



Case Communications October Newsletter

Greetings,

Welcome to the Case Communications October Newsletter. This month we look at several security issues. New credit card legislation comes into force at the end of the month and just how much information should you put on social networking sites.

Are we being cheated on Broadband data rates and is Britain falling behind when it comes to 'Fast Broadband'?

We take our hats off to Luke Varley a Shell Step student who made a major contribution to Case Communications XLR 550 product launch and who also won a Shell Enterprising student award.

Nokia adds Linux to a new WiMAX devices and we look at what motivates Linux developers, money of the sharing of their ideas.

Apples iPhone hits a software snag and XP gets an extended shelf life.

Indian IT firms top the polls when it comes to stock market performance.

We encourage our readers to add any thoughts or articles to this our monthly newsletter.

Traders Must comply with credit card security standards by 30th September 2007

Master card and Visa have set two deadlines by which traders must comply. Level 1 (Traders which have more than 6 million transaction a year) companies face a Sept 30 compliance deadline, while Level 2 (Traders that process between 20,000 and up to 6 million transactions a year) merchants have until the end of December to have their security up to standard.

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Are Social networking sites good fun or a potential source of information for fraudsters?

Social Networking site have become very popular over the last few years, with sites like MySpace claiming over 100million

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accounts, but how safe are these sites and do they provide an ideal hunting ground for identity fraudsters, or are they just good fun?

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Broadband speeds rarely perform at their advertised rates

There is a huge gap between advertised broadband speeds and the actual speeds users can achieve, research has shown

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Apple software update is disabling iPhones

An Apple software update is disabling iPhones that have been unlocked by owners who wanted to choose which mobile network to use.

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Microsoft Windows XP gets extended shelf life

Customer demand has forced Microsoft to extend the shelf life of Windows XP by five months.

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Open Soucre programmers are motivated by seeing their ideas in use.

Open-Source developers are people who develop programs not to get rich, but because they want to see their ideas happen, they want people to use their ideas,

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Nokia details Linux tablet WiMAX plans

Nokia plans to ship WiMAX-enabled Internet tablets next year. The as-yet unnamed model or models in Nokia's Linux-powered "N-series" Internet Tablet line will use Intel "Baxter Peak" WiMAX chips and will support Sprint's "Xohm" WiMAX service, the top phone-maker has revealed.

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Ofcom fears the UK is falling behind in fast broadband

Regulator Ofcom has added its voice to the growing debate about how the UK should roll out super-fast broadband.

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Indian IT firms shares top the polls

New research has found that shares in the major India-based IT services providers have vastly outperformed their western rivals so far this year, despite falling sharply in May and starting from valuations based on much higher multiples of earnings and revenues

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Case Student Luke Varley wins Most Enterprising Student on Shell Step Scheme

On the 7th September Luke Varley one of Case Communications summer students won the Shell Step title of 'Most Enterprising Student' and has gone on to win a place at the semi finals to be held at Rockingham Stadium, Northampton.

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Vendors of security products are making the most of these deadlines to try and sell their latest PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance products, while industry experts want companies to sit down and assess their position.

A recent report by VeriSign suggested that companies are 'stumbling' towards compliance. The Mountain View, Calif.-based company based its report on a review of 60 PCI audits it recently conducted for 50 large companies. VeriSign measured the extent to which companies are meeting more than 230 data security requirements and found 53% failing to meet key elements of PCI DSS. They found companies coming up short in several key areas, including regular testing, securing applications, logging and protecting data. The chief point of failure for 48% of customers was that they weren't regularly testing their controls to make sure they work.

The biggest sticking point for many is that there's so much detail to comply with," said Graham Gillen, a senior manager in VeriSign's PCI group. "Scanning is an obvious requirement, but there has been confusion over which systems should be scanned, how deep a scan needs to go, and so on." On the plus side, fewer companies are failing now compared to last year, when VeriSign saw a 73% failure rate among customers.

But that piece of good news is offset by the fact that an ever-shifting data security landscape is causing many enterprises to fail requirements that they had passed the year before. For example, Gillen said, IT shops are supposed to segregate data to make it harder to steal, but doing so means there are more systems that have to be scanned. So scanning procedures that were adequate a year before become insufficient. "As you solve one problem, it creates another problem," he said. Surprised by ongoing failures

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As the IT officer for Biddeford Savings Bank in Maine, USA, Keith Gosselin has found that most security regulations and standards carry common demands. Company computer systems must be protected by multiple layers of security, including data encryption, and sensitive customer information should not be stored unless absolutely necessary. Gosselin said he can understand the difficulties some companies face. There's a lot of oversight today that didn't exist five years ago, he noted. But he was surprised to see companies continuing to stumble over testing procedures.

He said one surprise from the VeriSign report is the high failure rate some continue to have in meeting third-party testing requirements. "I would think for the most part this would be an easy one to knock off and I would assume that many of these companies would already have an engagement with someone in place [for proper testing procedures]," he said. "That said, it surprises me how high that number is." Gosselin was also surprised by the suggestion that many companies keep struggling to keep track of all their stored customer data. After all, he said, companies should know by now that customer data shouldn't be stored in the first place. "Why would anyone want to hold on to that data?" he asked. "Just pass it through to VISA and imagine how much easier your life suddenly becomes."

In the final analysis, VeriSign's Gillen said companies who continue to struggle should not panic. Visa and MasterCard have hinted they will be forgiving to those who at least show they have a plan to address remaining problems, he said. "As long as you know what you need to do and when you need to do it, that'll probably be considered good enough in most cases," he said. "When the deadline hits, just be able to say where work is still needed and what you are doing about it."

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Are Social networking sites good fun or a potential source of information for fraudsters?

Social Networking sites have become very popular over the last few years, with sites like MySpace claiming over 100 million accounts, but how safe are these sites and do they provide an ideal hunting ground for identity fraudsters, or are they just good fun?

These sites are attracting an online generation, and sites such as Facebook claim up to 35 million people using its site to Blog, and catch up with old friends and to share photos'

Fueling fraudsters

There is a growing feeling amongst internet security experts that users posting so much information about themselves online is inviting trouble, and this has led to the media questioning the wisdom of sharing this information on the Internet "Social networking sites, we believe, do have some dangers if people don't handle their information properly," said Neil Munroe of credit reference agency Equifax.

"There is information there which it's been proven that fraudsters will use to actually steal your identity, not necessarily on the Internet, but in other areas.

"With this warning in mind it is astonishing to some just how much personal information is shared by unwary users. "The sort of information that people need to avoid in public areas on social networks are things like their mobile phone number, their mother's maiden name, their full date of birth, that sort of thing," explained Chris McCafferty of MySpace.

According to Mr Munroe this is the basic kind of information that fraudsters will use. "They will quite easily take that information and build up a profile to start taking credit out in your name or even take over your account. They could, for example, pretend to be you and take money out of your savings account." It is easy to avoid playing in to the hands of the people stealing identities - simply do not put any information that might be useful to a fraudster on your profile page, or anywhere on the web.

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In the last year online banking fraud in the UK has risen by 40%, according to banking trade body Apacs.

Workplace worries

But it is not just identity theft that users should be worried about, the online age presents new challenges in the workplace too.

Many employers are checking job seekers out online to see what they do when out of the office. "When people are applying for jobs they should be very cautious and make sure that everything online does represent them in the best possible way," warned recruitment agent Belinda Walmsley.

"The big no-nos are criminal activity or evidence of drug taking. No employer is going to look at a candidate where that is evident. "Then you have the things that are seemingly innocuous, for example a simple posting about being too drunk to make it into work.

Obviously if a prospective employer was to see that, they would really question whether you were the right candidate to join their firm." The issue of privacy is a sticky one. Take the case of University of Oxford university officials who trawled students' Facebook pages, searching for evidence of extreme post exam parties where students have a habit of getting more than a little bit boisterous.

On the evidence of several Facebook photos the university engaged in disciplinary action against a number of students.

Taking control

Experts counsel people to consider their social network page as resembling an ad in a local newspaper and few would take out one to show off intimate details of their life.

So why do so many post so personal information online for the world to see? "It's important to remember that you are in control of how public or how private you want your MySpace page to be," said Mr McCafferty. "So you can make your entire profile private if that is what you want to do, and then only friends that you accept on your list will be able to see your profile."

In a similar vein, Mr Munroe from Equifax recommends taking a steps to protect personal information. "Make sure that you are using privacy guidelines that are on the site. A lot of people aren't aware that the sites do offer privacy guards which you can use to actually lock down the people who can see your information. "And

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don't post things like when you are going on holiday," he added.

Mr McCafferty agreed: "People should remember that they are in control. They are putting information up on sites. So don't put information up that you don't want the whole world to know."

Whether people exercise control to avoid junk mail, stalkers or identity fraudsters, knowing what information about you is on the web is imperative.

If you would not give the information to a stranger, do not put it on the web

Based on an article from the BBC

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Broadband speeds rarely perform at their advertised rates

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A survey by consumer group Which? found that broadband packages promising speeds of up to 8Mbps (megabits per second) actually achieved far less.

Tests of 300 customers' net connections revealed that the average download speed they were getting was 2.7Mbps.

Which? has called on regulator Ofcom and Trading Standards to launch a fresh investigation into UK broadband.

Misleading ads

The speed tests were prompted by complaints from members of the public, unhappy with the speeds of their broadband connections.

In the last 12 months more internet service providers (ISPs) have offered services, promising speeds of up to 8Mbps.

The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) has investigated several cases of misleading promotions, most recently asking Bulldog to make it clear in its adverts that speed was dependent on how far away from the telephone exchange people lived.

It ruled that broadband providers could use the words "up to" 8Mbps when describing services as long as customers were likely to get close to those speeds.

The average speed achieved in the Which? trials was 2.7Mbps, with the lowest coming in at under 0.09Mbps, barely at dial-up rates, and the maximum only reaching 6.7Mbps.

"It is shocking that internet service providers can advertise ever-increasing speeds that seem to bear little resemblance to what most people can achieve in reality," said which.co.uk editor Malcolm Coles.

"If it's unlikely that you'll reach the advertised speed it

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should be made clear up front, so that you know with some certainty what you're buying," he added.

Lack of demand?

Ofcom said it was monitoring the situation.

"If we get increasing complaints we may look at what more can be done. We are working closely with the ASA and it is very important that consumers know what they are getting and what they are paying for," said an Ofcom spokeswoman.

According to a Which? survey, done in conjunction with the speed tests, only one in 10 of its members thought that a broadband service advertised as up to 8Mbps would actually deliver the top speed.

Tim Johnson from analyst firm Point Topic believes that people are generally resigned to the fact that they are not going to get super-fast broadband any time soon.

"There is currently small demand for 8Mbps and we are in the early days for things that need that kind of bandwidth. The fact is that video generally is not served at those speeds even if you could receive it," he said.

A BT spokesman confirmed that 8Mbps would be a rarity for users.

"Virtually no-one will get it. The laws of physics start applying as soon as it leaves the exchange and you would have to live on top of the exchange to get the full 8 megabits," he said.

BT is currently upgrading its exchanges as part of its 21st Century Network (21CN) programme. It will allow for broadband speeds of up to 24Mbps and will start to be made available from early 2008.

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Apple software update is disabling iPhones

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Earlier this week Apple said a planned update would leave the device "permanently inoperable".

Thousands of iPhone owners hacked their expensive gadget in order to unlock it for use with other mobile carriers and to run a host of unsupported programs.

There are also reports of the update causing issues with unaltered iPhones.

On Monday Apple issued a statement in which it said many of the unauthorised iPhone unlocking programs caused "irreparable damage" to the device's software.

The company said this would "likely result in the modified iPhone becoming permanently inoperable when a future Apple-supplied iPhone software update is installed".

That warning has now proved correct as many owners are reporting their phones no longer work following installation of the update.

Apple requires iPhone owners to take out a lengthy contract with AT&T in the United States but there are a number of programs on the net that unlock the device for use with other networks.

Some owners are reporting on technology blogs and Apple's own forums that the update is deleting contacts information, as well as photos and music, on iPhones that have not been modified in any way.

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An Apple iPhone

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Microsoft Windows XP gets extended shelf life

Microsoft was scheduled to stop selling the six-year-old operating system on 30 January 2008 to leave the field clear for Vista.

Now the date on which many sellers of XP will no longer be able to offer it has been lengthened to 30 June 2008.

Microsoft said the change was to help those customers that needed more time to make the switch to Vista.

Sales profile

In a statement Mike Nash, Microsoft's Windows product manager, said: "...maybe we were a little ambitious to think that we would need to make Windows XP available for only a year after the release of Windows Vista."

He added that most of the other operating systems that Microsoft has produced were available for about two years after a new version shipped.

The newest Microsoft operating system, Windows Vista, had a staged release between November 2006 and late January 2007.

In some quarters Vista had a lukewarm response and in April 2007 PC maker Dell was forced by customers to re-start sales of computers with XP installed. In January of that year the computer firm switched to Vista on almost all of the machines aimed at home users.

Software giant Microsoft does run a scheme that lets people rollback installation of Vista business and ultimate edition to Windows XP by ringing a customer support centre and getting an activation code.

Microsoft denied that the policy change was due to slow demand for Vista. Mr Nash said that up to the summer of 2007 Microsoft had sold more than 60 million licences for Vista. This put it on track to be the fastest selling operating system in Microsoft's history.

The XP date change applies to retailers and other manufacturers who sell Microsoft products. Independent

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firms that use Windows XP when installing and maintaining computers and networks for businesses can continue to offer it as an option until 30 January 2009.

Microsoft is also extending the availability of the cut-down version of XP, called Starter Edition, until 30 June 2010. It said this was because it was seeing increased demand for the software to run on low-powered devices made specifically for the developing world.

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Open Soucre programmers are motivated by seeing their ideas in use.

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In technology, many of the great innovators and inventors got a job that secured them financially, but the main reason for taking those particular jobs was not money, but the amount of time the job gave them. They used the job to keep themselves fed, but focused on their projects. Most of them never got rich from their work, many were not recognized in their time, and often they died poor. However, these people contributed more to science and technology than many laboratories. Without these innovators, most of today's technology would not be around. They spearheaded the technological revolutions with their ideas and work, not to get rich, but because they wanted to see it happen.

This is where open-source software comes in. The people who develop these programs are not doing so to get rich, but because they want to see their ideas happen, they want people to use their ideas, and most importantly, they want to contribute to the general improvement of software. The purpose of open-source and the ideal which it follows is not to let people steal eachother's work, but to improve upon previous designs. Asking for donations or money to help support a project is perfectly fine and is even necessary sometimes and people need money to pay for food and other living expensives, but the point of this money is that it is to help support the project; as in, getting money is not the goal of the project.

However, there is very little being done to promote these outside of the open-source communities. Very often, people are steered away from open-source by proprietary propoganda or by other people who had bad experiences. In addition, when a new user enters the open arena, they are often overwhelmed and don't understand what is going on. Most who come and stay know computers very well, so they know what they are doing. This is not going to benefit everyone, though. Open-source needs to also be able to draw in regular users. Many people, if not most, know of Firefox, the major open-source web browser, but this is an unfortunately rare example of an open-source program that is easy to learn and adjust to and that is well known. Many who are proficient with computers are even scared of going all the way to Linux because they have heard horror stories of how hard it is and do not think they have some form help available.

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In the end, open-source projects need to be able to draw in even inexperienced users in the stable versions of their programs. There needs to be some form of promotion among the open-source community that can also reach out to people. The campaign for Firefox resulted in many user-created things like commercials and designs that resulted in a good amount of the population knowing about this new web browser. This sort of thing is a bit too extensive to do for every open-source application that is able to reach out to most of the population, but there are alternatives that need to be looked into that could promote these. For example, some colleges with Computer Science departments put together lists of open-source programs that are good alternatives to commonly used applications and send them out to students. This is good, but will only reach college students, and can be considered spam mail by many.

In the end, open-source communities need to find a way to spread the word that will not infringe on people (like spam) but will still reach many. Creating websites and blogs help, but they need to find effective ways to promote themselves and others. The ideal of working with a goal and not for money is something that needs to be noticed, people need to know this ideal is still alive and working. This ideal applies not just for technology and software, but to almost every field. The music and arts, mathematics, social sciences, ect. all can benefit from this ideal.

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WiMAX technology was originated by Intel in 2004, positioned early on as a way to bring the Internet to the masses, including people in developing nations without the resources for copper-based "last mile" infrastructure, and in rural areas of the U.S. where low population density has rendered other network distribution techniques impractical.

Then at some point, WiMAX morphed into a mobile technology. Notwithstanding trials in desert locations WiMAX now looks likely to see its widest initial U.S. deployments in metropolitan areas, where it will help people browse the web in their cars, access Google maps at street level, and enjoy always-connected music players, cameras, and other devices. WiMAX-enabled mobile devices with VoIP softphones could even pose a challenge to traditional cellular networking, although "it's a question of the maturity of the technology, and how it will be priced," Nokia's open source director, Dr. Ari Jaaksi, recently told *LinuxDevices.com*.

Nokia's WiMAX-enabled N-series Internet tablets are expected to work initially with Sprint's Xohm service, which debuts in U.S. metropolitan areas next year. The N-series tablets will run Linux, and use Intel's "Baxter Peak" WiMAX radio chipset, the companies have disclosed. Baxter Peak is said to use the same silicon as Intel's "Echo Peak" MiniCard module for laptops and ultra-mobile devices, but optimized for small form factors and low power consumption.

The Nokia N-series tablets will integrate Skype, the Rhapsody music service, and a Mozilla-based browser, Nokia has revealed. Mozilla's Gecko rendering engine -- the same used in the popular Firefox browser -- should deliver superior performance on Web 2.0 sites with lots of AJAX, Nokia suggests. Apple's iPhone, meanwhile, uses a browser built on KDE's lighter webkit rendering engine. Today, Nokia's N-series tablets use a customized browser based on Opera's rendering engine.

Intel and Nokia partnered on WiMAX as early as 2005 -- months before the launch of Nokia's original Linux-based 770 Internet tablet

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Ofcom fears the UK is falling behind in fast broadband

It has launched a consultation, running until December, to probe ways to keep UK net services up to speed with those of other nations.

Current broadband speeds have a natural limit which are unlikely to satisfy growing consumer demand for bandwidth.

In other countries, networks delivering speeds of up to 100Mbps (megabits per second) are already being rolled out.

Some experts are concerned that the UK is falling behind its competitors. Last week Stephen Timms, Minister for Competitiveness, ordered a summit on the issue and did not rule out the possibility of public sector intervention.

The debate centres on the question of whether the UK should put in place a nationwide fibre network and, in its consultation, Ofcom lays out some of the options for the UK as well as suggesting ways in which such a network should be regulated.

So-called fibre to the kerb would offer speeds of up to 50Mbps and cost up to £10bn to roll out nationwide, experts predict.

Fibre to the home is more expensive - with an estimated £15bn price tag - but offers speeds of up to 100Mbps.

Ofcom points out that no one technology will answer the needs for more bandwidth. Cable networks will also play an important role in offering high-speed net access and Virgin Media is already trialling speeds of up to 50Mbps.

Controversy

As new applications such as net TV become popular so demand for bandwidth increases.

Some countries, including France, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and Korea are already investing in fibre networks which deliver speeds of up to 100Mbps (megabits per second).

According to Ofcom, current broadband speeds in the UK reach an average of 4.6Mbps. These speeds will be increased to around

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24Mbps when next-generation ADSL - named ADSL2+ - begins rolling out next year.

Ofcom's chief executive Ed Richards said that super-fast next generation access was an obvious next step, offering "a fundamental change to the country's infrastructure" and one that would affect how competitive the broadband market was "for years to come".

In its consultation, Ofcom is keen to stress any new network will be regulated in the same way as the existing copper-based access network. This would mean that it would have to be open to all operators, just as BT is forced to make its current network accessible to rivals.

BT, which is already investing heavily in upgrading its core network, said that it would look at fibre "where it makes commercial sense".

"BT welcomes the chance to discuss this issue with Ofcom, the government and the wider industry. We are totally committed to providing our customers with the services they want both now and in the future.

According to BT, more than 120,000 businesses already use fibre services.

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Indian IT firms shares top the polls

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The share prices of the largest four India-based vendors (Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro and Satyam) all increased by double-digit percentages, a feat that none of the largest five US service providers managed, and only one of the largest five European players, Capgemini, achieved.

Research has shown that overall shares in IT services companies have offered a poor return on investment in the first three quarters of the year, with overall increase in prices of less than 3%, far less than most of the capital markets' indices

Datamonitor's 'Global Computing Services MarketWatch analysis service' tracks the share prices of 43 of the largest IT services companies with the GCS Index, and is updated weekly. With its starting point of 100 at the beginning of the year, it rose sharply in the opening months to reach a high of 105.8 in early May, before macroeconomic factors, regarding interest rate fears, caused it to dive to 91.7 in mid-July.

While the GCS Index shows that IT services investments have been easily outperformed by the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the S&P 500 and the NYSE Composite Index, the reverse is true over the last three months, as the GCS Index has bounced back strongly from 96.2 at the beginning of the quarter to 102.8 at the end of September.

Of three regional indices which track the top five IT services companies in India, US and Europe, the Indian Top Five has risen to 117 over the last nine months, while the US Top Five has struggled to 98.3, with the Europe Top Five index barely breaking even at 100.4.

The Indians haven't had it their own way all year though, as the India Top Five index was the worst performing of the regional indices by early June, by when it had slumped to 92.2, which reveals the volatile and risky nature of the stocks, despite their handsome overall returns.

While Indian stocks made massive gains in the third quarter following impressive financial results, many of their European rivals have struggled with low growth and, in some cases, poor management. Atos Origin, LogicaCMG and Tietoerator have all suffered big hits to their market caps this year. US IT services providers' efforts to ramp up their global sourcing strategies has only served to mitigate the damage being done by the likes

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of Wipro and Infosys, which are competing for larger contracts and winning deals in markets previously the preserve of IBM and Accenture, such as finance and accounting outsourcing

However, the best performing stock on the GCS Index was Cognizant, a company that offers a total offshore delivery model, but is based in the US. Its shares have risen by almost 50% so far this year, after consistently delivering revenue growth even stronger than its India-based peers

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Case Student Luke Varley wins Most Enterprising Student on Shell Step Scheme

Both the winner and runner-up go on to battle for the title within the Eastern Region and if successful, will progress to the National Finals in London.

The programme offers university students the opportunity to experience the 'real world' outside of their studies by undertaking a project for a business or organisation across the summer. The students were assessed by an independent panel of judges, and were rated on a number of criteria including a written report, a verbal presentation and an appraisal from their employer. Special emphasis is given within the Shell Step programme to personal development and to the advancement of technology within the workplace. Nine organisations across Bedfordshire took advantage of this invaluable scheme, with projects varying from market research in the health and well being sector to business development initiatives.

Luke worked on the launch programme for Case Communications new XLR 550 22Mbps Broadband product and during his 11 week placement achieved such tremendous interest and sales that the company had to double their manufacturing capabilities.

When asked about his achievements Luke said "The Case XLR 550 was a dream product we only had to loan a customer a pair of XLR550's and they could see the difference between the XLR 550's and their previous DSL products. Once they tried a pair of XLR's they never returned them and simply place orders for more and more units. I am not technical but the message was easy to get across, we are 75% cheaper than BT services and twice as fast'. Typically if a customer had an existing G.SHDSL product the XLR 550 would perform at least 4 times faster'.

The competition involved Luke setting up an exhibition stand to demonstrate his achievements and he also had to give a presentation to a panel of judges and to be questioned on his placement.

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Below - Luke at his Case Communications stand in the Shell Step competition.



Garth McKenzie of Bedfordshire County Council presented the well deserved award to Luke. Commenting on the event Mr McKenzie said "I have been impressed with all the contributions the students have made and their willingness and professionalism speaks for itself. I am sure that this programme has given them a challenging work experience, which not only provides them with their new skills but also benefits the companies they have worked in. I would encourage them to continue to develop their skills and natural ability and wish them all the very best for the future."

The event, part sponsored by Bedfordshire County Council, was held at The Forest Centre at Marston Vale Millennium Country Park. In a unique way of commemorating the occasion, The Forest Centre has arranged for trees to be planted in the names of all 11 finalist students.



Above - Luke Varley receiving his award for most Enterprising Student from Garth Mc Kenzie of Bedfordshire County Council.

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Above - Luke with Mick Dobson of Wenta, who work with Shell on the Shell Step scheme

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Shell Step scheme should call 0845 371 0891.

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