



Why use Microsoft Office ...

I remember when nearly all PCs ran MS-DOS and almost everyone used WordPerfect as their word processor along with Lotus 1-2-3 as their spreadsheet program. Things were simple ... and then along came Windows. It was not long before Bill Gates and his then small band of employees had realised that a word processor and a spreadsheet that took advantage of the Windows WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) display and that allowed you to use a mouse would be quite attractive to users. Both WordPerfect and Lotus were slow to market with their Windows versions and Microsoft had got their foot well and truly in the door. With the addition of PowerPoint presentation software, Access database, and Outlook in the early 90s, Microsoft Office was born.

The newest version Office 2007 is scheduled for release very early next year and is the twelfth reincarnation of the product. UK Pricing has yet to be announced but the current version for PCs, Office Professional 2003 (Excel, Outlook, Word, Powerpoint, Publisher, Access) is priced at £375 from amazon.co.uk while Office Standard Edition 2003 (Excel, Outlook, Word, Powerpoint) is £317.



Now, with a half reasonable PC, delivered with VAT paid for £325 from Dell (see last month’s newsletter), this strikes me as a tad expensive. So is there an alternative?



One product with a rich feature list and a good pedigree is StarOffice 8 from Sun Microsystems providing powerful and integrated word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing and database capabilities for less than £30, yes, £30 from amazon.co.uk. StarOffice was originally developed by the German company StarDivision in 1986. The company and the rights to StarOffice were acquired by Sun Microsystems in 1999 with the intention of developing a competitor to Microsoft Office. In 2000, Sun released the source code of StarOffice software publically through OpenOffice.org, initiating the world’s largest open source project with over 14,000 developers. Sun then takes a "snapshot" of the OpenOffice.org code base, integrates value-added features and markets the package commercially as a new release of StarOffice.

