

Rust Report

News and views of the action in Australasia's IT sector this week

May 5, 2006

THE RUST BUCKET

We'll get back to you

CONCEIVING, HATCHING, AND NURTURING a new business are not activities for the faint-hearted. It's no secret the success rate for start-ups is pretty low, even for those with rich funding.

High tech start-ups have traditionally received funding from the venture capital (VC) community, but gone are the days of multi-million dollar launch parties, massive valuations, super burn rates, and high flying executive teams. Fewer than one in a 100 new businesses ever get to the point of paying back investors; less than one in 1000 go public.

With the market in a tizzy, where do entrepreneurs look for money to keep their companies alive? Seed money has been burnt. VCs are slow to make up their minds. Getting money from a VC firm is a bigger deal than getting seed funding. The deals take longer, dilute you more, and impose more onerous conditions.

Seasoned start-up types — and there are many of them — will tell you that their biggest asset (and biggest liability) is time. If venture capital is on your agenda, ask the VCs you approach to be up-front and honest with you. Interpret their responses objectively. Trust your gut feel because nine times out of 10 it will be correct. If phone calls and e-mails aren't returned after a positive meeting, the answer is NO.

Financial partners are not created equal. It pays to be very clear about what you are looking for and to get to know potential funders before signing a deal. Do your due diligence on them as they do theirs on you. Call several companies they've funded, not just the names that they give you. What is this investor really like? Will they let you do what you think is best or muscle in and take an active role in day-to-day management?

Venture capitalists generally focus on working with different types of companies. Look for someone who already knows something about your business and who, hopefully, is already doing work in your space.

A venture capitalist I know describes start-up ventures as a "race against insolvency" and he is right. Many of the challenges in the start-up process are utterly predictable. You need a good idea, and you need a market that has at least marginal interest in that idea — even if the market doesn't know it yet. You need good partners, unimaginable amounts of money and the ability to charm in the morning and play hardball in the afternoon.

Certainly the days when business plans on a napkin could lead to multi-million dollar cheques are over. VCs will tell you there's no shortage of good ideas for new products and services. Despite all the enthusiasm, the fund-raising climate is daunting: the countless presentations and intense scrutiny are tough to handle while keeping the company afloat as well.

— Len Rust RustOz@bigpond.com.au

Hot exports drive IBA's bumper financial year

Sydney health systems software developer IBA Health is gearing up for a strong finish to the 2005/06 financial year on the back of booming export sales. Shortly after announcing that it had been awarded a contract worth almost \$A10 million, the company upgraded its revenue and profit forecasts for the year to June 30. Sales estimates were lifted by about 10 per cent to between \$A55 and \$A57 million, while net profit before tax was boosted by between 33 and 43 per cent to about \$A15 million. "The company's strategy of expanding its international operations through increased sales focus is improving the quality of our earnings," noted Gary Cohen, chairman of IBA.

The contract that sparked the upgrade calls for the provision of a province-wide health information system for the South African Department of Health and Social Development, Limpopo Province. The Aussie technology will be deployed in 43 hospitals to create a province-wide patient-based electronic record. In addition there is an option to extend the deployment to some 300 primary health care facilities.

IBA systems are used by three of the nine South African provinces, providing hospital care to half of the country's population. "IBA is strategically positioned to work with the South African Ministry of Health to deliver a national health information system," claimed Steve Garrington, IBA's CEO. www.ibatech.com

BQT lands US data security patent

Sydney security systems developer BQT Solutions has secured a US patent for a method of securing data transmitted from a biometric device to an access control system or any other system via an encrypted line. "The need for such measures will increase as governments strive to protect their facilities when addressing security risks," said John Genner, managing director of BQT. www.bqtsolutions.com

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INSIDER EDITION

Senetas passes high-speed US test

High-speed SONET encryptors from Australian company Senetas have been deployed in a "huge" fibre optic network deployed for the US Government by US company SafeNet. The deal was announced just as SafeNet released a new family of Senetas Ethernet encryption devices in the US (*Rust Report*, Apr 28, p2).

While SafeNet declined to name the government agency involved in the deal, it claimed that hundreds of encryptors were involved and were successfully operating at speeds from OC-3 (155.52M-bits/sec) to OC-192 (9.952G-bits/sec).

"The deployment of these SONET encryptors by SafeNet is a huge endorsement for Senetas' SONET technology, designed to secure networks at speeds up to 10G-bits/sec," explained John DuBois, newly-appointed CEO of Senetas. www.senetas.com

Hansen retains financial contract

Combined Financial Processing, an operation that provides IT services to Australian credit unions, has renewed a contract for the provision of managed services with Hansen Professional Services. The original contract was signed in 1997.

Andrew Hansen, CEO of parent company Hansen Technologies, said that the \$A12 million, three-year deal included the provision of Unix systems for the core banking application, a centrally-managed LAN, LAN servers for Internet banking and insurance applications, and a wide area network for almost 200 credit union branches around Australia. www.hsnitech.com

Avand tidies up council's paperwork

Queensland software developer Avand has been selected to provide a content management system to Victoria's Latrobe City Council. Avand's DataWorks will be used to replace the council's legacy records management system and will help it comply with the state's public records requirements. The system is scheduled to go live in June, and the training of 800 council staff is to be completed by September.

DataWorks will replace the council's RecFind document management system and will be integrated with the Pathway core workflow system. In addition, the T2000 meeting management application will be replaced by Avand's Minutes Manager module for Data works later in the year, explained Chris Gorry, CEO of Avand. www.avand.com.au

Miner in shape for US regs with CQR

Adelaide-based information security services provider CQR Consulting has been selected to ensure that the Australian IT operations of gold mining company Newmont Australia comply with US corporate governance standards. "As we went through our detailed Sarbanes-Oxley compliance preparation we discovered the work required was more significant than initially envisaged," explained Bohdan Wojewidka, Newmont's executive general manager. "By getting CQR to the security compliance review side, bringing their tools and expertise to Newmont, we are able to channel our internal resources to policy development and deciding what systems need to be in place." www.cqrconsulting.com

ConnXion selected by publisher

Sydney document generation and delivery specialist ConnXion has been awarded a two-year contract to provide hosted delivery services to Pacific Magazines. The deal will require ConnXion to take responsibility for the production and delivery of the publisher's subscription renewal notices. Subscribers will be able to choose whether to receive notices by post, e-mail, fax, or SMS. www.connxion.com.au

Tabcorp set for major integration

Newly-passed NSW legislation has cleared the way for gambling group Tabcorp to integrate its NSW and Victorian wagering businesses. Amongst the anticipated changes will be the centralisation of the company's call centre operations in the Sydney suburb of Granville, the replacement of "ageing betting engine computers" in NSW, and the development of common wagering system operating platforms for the NSW and Victorian TABs. Matthew Slatter, CEO of Tabcorp, said the integration is scheduled to be completed by September.

Hyro wins extension of Feds' deal

Australian online business specialist Hyro has been selected by the Australian Attorney General's Department to extend its CiTR Access Point portal platform to support changes to the family law system. Under the new deal, CiTR Access Point will manage services provider directories and referral management for the proposed new family relationship advice line, explained Joe Calavassy, CEO of Hyro. www.hyro.com



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Eclipse puts Axapta into aged care

Solutions provider Eclipse Computing (Australia) has completed the first phase of a project to consolidate the financial systems of UnitingCare Aging, which is a provider of aged care services in NSW and the ACT. Eclipse was initially selected to provide a customised version of its aged care package, then in prototype form, which was being built on Microsoft's Axapta ERP software.

The first stage of the implementation of XaptCare covers billing, subsidies, resident funds, bonds, accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger, bank, BAS, and basic document handling. The second phase will start with a pilot implementation of modules that integrate KPI reporting and benchmarking, purchasing, budgeting, CRM, and fixed assets management, said Bradley Stroop, CEO of Eclipse. www.au.eclipsecomputing.com/default.asp

Call centre group updates backup

Call centre operator SalesForce has selected SQLTools to implement the SQLsafe high performance backup and recovery system from US developer Idera. The system will replace Quest Software's LiteSpeed backup product for SalesForce, which hosts more than 2500 call centre seats in Australia and NZ.

"With Idera Solutions you get SQL Server tools that don't create SQL Server problems and don't have complicated licensing contracts," claimed Tony Finnemore, managing director of SQL Tools. www.sqltools.com.au

Toyota's Aussie HQ wired for video

Polycom and its reseller Vantage have implemented 22 video conferencing systems at Toyota's new Australian headquarters at Port Melbourne. The technology will be used for communications between Australian offices as well as between Australia and Japan, explained James Anderson Polycom's country manager for Australia and NZ.

"Polycom's video conferencing solution enables Toyota Australia staff and customers to undertake communications that are more immediate, accessible, and relevant to day-to-day challenges," Anderson claimed. www.polycomasia.com

Callidus backs Vodafone dealers

US developer Callidus Software has provided systems that will manage Vodafone's incentive compensation programs for its Australian dealers. www.callidussoftware.com

Aussies worth watching**A roundup of companies making waves at home and abroad**

- **MORETON BAY SYSTEMS** develops advanced, low power wireless digital-camera technologies for the security, business, and home automation markets. The company has international patents pending in Australia, the US, Europe, and other countries for its ultra low power digital camera technology. www.moretonbay.com.au

- **SMARTYHOST** has provided secure hosting services since 1999. The company is dedicated to providing Web-hosting solutions to businesses of any size as well as to private users. The company, which has customers in 15 countries from Australia to America, Argentina, and across Africa, entered the top three of Australian Web hosting companies in 2005. New customers are in key SmartyHost's target markets, which include online resellers, small and medium enterprises, and private users. www.smartyhost.com.au

- **AeM GROUP** is an independent IT management and services company that counts among its clients and partners some of Australia's leading public and private sector companies, including Woodside, AXA Life, Bankwest, BHP Billiton, and ASIC. It also has clients in Hong Kong, Jakarta, and the UK. AeM offers a broad spectrum of services ranging from business strategy and planning, to systems integration and development, and extending to technical project management. www.aemgroup.com.au

- **CHANGE CORPORATION** is a consulting technology and venturing group providing business and technology consulting services to Australian and international organisations. The company's focus is on business-driven information systems consulting and systems integration. Change's clients include medium to large enterprises, and resources, financial services, and utilities companies. www.changecorporation.com.au

- **ASI** partners with products and solutions providers to offer leading-edge technology from mobile computers to enterprise systems and storage for large, network-centric computing environments. Its customer base is varied, ranging from federal and state governments, schools, colleges, and universities, to corporate and SME markets. ASI is able to service Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. www.asi.com.au

- **BLUECOLLAR.COM.AU** is a job search site dedicated to blue-collar workers. The company provides a single point of access for matching the recruitment needs of employers (direct employers or recruitment agencies and labour hire providers) of blue-collar labour. www.bluecollar.com.au

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FORWARD thinking



DEAL MAKERS

e-nable appoints S African reseller

South African company New Era Solutions has been appointed a reseller of mobile handheld solutions from Sydney developer e-nable Solutions. Under the terms of the deal New Era will distribute and sell the e-nable Your Business and e-nable Your Field Service mobile and field force automation applications, explained Paul Starr, managing director of e-nable Solutions.

"Partnering with New Era Solutions provides e-nable with a significant opportunity to grow our international revenues," Starr added. "Despite industry estimates that Australian firms will spend up to \$A134 million by 2009 on IT services in relation to their mobility projects, many organisations have yet to embrace the numerous cost and operating efficiencies and benefits to be gained from adopting enterprise mobility solutions." www.e-nablesolutions.com

Telstra clarifies position on KAZ

Telstra attempted to hose down press speculation about the future of its IT services arm, KAZ, by issuing a statement claiming that a KAZ subsidiary may be offloaded, but the core business will not be.

"As part of Telstra's strategic review announced in November 2005, KAZ is considering a number of options for its superannuation business, one option being a possible sale of the Australian Administration Services business," the statement read. AAS is KAZ's superannuation administration business.

The brief announcement closed with the statement that "KAZ's ICT services business is not part of this review, is not for sale, and is a key part of Telstra's strategy to deliver comprehensive end-to-end ICT solutions." www.telstra.com.au

realestate.com.au buys again

Real estate media company realestate.com.au has agreed to buy HubOnline Global, a provider of Web based sales and lead management solutions to Australasian real estate agents. Under the terms of the deal realestate.com.au will initially buy 87 per cent of the shares in HubOnline for \$A5.2 million, and expects to mop up the remaining 13 per cent for \$A800,000 within three months.

"We believe that there is an opportunity to move beyond online advertising by providing our 10,500 customers across Australia, NZ, and the UK, with a market-leading sales, lead management, and marketing application. This will make it easier for agents to do business and help them drive greater revenues at lower costs," explained Simon Baker, managing director of realestate.com.au. www.realestate.com.au

Kiwi company buys Australian

Argent Networks, a New Zealand telecommunications solutions developer, has bought its Australian counterpart, Integration Management (IM). Argent specialises in rating, billing, and customer care solutions, while IM provides operational support systems to some of the largest telcos in Australia, Asia, the Middle East, and the US, said Chris Jones, CEO of Argent.

"For Argent, the IM deal means we can continue to grow faster in key global telecommunications markets in Asia, as well as expand our existing customer base throughout other parts of the world," Jones added.

"IM's products are also complementary to Argent's Eclipse billing and CRM solutions, so the acquisition was a good fit for us," Jones concluded www.argentnetworks.com

SAI acquires British business

SAI Global, the international business spun off from Standards Australia, has acquired UK standards publishing and database subscription services company ILI for \$US60 million (about \$80 million). "ILI represents an important strategic acquisition for the continued growth and expansion of SAI's publishing business with operations in the UK, Europe, and North America, and an extensive range of intellectual property licences," explained Ross Wraight, CEO of SAI.

SAI has raised \$A81 million through a placement of 27 million new shares. The funds will be used to pay off short term debt required for the acquisition, and to reduce long-term debt levels. www.sai-global.com

Alliance builds regional VoIP services

Australian companies Cirrus Communications and Broadband Phone have joined forces with US equipment supplier NetGear to launch a wholesale VoIP product for regional customers. "Cirrus Communications has been monitoring the rising popularity of VoIP and was very keen to offer its customers this new technology — we just had to find the right partners to ensure our customers would get a high-quality service," said Dr Eric Heyde, CEO of Cirrus. www.cirruscomms.com.au

AWA delivers Aussie support for Sun

Sun Microsystems has appointed AWA its national authorised service partner in Australia. Under the terms of the agreement AWA will work with Sun to deliver hardware support at Sun's customer sites. www.awa.com.au

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DEAL MAKERS

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Aust partnership modernises faxes

Two Australian companies, MessageManager Solutions (www.mmanager.com) and DocsCorps (www.docscorp.com), have joined forces to develop a fax management system that can be integrated with other vendors' document management systems to meet vital requirements of the modern regulatory regime. The solution combines MessageManager with pdfDocs Desktop to provide instant access to fax from within Hummingbird and Interwoven systems, explained Ivor Livingston, CEO of MessageManager.

"With a central server managing the flow of faxed information in an electronic, not paper, format IT departments can immediately determine how that information is accepted, routed, audited, and archived," Livingston added. www.mmanager.com

— BUSINESS BRIEFS —

- After rounding up 96 per cent of Volante Group shares, Commander is mopping up the final shares on a compulsory basis and has applied to delist Volante.
- Australian e-learning specialist HarvestRoad is offering its shareholders an opportunity to buy up to \$A5000 worth of company shares without brokerage costs. The funds raised will be used to help fund international expansion, particularly in the US, Latin America, UK, and Europe.
- Sandstone Technology, an Australian developer of solutions for the financial services sector, has incorporated in its Internet products real time authentication systems from Irish developer ValidSoft. www.sandstone.com.au

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COMMS BITS**Telstra grins as NZ Govt opens net**

Just as Telstra launched a challenge against the Australian competition watchdog's actions over the telco's wholesale prices, it was playing a diametrically opposed game on the other side of the Tasman. When the NZ Government announced this week that it would force Telecom NZ to open its local loop services to competitors, Telstra's subsidiary was lavish in its praise of the relevant Minister, and it was Telecom NZ doing the bleating.

"Great decision Minister", was the headline on a release issued by TelstraClear. However, the company was less forthcoming on what it planned to do next. "We'll be dusting off plans we shelved a couple of years ago and look forward to seeing what we can do for customers," said Dr Allan Freeth, CEO of TelstraClear.

Telstra — from the horse's mouth

It's possible some true insights may emerge next Tuesday when Telstra's COO Randy Lynch presents a keynote address at CeBIT 2006 in Sydney. It is not yet clear what Lynch will talk about in his presentation *Telstra: Hear it (first) from the inside!*, but since he is the man responsible for strategic directions within the carrier there is a chance something illuminating may be forthcoming.

CeBIT runs from May 9 to May 11 at Darling Harbour in Sydney. Details at www.cebit.com.au

— Comms Briefs —

- Recently-formed Australian VoIP provider BroadIP has been appointed exclusive VoIP and networking services provider to National Telecoms Group and its channel partners. The deal gives BroadIP access to more than 16,000 SME customers of NTG and partners, as well as to new customers as they are signed up. www.broadip.com.au
- Soul and B Digital have extended their existing agreements with Optus to include access to its unbundled local loop network. The deal will allow Soul and B Digital to offer broadband data transmission services. www.optus.com.au
- Beam Communications has appointed Italian company Telespazio a reseller of Beam satellite products. Beam has worked closely with Telespazio for more than 12 months. www.beamcomm.net
- AT&T Australia has been awarded a contract to provide a South-East Asian multi-protocol label switching virtual private network for First Data International. The network will link First Data's offices in Sydney, Hong Kong, and Singapore.
- NetOptions, a subsidiary of Datacom, has been selected to provide ProCurve Networking by HP equipment to the Catholic Education Office in the Queensland city of Rockhampton. The equipment will be used to provide online access to all 28 primary schools in the Rockhampton Diocese.
- Dimension Data has built a gigabit network infrastructure for a new terminal at Adelaide Airport.

Rust e-Research Roundup

Survival in the outsourcing game

Outsourcing providers will increasingly institute standardised services as they try to generate better profits from their deals and to survive as competition for business becomes even tougher, according to recent research published by Gartner. The analyst's research vice president, Jim Longwood, highlighted that dwindling margins in the local and global market are forcing outsourcing firms to reduce their commitment to offering unique or unusual services as they do in current engagements.

"Service providers are trying to lower their cost of operations by investing in process standardisation, automation, utility offerings and remote management," Longwood said. "These investments eventually will decrease costs and could boost providers' profits in the short term. In the medium term, these investments will likely keep providers more competitive and alive at lower margins."

Longwood warned that service providers will also try to renegotiate their contracts in mid-term if they are struggling to make profit margins with a client. "The market is changing as user requirements shift from supporting customised, internally focused IT environments to shared infrastructure, applications, and processes that are based on open standards like AS8018," said Longwood.

As the push towards standardisation gains momentum, Gartner predicts:

- More than 50 per cent of new outsourcing deals will include IT utility service components through to 2008;
- More than 70 per cent of new application utility offerings will be targeted at business units or line managers, rather than IT organisations; and
- By 2015, 30 per cent of all professional IT service jobs may be delivered from emerging markets such as India and China, rather than from developed countries.

Longwood said that in an increasingly tough sourcing environment, the period of consolidation of small and large operators is not yet over, especially in Australia, as evidenced by Commander's recent takeover of Volante and CSC's formal announcement that it is for sale.

Growth slows for services vendors.

Research by independent market analyst Datamonitor has found that the world's 50 largest IT services vendors between them booked revenue of \$US262

billion last year, but grew at a slower rate than the overall market. Conducted annually, results from Datamonitor's research, *Global IT Services Top 50 Rankings*, add weight to the belief of many industry watchers that some of the sector's larger players are losing out to smaller, more focused vendors.

The vendors, which ranged from IBM Global Services with sales of \$US47 billion to Patni Computer Systems with \$US450 million, increased their combined sales by 1.9 per cent over the previous year. But this is well below the eight per cent growth in the overall market for external IT services expenditure recorded by Datamonitor.

There was little change at the top of the rankings, with IBM, EDS, Fujitsu, and Accenture again placed one to four, although BT Global Services overtook its German peer T-Systems to take eighth spot. However, India's five largest players all made significant moves up the league table, increasing their combined sales by 35 per cent to \$US9.3 billion.

Datamonitor estimated the size of the global IT services market at \$US513 billion in 2005, meaning that the 50 largest vendors claimed a share of 51 per cent. The largest player, IBM Global Services accounted for a nine per cent share, highlighting the relatively fragmented state of the marketplace.

The 10 fastest-growing IT services vendors in the top 50 rankings last year were either specialists in low-cost offshore delivery (Cognizant, Satyam, Patni, TCS, Infosys, HCL, and Wipro), or focused on the lucrative US central government and defence sector (SRA, CACI and SAIC).

The combined headcount of the top 50 vendors grew 18 per cent to 1.58 million last year, driven by aggressive recruitment in low-cost countries such as India. That country's biggest player, Tata Consultancy Services, added more than 27,000 new staff last year to take its total workforce to 66,480, while EDS plans to increase its offshore headcount from 14,500 in 2005 to 21,100 this year.

Increasing marketing momentum

Software vendors in the Asia/Pacific (excluding Japan) are gearing up to place added emphasis on partnering and alliances, given the ongoing market consolidation, technology convergence and marketing realignment trends that are currently characterising the region, according to IDC's latest report on *Partnering and Alliances in Asia/Pacific: A Software Vendors' View on Managing Partners and Alliance*.

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RUST e-RESEARCH

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"In 2005, increasing company revenue was the foremost alliance objective of software vendors in the Asia/Pacific. For 2006, software vendors will heighten efforts to increase marketing momentum, especially in China and India, given the fundamental infrastructure expansion in these countries", said an IDC analyst.

Aussie businesses hungry for IP

Corporate Australia's hunger for data services will drive nearly 17 per cent growth in data service revenues between 2005 and 2010, as companies migrate their data networks to next-generation technologies, according to Market Clarity.

The company forecast that the total Australian retail and wholesale data services market, worth over \$2.6 billion in 2005, will grow to more than \$3 billion by 2010. Other predictions in the report include that between 2005-2010:

- IP/MPLS revenue will grow by a total of 93.7 per cent
- Ethernet revenue will grow by more than 157 per cent
- Dark fibre revenue will grow by 165.1 per cent
- Frame relay revenue will fall by nearly 40 per cent
- ATM revenue will fall by 40.5 per cent
- Leased line revenue will fall by 15.9 per cent
- Retail ISDN revenue will fall by 42.6 per cent

"From SMEs all the way up to large corporate/government customers, Australia's data users are at the beginning of a historic migration to next-generation services," said Market Clarity's CEO Shara Evans. "While there is a clear decline in traditional service technologies like frame relay, ATM and leased line services, we are predicting strong overall growth as customers implement next-generation technologies. In particular, customers are clearly moving to roll out Ethernet and IP/MPLS-based services."

Evans identified hunger for bandwidth, the growth of business IP telephony, and converged applications, as well as ongoing upgrading of carrier infrastructure, as key factors driving the shift to next-generation data networking technologies.

Evans said she believed, however, that there will be some traditional services that survive the transition to next-generation networking, "While there will be some loss of connections and revenue in both the leased line and frame relay markets, these services will retain a foothold in the retail market."

BY ASSOCIATION

Entrepreneurs rewarded

By Rob Durie*

The 2006 iAwards were held on April 7 in Sydney. Presented by the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), the *Australian Financial Review*, the CSIRO ICT Centre, and *MIS Australia*, the iAwards embraced the entrepreneurial spirit of the Australian ICT industry.

Yet, the role of the iAwards is not just to reward innovation. They recognise the value of an industry that contributes 4.6 per cent of Australia's GDP and underpins productivity growth in many sectors. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2002-03 the ICT industry was responsible for generating more than \$A36 billion — more than the agriculture, forestry and fishing, defence, and education industries.

This builds on previous research by the Department of Information Technology, Communications and the Arts, which revealed that ICT contributed up to 85 per cent of productivity growth in the manufacturing sector and up to 78 per cent of productivity growth in the services sector over the last two decades.

This year, iAwards winners spanned industries from healthcare to agriculture, from education to tourism and hospitality, and from finance to security. Our healthcare sector, for instance, is increasingly reliant on ICT to improve the lives of all Australians, and two iAwards winners were rewarded for their contributions to e-health.

Seeing Machines was acknowledged for the world's first non-contact objective visual field test, which will significantly improve the ability of clinicians to diagnose certain diseases, such as glaucoma, by providing reliable early stage detection. Meanwhile, Medtamic's innovation, MD Analyze, provides surgeons with instant access to vital data enabling them to provide better treatment in line with industry best practice.

Can you imagine the accounting industry without MYOB? Very few people — if any — could. Craig Winkler, MYOB's CEO, was recognised for his contribution not only to the ICT industry, but to business in general. A recipient of the CSIRO Tony Benson Award for Individual Achievement in ICT, Craig commented: "Australia is a great home to ICT innovation, and I'm proud to be part of both a company and an industry that together keep pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve."

This year's Inspiration iAward for overall ICT excellence, won by Wotif.com, is another great example of ICT enablement. It has changed the accommodation market for both hoteliers and customers.

A list of iAwards winners is at www.aiia.com.au

*Rob Durie is CEO of the Australian Information Industry Association

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REVOLVING DOORS

Chai heads 3Com region

3Com Corporation has appointed Peter Chai vice president and general manager of the Asia/Pacific region. He will be based in Singapore.

Before joining 3Com, Chai was vice president and country manager of British Telecom Global Services for South-East Asia. His career started in Australia where, after completing his tertiary studies at Bond University, he worked for Telstra and Optus. He has also run businesses in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Oracle boosts JDE arm

Oracle has boosted its Australian JD Edwards operation by appointing Eugene McConville general manager of JD Edwards applications, and Lloyd Perrin business development manager for JD Edwards applications.

McConville was previously with Symix, where he became general manager after Mapics acquired Symix/Frontstep. Early in his career he worked in IT and project management for the Victorian Government.

Perrin worked for Computer Associates before joining JD Edwards in 1993. In 2000 he left to join Ernst & Young in that firm's JD Edwards services practice.

IProvide finds sales head

IProvide by AAPT has appointed Chris Roberts director of sales. The IProvide partner program focuses on developing products with systems integrators, value-added resellers, and application service providers to fulfil the requirements of SME customers.

Before joining IProvide Roberts was in a general manager's position at PowerTel, prior to which he was responsible for setting product direction for Request Broadband. He has also worked for Siemens.

Avoga consulting head

Australian IT services and consulting firm Avoga has appointed Branko Ceran its business consulting manager. A 17-year industry veteran, Ceran has held senior roles with EDS, MLC, and AUSMAQ.

Plowman at Fairfax

Sam Plowman has been promoted to general manager of online real estate at Fairfax Digital. He was previously the company's director of new business.

Scrimshaw quits boards

Russell Scrimshaw has resigned from the boards of ASX-listed data communications solutions provider Mobilesoft and its subsidiary Mobilesoft (Australia).

Scrimshaw had been acting chairman for a month, but with his departure Rob McKelvey has been elected chairman of both companies. He had previously worked for Sterling Software and Gartner Group.

Changes at Orion

Noel Robertson has resigned as CEO and a director of Orion Telecommunications, leading to a review of management. Executive chair Amanda Lacaze will take control of the company until a replacement CEO is named. Shane Allan has joined the board as a non-executive director.

Feds boost board

Elizabeth Lewis-Gray and Bill Hassell have joined the Australian Industry Research and Development Board, and David Miles has accepted another term as the board's chairman.

Lewis-Gray is a founder of Victorian minerals processing technology company Gekko Systems.

Hassell, who has had a long public sector career, is also on the board of Antares Energy.

O'Brien in principal's role

Maxine O'Brien has been appointed principal of Phoenix Consulting, the consulting services practice of the Ambit Group of Companies. An experienced management consultant and business manager she was most recently in charge of the internal consulting arm of Australia Post, and has also worked for chartered accounting firms.

— Around the traps —

- Ravi Bhatia plans to retire as chairman of wireless broadband carrier Access Providers at the end of April, when he will move to the US to work for a large US telco. CEO Keith Ondarchie will be acting chairman.

- Anthony Dage has joined Access Providers' board as a non-executive director.

- Telstra has appointed Vincent Morreale senior vice president of sales and marketing at its US subsidiary. He was previously with Alvarion, and also worked for Nortel and Prism Communications.