

# In Harmony

Future Business Systems Newsletter

Issue 1, May 1999

## From the publisher

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our quarterly newsletter, *In Harmony*. We hope you will find it a valuable resource to enhance your Harmony installation.

I have to admit, the staff at FBS have been "lobbying" me for this publication for a long time. They have long recognised the value of a regular newsletter for updating our public, sharing information, and strengthening client relationships.

However, I was reluctant to commit to the project, until we could ensure a consistent, high quality publication that would add value for the readers – until I could be sure our newsletter was something you would want to read. With our larger customer service team I have that confidence, and now you have *In Harmony* – a new source of product information, hints and tips, industry news and the like.

In this first issue, for example, we'll introduce our new staff and structure, share some Harmony product news, cover year 2000 issues, discuss exciting new technologies, reveal how one client is using Harmony to improve productivity, and much more.

Being a new publication we expect some "evolution", and your feedback is crucial for this. I welcome your comments and suggestions, even letters to the editor. You can call me at the office, or send e-mail to [msilver@fbsaust.com.au](mailto:msilver@fbsaust.com.au).

I hope you enjoy *In Harmony*.

Mark Silver  
Managing Director

## New Structure, New Staff

Thanks to your support, Future Business Systems has experienced significant growth in the past few years. We believe the key to success in a fast growth environment is to remain focussed on the customer. In order to do this, and improve our service levels, we have created a new, customer-oriented structure and employed four new customer service staff. We believe this gives us one of the highest ratios of service staff (relative to development and support staff) in the software industry.

Two of the four new staff members are account managers, who will see to all your needs as well as pro-actively suggest ways to make your job easier and more productive.

Our aim is to improve your access to FBS and remove any bottlenecks in the system - having a dedicated account manager gives you a single point of contact for all issues except help line calls. It's the account manager's job to supervise installations, then to liaise with FBS staff on your behalf, in order to answer your questions, expedite solutions, and make sure your installation is everything it should be. In response to client requests, account managers will also be working with you to ensure you are making the most of your Harmony investment.

Our new account managers are **Simon Marks** and **Adrian Jacobson**. Simon is a qualified accountant and

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has had extensive experience in the wholesale area for 22 years. He is very familiar with business management and operating Harmony software. Adrian is a qualified computer programmer and hardware technician. Adrian's first encounter with Harmony was as an end user where he was responsible for implementing the software into the company he worked for. He acquired two years experience with the software before being employed at FBS as a hardware technician for six months before undertaking the responsibility of Account Manager.

Such experience in hardware and software has helped Simon and Adrian become an integral part of the FBS team.

Your account manager will be in touch regularly to ensure he understands your business.

The other new staff members are **Karen Bouhadana** and **Zoran Miloradovic**. Karen is our new training manager and software-testing engineer. Having worked extensively with Harmony as an end user, and with 9 years' experience as an accounting software trainer, Karen is ideally suited to her new role. She will handle your on-site Harmony training, as well as performing quality assurance work on the software. This dual role helps to ensure Karen is always up-to-date with Harmony as it grows.

Zoran is our new hardware and systems integration specialist. It's his job to ensure that all the elements of your system – hardware, operating system, network, and application software – work together effectively. With the complexity of today's systems, proper systems integration is important for almost every business. We recognise that Harmony is just one part of your installation, and Zoran is there to help you manage all the rest.

If you would like to know more about our training or integration services, please contact your account manager.

## Harmony News: Harmony Desktop Version 1.1

Harmony Desktop is a specially developed interface that gives you the option of running Harmony through your Windows PCs on your Unix Server, giving you the benefits of Windows with the stability of Unix. Harmony Desktop offers:

- Up to 12 separate windows in which to run Harmony or other Unix applications.
- Mouse support for Harmony.
- The ability to customise Harmony colour schemes.
- Variable screen size support.
- An easy to use connection manager.

Now, with Harmony Desktop Version 1.1, we have added many useful new features, including:

- Several new buttons to the toolbar to allow quick access.
- Windows tooltips to improve navigation around Harmony Desktop.
- Different colour schemes for different logins.
- The improvement of the colour selection dialogue to include pull down selections and tooltips.
- Environment variables for each dialogue. These will be used as part of the Unix/Windows filename mapping.
- Programmable buttons to the toolbar. Up to 10 buttons can now be configured, to allow shortcuts to commonly used Harmony Accounting features, other applications, even commonly typed text.
- The ability to prevent one person from using too many Unix runtime licences. This is done by limiting the number of connections that Harmony Desktop can make to any one remote machine.

For more information on Harmony Desktop 1.1, contact your Account Manager.

## A Brave New World

Technology has advanced so much in recent years, that it is actually changing the way we do business. In this article we explore three important new technologies you should be exploring:

### The Internet

There's a world of information just a few mouse-clicks away! Use the WWW to research new products, check out competitors and prospects, download software, find new suppliers. Your own Web site can be used to publish information such as your current catalogue or product instructions, and even take orders on-line.

Of course, there's more to the Internet than the Web – there are bulletin boards, news groups and electronic mail, for fast, inexpensive communication with staff, suppliers and customers. Low cost phone calls through the Internet are also a reality.

### Intranet

An intranet is a private, localised Internet. It is excellent for sharing information within organisations, and saves big money by eliminating traditional publishing and distribution. An intranet is ideal for newsletters, product manuals, phone lists and the like, and can be used to give controlled access to corporate information, such as your Harmony accounting

records.

### **Multimedia**

With new media such as CD-ROM and Zip disks, you can incorporate sound, video, animation and even interactivity into your communications. A sales presentation can show a product in all its styles and colours, and a training CD can simulate the real environment. If a picture tells a thousand words, a multimedia presentation tells a million.

### **FBS – your technology partner**

At Future Business Systems, our aim is to help you capitalise on these new opportunities provided by the World Wide Web. That's why we now offer a range of multimedia and Internet services, performed by qualified and experienced staff. We can help you develop and implement a plan to support your business strategy and take advantage of all that this brave new world has to offer. Everything from an entry level website with email through to secure high speed Virtual Private Networks that can be customised to your business needs. For more information, contact Andrew Gostin on (03) 9500 1788.

## **Harmony Hints and Tips UPS and RAID systems – what you need to know**

UPS and RAID systems are excellent safeguards for your data. A UPS maintains consistent power to your system in the event of electricity interruptions or surges, while a RAID protects you from hard disk failure. However, these systems are not infallible and they *do* need to be managed. Here's what you need to know:

- Your UPS is not a power generator – it is designed to give you enough time to properly shut down your system in the event of electrical failure. You will get about 15 minutes of operation from the UPS batteries, which should last 3 years.
- Never plug your UPS into more than 2 servers.
- If a hard disk dies on your RAID system, the system will still perform on the remaining hard disks, but there is no longer any safeguard. Be sure and replace faulty disks promptly.
- Don't ignore beeps or error messages – they are

important. ALWAYS, IMMEDIATELY report any beeping to FBS, and note the exact wording of error messages. Take special care to check your RAID console periodically if it is not in regular use.

- Units should be tested every 6 months. If your UPS does not have a test button on the front, remove the power cord from the rear and it will automatically act as if there were a power failure. If the fault light comes on, or if the batteries do not operate for the recommended time, contact us immediately.

Neither a RAID nor a UPS is a substitute for regular backups. Backups should be tested for integrity, correctly labelled, and stored offsite for security.

## **Year 2000: Are you ready?**

Ready or not, Y2K is coming! Please read the following information on hardware and software compliance issues.

### **Hardware**

Hallmark servers and PCs supplied by FBS since January 1997 are generally year 2000 compliant, as are Ipex servers and PCs supplied since May 1997. However, these computers must be certified as compliant by their respective manufacturers. All PCs supplied by FBS prior to these dates, and any other brands of PCs, will need to be individually checked. PCs of any age which have been modified, ie: a card added, may no longer be compliant.

### **Harmony Software**

The September 1998 release of Harmony is fully year 2000 compliant and is being progressively installed at all Harmony sites with current support agreements. If your site has customised DMLs, these will need to be individually checked.

### **Unix O/S and VSIFAX**

SCO Unix Openserver 5.0.0 and onwards has been certified as year 2000 compliant by SCO. Clients still running on Interactive Unix or older versions of SCO Unix should contact us to arrange an upgrade. Vsifax Gold Version 3.0 and onwards has also been certified.

### **Other Software**

All third party software and operating systems, whether purchased from FBS or other sources, requires certification from the publisher. FBS cannot test for year 2000 compliance of these products, but we can perform an audit of software being used, and manage certain aspects of your compliance program for you.

With so many possible failure points, we recommend a complete audit of all PCs, other hardware, and software in use. If you would like FBS to examine your system, please contact your Account Manager.

## Welcome New Harmony Users:

**The Discovery Group**, NSW. Wholesale and retail women's clothing, with more than 35 stores. Brands including Charlie Brown, DIO, Elizabeth S, Linea, Discovery and more.

**Blue Illusion**, Vic. Wholesale and retail upmarket casual clothing for men and women. Brands include Blue Illusion, Kaliko and Alphanumeric.

**Avenel**, Vic. Importers and distributors of hats, mainly men's, under the Avenel brand.

**Wildia Enterprises**, NSW. Import and distribute linen, manchester and soft homewares.

**Pro DJ**, Vic. These music publishers produce and wholesale CDs for their list of prominent musicians.

**Campoli Foods**, Vic. Importing and distribution of Italian foods and condiments.

**AIRA**, Vic. Importers and manufacturers of industrial heating and air conditioning equipment. Includes Clockford & Robinson.

**Umbro**, NSW. One of the biggest names in soccer, Umbro imports, manufactures and wholesales soccer clothing and equipment. ❖

## Marquise – Company Overview

You would expect a business that's been operating since 1932 to have undergone some changes – and in recent years, the Melbourne based children's wear manufacturer, Marquise, has completely re-invented itself. Once a knitted garment business with a dated image, the company is now a fast-growing force in children's fashion.

Marquise uses Harmony for its business functions, including accounting, sales and marketing, manufacturing, importing, stock control, distribution and payroll. EDI is in use, and scan packing improves efficiency and accuracy. The company has recently begun using Harmony for style creation, as well as bill of materials management.

Harmony has enabled Marquise to improve selling methods. Sales reps used to call on the customers in their shops, then write the orders by hand for later data

entry. "The customers were distracted, the process stopped every time someone came into the shop – it was very unprofessional," says Managing Director Joe Gehrig. "And we had one employee spending about half her time just keying in orders."

Now, customers come to the showroom, where sample garments are bar coded. Once the customer selects a style its bar code is scanned, then the customer's size and colour requirements are keyed directly into the system and the order is confirmed.

Harmony is then used to create pattern sizes and gradings, order raw materials, generate picking slips and cut orders, and track what raw materials have gone to the makers.

All this means Joe can monitor the business more closely, because management information is readily available. "The speed and accuracy of management accounts has improved, and we can perform sales analysis to track trends in the market place," he says.

"You could say that Harmony has facilitated many of the changes we've made to our business," remarks Joe. "There is no way our old system could have seen us through the process. Information is fantastic now."

