

# evolution

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## WELCOME

This summer, the two giants of the software industry, Microsoft and Google, seem to have started the next stage of their ongoing war. Each has made significant product announcements and launches that are in direct competition with the other.

First up was Microsoft with its launch of Bing, a new search engine that is rapidly gaining followers and admirers and is seen as a significant improvement on their previous MSN offering. This is obviously direct competition for Google's main money-spinner and follows on from Microsoft's failure to acquire Yahoo.

In turn, Google has announced that they'll be launching an operating system for netbooks and this is seen as their initial attempt to rival the Windows operating system. Microsoft then retaliated by revealing that their next version of Office will be available online to compete with Google Apps.

Clearly, this is going to run and run and neither is likely to be completely dominant in either sector in the future. It does seem though that both companies acknowledge that there is a time and place for both thick (Windows style) and thin (Internet delivered) client computing. This is our view as well and, as always, we aim to advise on the best value approach for your own individual circumstances.

**Andrew Robson**, Chief Executive

## KEEP IN TOUCH



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## / GETTING IN TOUCH THE CRM WAY

On every television channel you tune into, the state of the economy is always headline news. From BBC news to Coronation Street, no one can escape the horror stories that are affecting many businesses today. Even so some businesses are making vital errors in their customer service and sales. 'Make a customer not a sale' should be the mantra that many businesses adopt but many are not. So how can a business ensure that they are taking care of their customers and building long-term relationships rather than short-term one off sales?

One of the ways businesses can achieve long term relationships is through a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system. Co-ordination, development and focus on customers can be achieved by implementing a flexible, robust system. This will help build unique relationships by concentrating not only on the satisfaction of your product or service, but on the importance of your relationship with your customers. Knowing your customers and their needs as thoroughly as possible is central to any business; and that's the very point of customer relationship management systems.

For those unfamiliar with the term, CRM gathers significant facts about customers, including: sales: data, shopping preferences, contact information and other data, for use in better serving them. This collection of information can be analysed and employed to create a profile of your customers to enhance the quality of

customer service. Solutions such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM software are designed to make that information easier to manage and as useful as possible.

There has been a lot of progression in CRM systems over the past few years and one that is not easy to escape is Social CRM. Today's fascination and rapid developments within social networking mediums means that it

is now essential for businesses to ensure they build strong relationships with their customers. Social mediums such as Twitter and Facebook provide your customers with the opportunity to communicate freely their perceptions on your products and services. With Social CRM you can monitor and analyse real time customer conversations and act on it quickly. By using Social CRM you add a new dimension to your interactions with customers giving you a chance to leverage this additional information to add better value to your relationships.

Banking on the fact that your customers use these social mediums, your business now needs to provide enough source of interest to make your customers want to continue your relationship with them in this way. Coca-Cola tracked a Facebook group and found they could cooperate with the founders of this group to provide members with privileged information and directly answer any questions that were posted on the group page. Coca-Cola has learnt a vast amount of knowledge about their customers strengthening loyalty to the brand and beginning new relationships with individuals that they would not have been able to contact

in any other way. More impressive is Virgin use of the Social CRM. They are actively monitoring issues, frustrations, and recommendations to solve challenges as they arise.

The recent release of the Microsoft Dynamics CRM Social Networking Accelerator provides an easy way of gathering valuable insights in to your customer. Despite the fact that the above system provides additional help on dealing with your customer relations, you still need to ensure that your account managers stay in control of this communication. Gaining a negative reputation for not maintaining this communication with your customers could spell trouble for your revenues in the long run.

To help assess whether you should consider the purchase of a CRM system, email [info@perfect-image.co.uk](mailto:info@perfect-image.co.uk)



## / TECHIE UTOPIA

### Hyper-V 2.0

Windows Server 2008 R2 is due for release late 2009 or early 2010 and with it, a whole host of new features. It is also Microsoft's first x64 only operating system. One of the most anticipated upgrades is the Hyper-V 2.0.

Microsoft's first attempt at virtualisation (the first release of Hyper-V) was first included as a beta version shipped after 2008's release and is a hypervisor-based virtualization system for x64 systems. This allowed multiple virtual machines to be run from a single physical host. Despite this great advantage, Hyper-V is not without limitations. It does not allow you to live migrate a virtual machine from one host to another without downtime and it also does not have a cluster aware file system which complicates high availability.

Hyper-V 2.0 addresses all of these limitations. First of all it has a cluster aware file system called Clustered Shared Volumes which allows Live Migration. The benefit of this is that virtual machines can be moved from one physical host to another with no interruption to service. Hyper-V 2.0 will also support 32 logical processors on the host machine which is twice the number of the first release. Another new feature is the ability to hot add/remove VHD disks to running virtual machines without a reboot.

As software virtualisation continues to grow so does the hardware and Hyper-V 2.0 makes the most of this with SLAT (second level translation). This allows more of the virtualisation overhead to be offloaded from the hypervisor to the CPU freeing resources for virtual machines. SLAT works on both Intel's nested page tables and AMD's Enhanced page tables.

To complete the feature set dynamic memory has been added this allows memory to be to be dynamical allocated or removed with no interruption to service. This dramatically improves the consolidation ratio as memory is no longer hard allocated to a virtual machine instead a pool of memory is shared across all VM's.

Upgrading to Hyper-V will also be easy, you only need to update Hyper-V to R2 no other infrastructure updates are needed.

***For more information on Hyper V please contact us. Details are on the back page***

## / THE ECOMMERCE POWERHOUSE

There has been a lot of hype surrounding Magento. It was recently named the fastest growing ecommerce product on the market with over 500000 downloads. With the boom of Magento we take a quick look at Magento's credentials.

Magento is an open-source e-commerce platform providing businesses with a sophisticated software platform to manage their online sales. Originally developed by Varien, a US company, it has a very large developer community who create extensions to the product, ensuring it always caters for a wide range of organisations and business requirements. Magento is currently used by tens of thousands of merchants worldwide and appears to be the ecommerce platform of choice with many businesses moving from existing platforms to Magento.

The economic climate has had a hugely positive impact on the Magento business as medium and large-sized companies start to focus more on cost, flexibility, and time-to-market. The Magento platform offers the same functionality as leading enterprise-class proprietary software providers in the e-commerce market but at 10% to 20% of the cost and takes less time to create a market ready website. For online retailers, this is very important as every day offline is lost revenue.

There are two editions of Magento available: Community and Enterprise. The Enterprise edition has a few additional features including: advanced administrator roles, gift certificates, store credit and private sales. It also has a higher annual cost associated with it compared to the Community edition which has no cost directly associated with it. However the Community edition, as you would expect, has strong community behind it, meaning there is little doubt that you will be able to get the extra features in the future that you get with the Enterprise edition now. On top of this there are many websites offering hints and tips to help you manage your site, although Magento is so user friendly we doubt you will need them.

If you're looking for a platform to use for your own business, Magento Community edition is ideal in helping you keep costs down whilst delivering a strong, stable online platform for you to grow your business from. It integrates with PayPal and Google Checkouts as standard it offers a saved credit card option (make sure your covered by your SSL when using this option).

The beauty of Magento is that it can be used for small to very large organisations. It is feature rich but so easy to use!

Perfect Image is excited to offer Magento as one of its solutions. We can tailor the client's Magento store by creating a professional design as well as being able to customise or integrate it where necessary to meet the business' needs.

***For more information on Magento visit our website***

## / PERFECT IMAGE NEWS

### ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO TELL YOUR EXCEL FROM YOUR ACCESS?

Perfect Image is pleased to announce the launch of [www.makethemostof.com](http://www.makethemostof.com)

The website hopes to provide you with useful tips and hints to assist you in your day to day tasks. It is a one stop shop for your IT needs hopefully preventing you from spending valuable time on search engines and sites trying to find the answer.

All suggestions relate to the use of business applications helping you get more from your current IT investments. The website enables you to search for suggestions by product and by business area.

When you sign up, you will be able to upload your own articles, rate articles and provide comments in addition to downloading any extra material.

We hope you find the site useful and welcome your comments and suggestions.



### WE HAVE A NEW MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER!

After many requests we have launched eVolve, a way for us to provide you with valuable information, updates on our services and news on a more regular basis. You will still continue to receive Evolution on a quarterly basis. To sign up for eVolve please email [marketing@perfect-image.co.uk](mailto:marketing@perfect-image.co.uk)

- Perfect Image supported the North East Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting in June.
- We have expanded our skills and expertise in our Managed Services team, with the new edition of Stuart Carruthers, Senior Infrastructure Engineer.
- 5 members of staff will be taking part in the Great North Bike Ride on 30th August 2009. They will cycle 54 miles through the beautiful Northumberland scenic coastline raising money for The Chris Lucas Trust ([www.chrislucustrust.com](http://www.chrislucustrust.com)).

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