

# The Scout Association streamlines communication and administration systems with new online membership solution

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The Scout Association has launched an online membership solution to improve communication and reduce administration throughout the organisation. This has been achieved by combining a new-look website with a web-enabled membership solution.

For the first time, The Scout Association is providing online material specifically for the 400,000 young people in the Movement.

After evaluating a number of options the Association selected Strategic Thought's solution of IBM WebSphere Portal in conjunction with APT's Stratum Membership System. Strategic Thought was selected for its integration expertise, using IBM's WebSphere product, and its ability to understand the requirements of this large organisation.

"The Scouts has a complex hierarchical structure with people holding data at every level of that hierarchy" said James Wren, the Association's Head of Membership Services. "We are moving towards a centralised storage system instead of multiple databases, all containing similar data, there will be just one. In addition individuals will be able to manage their own information therefore ease of use technology was essential."

As the system is introduced youth Members aged between 6 and 25 years will be able to register on the site. As well as accessing information on activities and news they will be able to maintain their own membership details. "WebSphere Portal Server has made it possible to have different interfaces to the system for the different age groups. For example, Beaver Scouts can enter the site via a colourful world of cartoons, games and puzzles. For older Members there is more in-depth material to support their personal development.

The new de-centralised membership management solution from APT Solutions Limited differs significantly from a traditional centralised scheme where a single department or individual has access to all membership data. "The fact that the system is now browser-based means that authorised users, and most importantly their membership, will be able to access the system from wherever they can gain internet access" said Roger Bourdon, APT Solution's Commercial Director. "We are only through stage one of the project and the Association is already reaping the benefits of an integrated database."

With the de-centralised system many parts of the organisation will now have direct access to their own and other people's data. "This increased flow emphasised the need to plan and test the solution thoroughly." said Iain Thompson, project manager and Managing Consultant at Strategic Thought. "It was necessary to test not just the technical aspects but all the workflow processes as well to ensure everyone got what they needed."

Strategic Thought was introduced to The Scout Association by IBM and from the outset the relationship worked well. James Wren said, "Strategic Thought has been great to work with. The consultants have been enthusiastic, keen and understood what we wanted to achieve from very early on. This helped to keep the project moving and on track."

James Wren is keen to develop the project on an ongoing basis: "We see the web playing an increasingly important role in supporting everyone in Scouting particularly young people" he said.

#### Notes for Editors

- Scouting is the UK's biggest co-educational youth movement offering young people aged 6 to 25 and adults the experience of a lifetime
- Worldwide it boasts nearly 30 million members in 216 countries
- Every Year 50,000 Scouts travel to every continent to climb mountains, canoe down rivers, help developing countries build schools and have fun and adventure!
- Each night of the week 100,000 people go to Scouts. That's more than the Millennium Stadium can hold!
- Scouting will celebrate its centenary year in 2007

Further background information can be accessed from the Scout Association's corporate website [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk) and its Members' website [www.scoutbase.org.uk](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk)

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#### APT Solutions Limited

Founded in 1988, APT Solutions is a leading supplier of membership/contact management systems and outsourced services to the not-for-profit sector. With over 50 major systems installed in both the UK and Australia, there are in excess of 1,500 users working with the software each day managing databases from 2,000 to 1.7m records

Among the services on offer from APT Solutions are:

- Mailings, printing and fulfilment

Membership renewals, personalised letters and mailing fulfilments from small mailings to hundreds of thousands are easily dealt with.

- Telephone campaigns

From premium rate telephone line call management solutions to short subscription chasing campaigns, APT Solutions offers the most versatile packages.

- Membership Hosting, Management and Data Processing

Flexible and efficient ways of maintaining databases, whether for short or long periods – APT Solutions will design the appropriate package.

- Subscriptions Processing and Payment Chasing

A fast and effective programme to keep accounting and banking simple.

- Document Imaging and Indexing

Saving storage, photocopying and time, APT will image any document, store and index onto disc.

- Network Security and Systems Design

APT Solutions will advise on all security, virus protection and everything to do with asset management, including disaster recovery.

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#### About Strategic Thought Limited

Founded in 1987, Strategic Thought is a technology and services company specialising in mission-critical applications, portal and hub integration and using these skills have developed and provide the enterprise risk management software system - Active Risk Manager. Strategic Thought has been an IBM Premier Business Partner since 1999 and is an ISO 9001 certified company.

For further information please visit: [www.strategicthought.com](http://www.strategicthought.com) or contact:

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