ColArt to roll-out Microsoft Lync to 16 offices worldwide following successful UK project

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February 5 2013 – ColArt, the world's leading supplier of colour and art materials will be rolling-out Microsoft Lync to 16 offices across Europe, America and China, with the support of Advanced 365 (Advanced). The project follows a successful Lync project, which Advanced successfully completed in two of ColArt's UK-based offices in 2012.

ColArt, a fast-growing business worth £150 million, holds one-third share of the world market for artists' colours to the education and craft markets. The art supplier operates in 16 countries and sells products in 120 countries across the world.

Advanced was initially contracted to support ColArt with the challenge of moving its headquarters to London and retiring a legacy telephony system. Advanced implemented Microsoft Lync and a new VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephony system in both the London and the Kidderminster offices in 2012, replacing a number of disparate systems and servers. This project involved integrating Microsoft Office Exchange 2010 with the new VoIP system, using Microsoft Lync (http://www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/365/microsoft-lync/index.php).

UK staff are now able to communicate more effectively through a mixture of methods including instant messaging, web meetings and video conferencing. Lync's presence feature provides users with visibility of where their co-workers are at any time. Users can see if a colleague is in the office, working from home, in a meeting, on holiday or has left for the day. Presence will also indicate when a busy colleague will next be available, and how they can best be contacted.

The installation has already enhanced communication across the group, especially amongst mobile workers, and has created a much richer collaborative environment for ColArt's UK staff. The success of the project will serve as a best practice model for the global roll-out of Lync which will take place in 2013.

Mike Panther, Global Infrastructure Manager, ColArt says, "We need to unify our Global IT strategy so that IT can more effectively support the business. The roll-out of Microsoft Lync to 16 global offices will allow staff to communicate and collaborate more effectively, better supporting operations and enabling higher levels of efficiency."

Once Lync is live across all 16 offices, ColArt is anticipating more unified working and an improved 'single company' mentality. There will also be reduced office-to-office international calling rates.

"We will be able to bring staff together into a single, international team, allowing us to keep everyone fully-informed of our strategy and make decisions more quickly."

"Advanced has done a great job with the UK project and we're looking forward to replicating this success across Europe, America and China." Adds Mike Panther.

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Notes to editors

About ColArt www.colart.com

ColArt comprises a group of famous art materials companies of complementary character and with origins dating back to the early 18th century. This proud history forms the cornerstone of a unique brand heritage.

At the heart of the ColArt expertise lies a commitment to nurture and develop these great brands.We do this by celebrating their diversity, fostering their individuality and preserving their unique elements of heritage.

At the same time, we constantly respond to the changing needs of artists by improving the performance of all the product ranges through the application of the latest available technology.

Today, ColArt is by far the leading supplier of artists' materials in the world, with a portfolio that includes three of the world's top six artists' colour brands.

About Advanced 365 www.advancedcomputersoftware.com/365

Advanced 365 provides a full outsourcing solution for desktop to data centre service delivery, ITIL based service management, application development, unified communications and cloud enablement. Advanced 365 designs, deploys and operates applications using .NET, Microsoft SQL Server, the Microsoft Office System and Microsoft CRM.

Service delivery can be provided from either Advanced 365's own data centre facility or one of its managed suites (hosted and managed in shared facilities). Advanced 365 also provides Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) utilising its own cloud platform. Quality and security is assured through the company's ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 accreditations.

Core offerings include:

• IT Managed services focusing on the core utility components of clients' IT operations (including monitoring, backup, email and hosting right up to full IT infrastructure outsourcing).
• Unified Communications and collaboration solutions that consolidate telephony, presence, mobile and contact centre systems and are designed to bring data, voice and video together. Technologies include Microsoft Lync, Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Zeacom Contact Centre, SIP and many more.
• Line of business applications designed to improve the flow of information around an organisation. Applications include Microsoft SharePoint 2010, Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Microsoft Business Intelligence.
• Application development to deliver a fully-supported application managed service for both existing legacy applications and new applications developed by Advanced 365.

Advanced acquired Fabric Technologies in 2012. The acquisition of Fabric strengthens Advanced 365's

managed services portfolio and provides a new unified communications offering to Advanced's customer base. The integration of Fabric into the Advanced 365 division creates one of the UK's biggest Microsoft partners.

Fabric Technologies provides the Unified Communications service as part of the Advanced 365 division.

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