



# R.E.D . Xmas News



Issue 36

Winter 2003

## 2003 R.E.D. USER GROUP MEETING

The Eighth R.E.D. User Group Meeting was held on the afternoon of 16th October at the offices of Income Data Services Limited in London. We were pleased to welcome over twenty-five users from different areas of the country, including people who travelled in from Ely, Milton Keynes, Tenterden and Peterborough specially to attend the meeting.

As usual, it was a lively networking event, with users sharing their experiences and meeting up with each other. The meeting started with introductions and an overview of significant events and developments in the industry over the past 18 months by Helen from R.E.D. Carolyn Peck from Warners Group Publishing updated the Group on their successful implementation of AUDDIS earlier in the year.

This year we had four invited guest speakers, including two who use the R.E.D. system, who gave talks covering a variety of topics. The related Power Point presentations can be found on the R.E.D. web-site [www.redcomputing.com](http://www.redcomputing.com) on the Agenda 2003

- An insight into the sophistication of de-duplication services was provided by Andrew Parks from Air Business, together with some topical information on the use of suppression files.
- Peter Marshall gave an overview of the benefits of analysing data flow and automating processes, as well as some of the potential pitfalls of using Excel spreadsheets to manipulate data.
- We were pleased to welcome Russ Haderer from the BPA who gave an introduction to the BPA and a taster of a new training program for circulation managers to be launched in 2004.
- Our final speaker was Simon Elwell from Enable who have worked with Asia Intelligence and R.E.D. to develop a browser based interface to the R.E.D. database allowing subscribers controlled access to their on-line subscription products via the web.

### 8th R.E.D. User Group Meeting

#### Meeting the Challenge.....

- The need for diversification and the generation of revenue and readership from related business activities has resulted in more publishers implementing mailorder sales, list rental, conferences and exhibitions.
- An increased awareness of the problem of 'dumping', more industry checks and regulation, and the tracking of copies to verify delivery, will guard against a repeat of

#### Looking Back: Challenging Times

- Global dip in advertising revenue has affected sectors of the publishing industry
- Wider availability of data on the internet has impacted on providers of specialist publications
- Direct access to advertiser web-sites has reduced the effectiveness of Reader Response cards
- 'Dumping' of mail by mailing consolidation company raised issues of the reliability of delivery
- US subscription agents Rowecom/Divine's financial problems resulted in many subscriber payments not being passed on to the publisher

## New Magazine is Launched



A new bi-monthly magazine was launched in October with the aim of addressing a gap in the existing industry related titles. To quote the Publisher, James Eveleigh "While there are a number of publishing titles around, there hasn't been one dedicated to all matters circulation". The launch issue is certainly off to a good start with articles covering a wide range of topics.

To register for a free copy of the new 'In-Circulation' magazine visit their web-site: [www.incirculation.co.uk](http://www.incirculation.co.uk)

## USING EXCEL PIVOT TABLE REPORTS TO ANALYSE SUBSCRIPTION DATA - an Overview by Alan Weaver

Analysing subscriptions data is one of the biggest challenges we all face – how can we get data out of our system and summarise it, compare it with budgets and with this time last year, add sub-totals and percentages, play “what-if” games to test the financial consequences of different options, and create next year’s marketing budget?

Most of us import data into Excel, and use spreadsheets to create customised reports on our acquisition, up-sell, cross-sell and renewal campaigns. This reporting method works, but it’s time-consuming because different reports are needed each time we drill down into the detail. Take New Subscription orders, *you may like up to 7 levels of “drill-down”, eg.* New subscription orders by month, by source group, by promotion campaign, by payment method, by payment status, by term length, by geographical region etc.

Imagine using Excel to create a report showing the detail at any level, in a matter of seconds, without any need for manual data entry, linked spreadsheets or complicated Excel formulae. This is exactly what Pivot Tables do, and they can revolutionise our subscription reporting and analysis work! Pivot tables allow us to specify the rows and columns of a report by dragging and dropping the reporting categories from a master list on the spreadsheet, and then populating that report with data at any level of drill down – from the most detailed to the most summarised.

We have been using Excel pivot tables to analyse R.E.D. data for two purposes, monitoring the performance of new subscription campaigns, and using circulation modelling techniques to quantify the financial effects of different subscription development strategies and to calculate next year’s marketing budget.

We import a flat-file report from R.E.D. (exported as a CSV file) which provides raw data for each subscription on file. For example, a flat-file for a publication with a subscription file of 10,000 would contain 10,001 rows, one row for each subscription plus a header row showing the column names. We use the Excel command: Data / Pivot Table and Pivot Chart Report, to create the pivot table. Data in the pivot table is simply refreshed every month after each label run.

**Alan Weaver is director of Alan Weaver Associates, a business consultancy practice for subscription-based publishers. Alan is developing a new Excel-based circulation model for publishers in Europe. Further details can be found at [www.aweaver.co.uk](http://www.aweaver.co.uk). We thank Alan for his input, and for providing this article for R.E.D News.**

### A Sad Announcement

Many of you will be aware that Howard has not been answering the telephone recently. We are sorry to tell you that he had to leave R.E.D unexpectedly at the end of October due to ill health. It is with regret that we have to pass on the news that Howard died on Tuesday 18 November.

JB represented R.E.D. at Howard's funeral service and he has passed on our condolences to Howard's family.



### Jules Attended the Mailsort Software Suppliers Seminar

With the bulk postal market being opened up for competition and Royal Mail working to meet new Quality targets, a seminar was held in November regarding future changes to Mailsort and Walksort. The aim was to get the customer's perspective and their requirements. The three main areas were –

**Royal Mail Access:** Current status, future developments and implications for customers

**Address Accuracy:** Saving more money through increased accuracy

**Q and A session:** This gave an opportunity to meet Royal Mail's Mailsort team face to face and ask any questions or express concerns

### If you missed...

...the International Direct Marketing Fair this year - not to worry, there is now a 'virtual exhibition hall' online that you can visit anytime at [www.idmfonline.com](http://www.idmfonline.com). Using this very engaging facility you can watch videos, read brochures, attend seminars, even discuss DM issues with fellow delegates.

You have to register first (as with any exhibition), and once registered you can browse through 'halls' with areas such as data handling, agency services and printing, set up 'virtual meetings' with suppliers in the discussion forums, and save details of exhibitors in your personal 'carrier bag' (there is even a 'virtual bar'!).



### Anagram Competition

**Congratulations to last issues winner of the big bar of chocolate. This issues anagram is:**

**DEGENERATES FORMS OR SIGNS**

**The first person to contact us with the right answer will soon have a large bar of chocolate landing on their desk!**



## Royalties Update -

For all our Royalties Software Users, the latest Windows Version of the Royalties software is now available as an upgrade - contact us if you would like more information, or to arrange a demonstration.



## Back Issues

If you missed any of the first 35 issues of R.E.D. NEWS - they are all available on the R.E.D. web-site:  
[www.redcomputing.com](http://www.redcomputing.com)

## Technical Update - Pervasive's New Products

Pervasive, the suppliers of the database engine used by current R.E.D. programs, have released two new, substantial, products called **AuditMaster** and **DataExchange**. JB went to a launch briefing and reports as follows:

**AuditMaster**, (which requires Pervasive.SQL v8.1 or v8.5), enables monitoring of all activity in a database by logging to file(s) "who has done what, when, where, and how...". It logs both Transactional and Relational engine activity and comes with tools for viewing the log files in different ways. It can be configured to raise 'alerts' when predefined patterns of database usage and/or data adjustments are detected. Note that **AuditMaster** is application independent which means that no existing programs or data would require changing in any way to work with this package. For further details, see <http://www.pervasive.com/auditmaster/>

**DataExchange**, when installed on two servers, enables 'real-time' backing up to be done from one server to another. It can also be used to synchronise multi databases, each one stored on a different computer in different locations. For further details, see <http://www.pervasive.com/dataexchange/>

**Pervasive are about to release version 8.5 of their Pervasive.SQL product. The most important difference between this version and all previous ones is that it will now be possible to 'hide' the database files from all users, even though they have the rights and permissions to access the databases. For further details see [http://www.pervasive.com/psql/v8\\_whatnew.asp](http://www.pervasive.com/psql/v8_whatnew.asp) and [www.pervasive.com/library/index.asp? shownode=PRV](http://www.pervasive.com/library/index.asp?shownode=PRV) followed by Pervasive.SQL V8.5 (Security)**

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[http://www.pervasive.com/psql/v8\\_whatnew.asp](http://www.pervasive.com/psql/v8_whatnew.asp)  
and  
[www.pervasive.com/library/index.asp? shownode=PRV](http://www.pervasive.com/library/index.asp?shownode=PRV)

followed by Pervasive.SQL V8.5 (Security)

... Stop Press ... Stop Press ...  
A new specialist association has just been announced - the BCMA (Business Circulation Management Association) - more details to follow as they are available.

## Dates for the Diary 2004...

The Independent Publishers Advisory Council (part of the PPA) are running the following events for both members and non-members;

- Employee Contracts Forum 26 Feb 2004
- Merchandising Forum 27 May 2004

See [www.ppa.co.uk/ipac/](http://www.ppa.co.uk/ipac/) for details.

**Merry Christmas  
One and All !**