

## Miriona's Message – no. 14

### In this edition

**Introduction:** Happy Easter!

**Hot Topic:** Good passwords

**Working Smarter:** Risk logs

**Hints & Tips:** **Free e-book** about Microsoft Office 2010, MS Word/PowerPoint – Draw a perfect square or circle

**The Lighter Side of IT:** to brighten your day!

### Introduction

#### Happy Easter!

It's difficult to believe we are nearly at the Easter break. Whilst it's nice to have a long weekend coming up, it does mean the year is already well on its way...

For many of us this time of year means lots of budget reconciliation – and planning how to do what we need to from the new year's budget. In the midst of all that financial angst it can be easy to miss the other signs of a new year. Daffodils and crocuses are finally starting to appear, after a lingering winter, and the days are starting to get longer – and even a bit warmer (at least out of the wind!). And Easter itself sends a good message to most of us – even if you do not celebrate the religious festival, there are chocolate eggs to enjoy!

### Hot Topic

#### Good Passwords

One of the foundations of many of our security measures are passwords. But how good are they? You may force your users to change them at regular intervals and perhaps dictate the 'strength', but does this mean lots of helpdesk calls because people cannot remember them? Or (worse) people putting post-it reminders on their monitors...?

You can see the 'Top 500 Worst Passwords' at [www.whatsmypass.com/?p=415](http://www.whatsmypass.com/?p=415). The top 10 worst are:

1	123456	6	4	1234	9
	12345			696969	
2	password	7	5	pussy	10
	dragon			mustang	
3	12345678	8			
	qwerty				

Are your users better than this? In fact, anything that has a correctly spelled English (or, indeed, foreign) word is fairly easy to crack. As are names, significant numbers (eg your phone), TV program names, famous people or characters, anything all upper or lower case or with just the first letter uppercase.

So, what is a good password? Some techniques are:

- use capitals in odd places
- use numbers instead of letters (eg 5 instead of S)
- use symbols within the password (eg <)
- misspell words
- link words together

- use abbreviations
- interleave two words or a word and number string (eg cEhGoGc or f1r2E3d4)

The more techniques you can use, the stronger the password. And yet, it can still be memorable! Perhaps it's time to remind your users?

For more information, you can call Miriona on 07766 948470 or email [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).

## Working Smarter

### Risk Logs

Once project initiation starts there are many different activities that will help the project get off to a good start. One of these is risk management; an activity that should start early in the project and then run throughout.

A Risk Log is a fairly basic document in itself, often held on a spreadsheet. The Log needs to record a unique number for each risk, details of the risk, its scores for probability and impact and details of the mitigating actions to be taken.

However, the level of usefulness of a Log depends on its contents – so how best to gather and manage risks? One good way is to hold a risk workshop with as many stakeholder representatives as is possible (and practical). The workshop should preferably be facilitated by someone outside the project, as a facilitator cannot easily act as a participant as well. It's useful to come to the workshop with a checklist of areas to cover; examples would be technical, strategic, suppliers, business processes, culture change etc.

Once risks have been identified, the team need to agree the probability of the risk happening and the impact if it does. These can be recorded as a low/medium/high or by a number. The latter can provide an overall risk score by multiplying the two scores. For the higher scored risks (the level depends on the projects risk appetite) the team then need to determine some mitigating actions. These could avoid the risk, reduce the probability and/or impact of it, outline contingency actions to take if it does occur, transfer the risk (eg insurance) or just accept it. You can then work out a residual score by seeing what the probability and impact will be after the mitigating actions have been taken. If that's not enough, you may need to look for more actions.

Having written up all the risks (and taken the actions!), the Risk Log should be re-examined regularly (say, monthly) throughout the project. There may be new risks, probability and impact may change, or more mitigating actions may be needed. The responsibility for managing the Risk Log lies with the Project Manager.

Want to discuss this further? Contact Miriona on 07766 948470 or email [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).

## Hints & Tips

**Free e-book about Microsoft Office 2010**

This is a free e-book offer from Microsoft Press with a first Look at Microsoft Office 2010. For a limited time, you can [download this free e-book](#) by Katherine Murray and read 14 chapters of early content. Worth a look!

### **MS Word/PowerPoint – Draw a perfect square or circle**

There are times when you want a shape to be perfect. To do this, select the Rectangle or Oval shape and hold down the SHIFT button when drawing it. Drag the mouse down and to the right to get the required size. Release the mouse button before the SHIFT button to hold the shape.

### **The Lighter Side of IT!**

#### **Even more Classics: People who just got it wrong...**

"So we went to Atari and said, 'Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we'll come work for you.' And they said, 'No.' So then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't got through college yet.'" - Apple Computer Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and H-P interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." - Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

"I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not Gary Cooper." - Gary Cooper on his decision not to take the leading role in "Gone With The Wind."

"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value." - Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre.

"640K ought to be enough for anybody." - Bill Gates, 1981

### **Thank you for reading!**

**Any comments or ideas for future newsletters are welcomed – please send to [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).**

**More information on Miriona and our services can be found on our website [www.miriona.co.uk](http://www.miriona.co.uk).**

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