

# i - contact

The Internal Newsletter of IONATEchnologies

---

## Festive Fun For All At Christmas Party

With Orbix2 now flying out of the shipping department faster than Lisa Daly can say "Avant Garde Sculpture", IONians have plenty to celebrate over the Christmas period. With this in mind, top admin boffins have pencilled in 23rd December for what sources have already dubbed "the biggest object-oriented bash of the year".

Taking place at the Killiney Court Hotel, the IONA Christmas Party has captured the imagination of staff and customers, with extravagant plans involving food, drink and dancing. Says sales whizz Paul Lowry "this is a truly standards based party, scaleable across the enterprise". Margaret Gallery adds "this party is much superior than those offered by Expertsoft and Post-Modern. Our disco integration is regarded as being leading edge party technology - whereas Post-Modern still think ABBA are cool".

Meanwhile Graham Walsh has promised to support the bar for the length of the evening. "Support is important" he told i-contact, "and I should be able to get some of the guys to help me".

Party organiser Suzanne Brown is particularly enthusiastic about the object-oriented nature of the meal. "Various food stuffs will be on the plate, including sprouts, peas and some kind of meat. Diners will be able to invoke vegetables dynamically in order to create their chosen mouthful at runtime". When quizzed about CORBA2, however, Suzanne confessed that "Vegetable Transaction Services are proving a problem to implement", but she was able to guarantee delivery by Q1 96. Happy New Year!

What complements food better than drink? Nothing, that's what, and Oisín Hurley for one is looking forward to the odd tipple. "I've always been careful to avoid going over government recommended limits - but now that booze is officially good for you I intend to get well stuck in". Following the wining and dining IONA staffers can relax and enjoy the sounds that count, the platters that matter, and the grooves that move on the dancefloor. Says well known music aficionado Brian Comiskey, "we can look forward to some super tunes - guaranteed to set the pulse racing and the feet tapping. The rhythm will be faster than a jackrabbit, but not as fast as Orbix".

But perhaps the craziest plan of all is the brainchild of Anraí O'Toole. "We should all get really drunk and go swimming", he says, "apparently it's really cool". Colin Newman has provisionally backed this plan, "if I have the bandwidth". You tell 'em Colin.

So that's a date then. 8pm, the Killiney Court Hotel, December 23rd. Those bringing along their marbles should leave them at the door....

---

Don't forget, i-contact is an internal newsletter. Send all your contributions, letters and news to [tfarrell@iona.ie](mailto:tfarrell@iona.ie) The next i-contact should be 'released' on 12/1/96

---

## Engineering News

It's here! **Orbix2** finally shipped on Solaris - on Friday 1st December. Using hot new technology (CDs), not only does it distribute objects better than ever, it also looks good on the shelf next to your Lenny Kravitz collection (but then anything looks good next to Lenny Kravitz).

Leading the line on the effort was **John Moreau** - the self proclaimed 'hardest working man in ORBusiness', although the superhuman efforts of **Paul O'Neill** now put that position under threat. Of course they are only one small part of the now famous "Orbix2 Team", featuring such Object luminaries as **Kevin Sullivan, Stephen McNamara, Michael Reidy, James Grimes, Austin O'Brien, Adrian Treneman, Colm Caffrey and Kevin McGonagle**.

And that's not all....

**James Boland** and **Ann Barry** took a break from the poetry to produce manuals for the new product which are, quite frankly, amongst the glossiest I have ever seen.

Check out further work in progress, and weep.....

- **Orbix 2.0** is now being ported to HP/UX 9.0 and WindowsNT. "More platforms are certain to be added over the coming months", claimed an ecstatic **Paula McGrath**.
- **Oisín** visited BellSouth to discuss the MVS port.
- **Margaret Irish** is now beginning to put the Orbix + Objectstore through it's paces - pre QAing has begun. Remember Margaret - be persistent.
- **Sam, Stephen and Paul** now head up our OMG task force, dealing with COM/CORBA, IOP and C++ Mapping respectively.
- **Martin** visited EDS.
- Technical support are reportedly snowed in at the Boston Office. Meanwhile **Graham** got his first taste of management, being elected the "Boston gaffer" in **Colin's** absence. "It's about time my man-management talents were fully appreciated", the ginger-bonced support engineer told i-contact.

I assume all the sweets have been handed out after such an impressive display.

## Staff News

If anyone doubts the extraordinary effects of the recent over-crowding, allow me to point out that I myself have had the recent mis-~~for me to~~ arrive in to work at the sprightly hour of 10.30 to find some young whippersnapper occupying my desk. I can understand this kind of thing happening to **Annraí, Colin** and the like, but when my good self is ousted - something's gotta change. Brother.

- **Garrett O'Grady** started in sales on 1/12/95, as the in-bound sales co-ordinator.
- He is joined by **Alison Hand**, who started as a sales account manager (in the UK market) on 6/12/95
- Sales also boasts our first full-time American employee, the redoubtable **Steven Deane**.
- **Conor Halpin** joined marketing/business development as a product manager (in the mainframe side of things) on 4/12/95. He wears a silly hat.
- **Irene Carey** is now officially our full-time receptionist, as of 18/12/95. She replaces **Caroline** - who moves into personnel, where as we speak she is adding noughts onto my pay cheque. Nice one Caroline...

Look out for more details on our new strategy for beating the space crisis - dwarves. Most of us take up the space of two dwarves - **Paul O'Neill** takes up the space of three. The additional advantage is that **Colin Newman** can keep his job...

## Marketing News

Flushed with their success in **Unix Review**, and basking in further high praise in **Open Computing**, marketing have never had it so good. Check out, if you will, these vital statistics....

- IONA's presence at **DB/Expo** was in many ways like the product itself - small but perfectly formed (and faster than a jackrabbit). Colin and Tom F. heroically manned the booth on their own, shunning the night-life in favour of an early morning and closure before breakfast.
- If you haven't already seen our award-winning performance in **Unix Review** - check it out. Only four software products were featured in their product of the year awards. It's official - **Orbix** is better than **Asteroids** (though I don't believe 'em). **Open Computing** also printed a story featuring our company history - reprinted elsewhere in this issue....
- On the contract-signing, deals going down side of things, IONA have licensed **Orbix** to **SGI** for use on their **IRIX** platform. Said a jubilant **Paul Hickey**, "10 more similar deals and we can pack up and go home". Paul has apparently also developed a passionate interest in **Smalltalk** - he can chat about the weather for hours....
- The latest seminar odyssey has finally come to an end, after a three week tour of Chicago, New York, Boston, Dallas, Washington and Birmingham (Alabama not UK). **Brian Comaskey** appears to have been left behind. Perhaps he's being shipped home.
- Sales, now comfortably filling half of Office 'A', are taking on new recruits by the bucketful (see staff news). Now poised to come good on the '**Orbix Everywhere**' promise, the world had better watch out. **Mark 'action man' Dunleavy's** proposal for an armed invasion of various competitors has, however, been rejected. "I'm not sure it's legal" was **Siofra Flood's** only comment.
- I asked **Laura Dillon** what **Barry Morris** was up to and was told "he just flies round the world talking to people". I believe he is also working on the co-ordination of the **CORBA 2** roadmap and product strategy for 1996.
- Elsewhere - documentation and the **WEB** are being overhauled (why do I seem to write this every issue?), **OrbixWise** is finally getting off the ground, and work is beginning on implementing our much lauded 1996 strategy - watch this space (but don't get too excited).

## Steve Deane Speaks His Piece...

Its been an interesting first two weeks here at IONA, and I have been asked to share my views of being your first American hire, so here goes...

- 1) I keep trying to find the stop for this software bus **Annrai** keeps talking about. Can anyone help?
- 2) I would like to thank **Paul** and **Mark** for taking me under their wing (and putting me under the table) on our adventures to Dublin's finest establishments (ie. **Judge Roy Beans**, **Major Toms**, **Howl At The Moon** and **Annabelles**). They claimed it was part of some sort of "salesman initiation" - see the last i-contact.
- 3) I need all of you to speak slower. I know we speak the same language but the Irish speak it twice as fast. If we can have some 'closure' on this then everything will be 'all set'.

In all seriousness you have all been overwhelmingly friendly and always willing to give me your help. Its obvious to me that I made an excellent decision to come to IONA and I look forward to working with everyone and making some big sales (at least 1.5 million...right Margaret!!). I look forward to showing you the same hospitality when you make it to the Boston office. Thanks for everything.

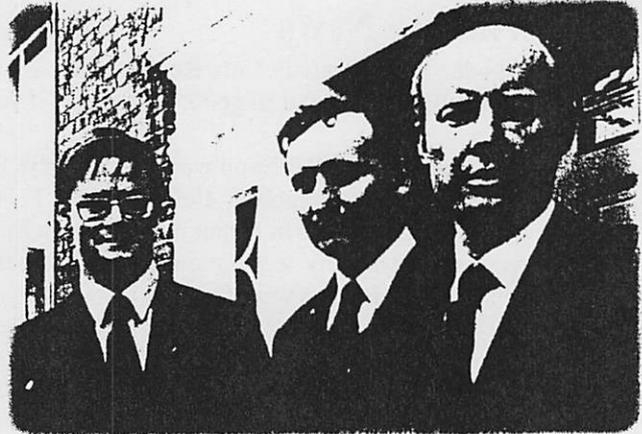
(Steve also wrote a little piece about why everyone hates sales, but obviously I was unable to print it because here in IONA we love sales. They're great, and they pay our wages. Sorry to disappoint you Steve....

## Sinister 'Object Gang' Spreads Reign Of Terror.

The Object World is under threat from a gang of **sick thugs**, masquerading under the name "IONA Technologies". Believed to now control an extended empire across the globe, the roots of 'the firm' are in East London, from where their vision of being a '**high technology Kray brothers**' has spread. Now for the first time victims of these men (pictured right) are coming forward to share their terrifying ordeal with **i-contact**.

### Gang Lords

"The guy on the left, he calls himself **Chris**", says an anonymous customer. "He usually makes initial contact, and comes over all professional. He makes it sound like you can choose whether or not to buy his ORBs, but as soon as **Sean** (far right) turns up, you can feel your arm being twisted". Mr. X. (our customer) goes on to outline what essentially amounts to a protection racket being operated by these gang-lords. "I remember suggesting to Sean that I really didn't need his technology. He replied by saying how terrible it would be if my legacy applications went down overnight. I remember his exact words - he said '**that would be such a shame, but I can help you make sure it won't happen**'. Another customer, Mr. Y, sheds light on the mysterious 'third man' (pictured centre), who for his own sick reasons chooses to call himself **Annrai O'Toole**. "He's the worst of the three", claims Mr. Y, "he acts like you're his best friend, taking you out for drinks and chatting about IDL. But then if you mention you might use DCE, he says something about how he has a lot of '**big lads**' working in engineering. One chap called **Paul O'Neill** was sent round, but he wasn't very threatening. Quite a nice bloke really". It is believed that over 7000 people (in over 750 sites world-wide) have now been forced into the purchase of



'Orbix', the alleged 'product' that these men claim to sell. What they receive is an empty box. As Mr. X explains "it's a very pretty box all right, but there's not much in it. There's a couple of books, which just seem to be gibberish to me, and a CD, **which is full of that weird electronic music**. I have to say that for \$5000 I feel cheated - but I had no choice".

**i-contact** decided to contact these men in person, calling on a 'freephone' line which was obviously put in place to lure in unsuspecting punters into **their 'world-wide WEB'**.

### Veiled Threats

At first our efforts were unsuccessful - we failed to get in personal contact with the ringleaders, and from the outset it was assumed that we would buy the product. When we said we were not interested in purchasing, a lady calling herself '**Fiona**' told us "you'll get something in the post and I won't bother you again" - more veiled threats. Eventually, after several hours of trying, we were put through to '**Annrai**' (Chris was 'on the phone' and Sean was '**out taking care of some unfinished business**'). When we put it to Annrai that he was involved in an illegal operation, he said "**lets have a drink and discuss it**".

# i - contact investigates

---

## New employee at IONA

While Tom normally does the usual round up of new people at IONA, it has come to our attention that a new employee has been overlooked in the marketing department.

Rumours have been circulating that someone fitting this new person's description used to sleep under his desk in the month of November, prior to a series of seminars. However, the arrival of this new employee on Tuesday has promoted a series of questions. What has happened to the respectful, quiet, slightly scruffy individual who rushed around the office? Who is this new cool dude who talks of New York bars and speak-easies open until the wee hours. This new employee even had the temerity to tease the editor of this august journal about a pair of basketball runners while sporting an equally flash pair of foot attire himself.

Sources close to the new employee say that his clothes were all bought in New York - down to his underwear which he has promised to show everyone (although if he didn't drop his kacks at the marketing lunch one imagines this must be a bit of bluster). Following the earlier inquires I-Contact decided to do some digging around and came up with the following answers.

**Brian Comaskey** (of the three email addresses) officially joined the company in October and subsequently spent the next two months tied to, and sleeping under, his desk in a valiant effort to ensure his mission was successful.

**Brian Comaskey** was generally considered to be a most respectful, mild mannered young man. **Marie Connolly** from the Finance Department was quoted as saying that even when under pressure to come up with POs, Mr Comaskey remained calm and polite.

**Brian Comaskey** was also frequently seen shivering on the balcony with inadequate outerwear to keep him warm. Doubts were expressed across the company as to the wisdom of such a course of action, particularly since Mr Comaskey was perceived to be of slim build and delicate constitution.

The new employee who arrived on Tuesday appears to bear a certain resemblance to **Brian Comaskey** but this ended with the socks (also bought in New York we were assured). The new employee's accent is thought to be a cross between Irish and American - the familiar Mid Atlantic drawl commonly found in certain suburbs of Dublin amongst people clutching battered J1s. The new employee also sports a Michelin-man of a coat which appears to be impervious to all weathers (and excellent for combating New York winters).

The new employee's manner is also dramatically different from the old **Brian Comaskey**. **Tracy Coffee** from Finance was found sobbing pitifully in the ladies toilet on Wednesday. When quizzed by this reporter, it transpired that the new employee had thrown a parcel of POs on her desk with the gruff instructions to 'Process these now!' and the warning that the new employee would return in half an hour - 'I'll be back' was left ringing in her ears. Despite a stern talking to administered by The head of Finance, the new employee dodged all such issues and demanded a company credit card (which he is getting next week).

So just who is this new employee? While we tried to get to the bottom of this mystery (and please avoid all silly jokes about new underwear purchased in New York) we were unsuccessful. The new employee refused to answer any questions and referred us to his personal assistant, but **Tom 'ugly boots' Farrell** refused to talk to us as well. All we can conclude is that **Brian Comaskey** has been the victim of some terrible fate and has, at the grand old age of 24, been swapped for another similar but not identical young man. The jury is still out on which **Brian Comaskey** we prefer (polite and shy or brash and assertive) and all we can say is 'Will the real **Brian** stand up!'

The above is another example of the wit and wisdom of **Jillian Godsil** - who appears to be under the impression that she is paid top wonga in order to contribute juvenile little 'stories' for i-contact. I suppose someone has to....

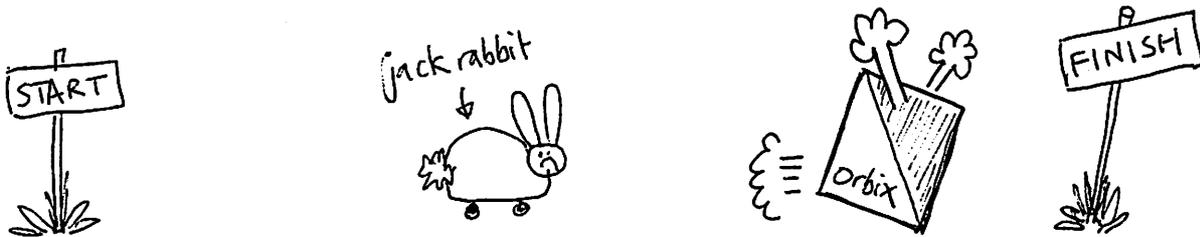
## ORBIXWISE - Public Service Announcement With Jillian Godsil

Is it a bird, is it a plane, no, it's OrbixWise!

This long awaited program is finally getting down and doing some funky stuff.

Our primary aim to link in with solutions providers and ISVs and encourage them to sell more Orbix (mindshare = volume = lots of wonga). OrbixWise is an accredited, fee paying Program which means although we'd like lots of people to join, we want them to be committed Orbix users. There are a number of key benefits for members who join the Program. These include access to discounted training, marketing collateral and support and other goodies such as the **OrbixWise Catalogue**, being invited to the **Orbix Users Conference** (you didn't know there was one- well, there will be next year), and receiving our glossy quarterly OrbixWise Journal. For fuller details, check out `q:\orbixmkt\orbixwis\the3.doc`. (Final brochure expected next week).

The Program has been forged from the combined input from Professional Services, Sales, Marketing and many others. The first six months will be a testing ground, and we expect to see to the Program evolve dramatically over 1996. If you have any feedback or comments (and especially good ideas) please pass them on to the sub editor.



### Ken Knox's Finnish Trip - Part II (at last...and by public demand)

Well much re-arranging of flights then took place and our brave hero lands at his destination a mere 6 hours behind schedule at 00.45 local time. Of course by then the firm from whom he had hired his car had gone home, but a rival firm came to the rescue with an offer of a car that had just been returned, hadn't been checked yet & was only 1/4 full of petrol. Well I took it along with his directions to my hotel "Simply follow the signs to CENTRAL". Why did I expect there to be any signposts pointing to Central? after much guessing I eventually stopped & asked for directions from the only people to be seen at that time of the night, and incidentally my favourite form of life - taxi drivers. After much waving of hands, spouting of Finnish, and looks of confusion they clarified everything with the obvious "CENTRAL! CENTRAL! CENTRAL!" ... "Ahh yes - thank you, you've been very helpful". Half an hour later I found a sign showing the way to central, when I turned the corner I could see my hotel.

Unfortunately the remainder of my stay was not so exciting, with a mere two flat batteries and a car replacement to report. However I should have missed a connecting flight home, and were it not for the commitment of Aer-Lingus to providing a better customer service - i.e. planes just as late as everyone else, perhaps this story would be too incredible to be believed.

#### Interesting facts about Finland.

1. There is no Tourist Information office in the International Airports  
- I suppose if you've got that far, they've done their job.
2. Duty-Free prices are dearer than supermarket prices in Ireland.
3. Every-one has a cold.
4. Laughing is a Capital offence
5. All public places (especially airports) must be painted grey, but on occasion some dark navy may be allowed.

## High-tech Company Beaten by Low-tech Lock?

When staff arrived on Friday 17 November, they got a shock to discover that they were locked out of the IONA offices. It took almost an hour, but eventually **Chris Horn** and **Ross O'Crowley** saved the day by cutting up a phone card and using it to disengage the lock. "It was a useful trick I learned from an episode of 'McGyver'," (or possibly down the East End with the 'lads' - see page 4) one of the modest heroes told this reporter. "In that episode, McGyver also disarmed a nuclear bomb with a safety pin and escaped from a burning building in a hot-air balloon made from papier-mâché. Luckily there was no need to resort to such measures for the locked door."

Reactions from the employees to being locked out of the office were quite varied. **Cormac O'Foghlu**, who lives near the IONA headquarters decided to go home for an extra half-hour's sleep. **Jillian Godsil** said that "I was a bit disappointed by the lack of coffee facilities, but overall it made for a nice start to a Friday morning. Perhaps we should get locked [out] more often." But there was a more serious side to the incident. **Ann Barry** explained "It was getting quite claustrophobic with all of us having to wait in the lobby, and there was an even greater shortage of desks there than in the office. Luckily I arrived early and managed to grab one of the few chairs so I was comfortable."

After the terrifying ordeal was over, the lobby receptionist sighed with relief and commented "Thank goodness that's over. Having all those scruffy people lounging around in the lobby brought down the tone of the place. And I don't think that there was a single clean t-shirt among all the Engineers. Hasn't IONA been hiring lately?"

*Editors note - curiously the marketing dept were unaffected by the office opening late. How odd.*

## The Biggest Lie

For decades, the phrase "the check is in the post" held international recognition as being the biggest lie of all time. However, according to a recent survey among IONA staff, this falsehood has lost its title to the more modern lie "the leased line is now working properly". (oh dear - death by bonga bonga).

## Ways to Beat Stress

Many people think of work in high-technology companies as being synonymous with stress. However, this need not be the case. There are lots of opportunities for Iona employees to beat stress, as we discuss in this article.

Read a good book. "The Design of the C++ Programming Language" or "The IDL to C++ Mapping Specification (Draft)" both have a wonderful therapeutic effect in helping you to realize that no matter how screwed up your life is, things could be worse.

Sit back and relax. If your job keeps you rushed off your feet then maybe you should do some consultancy or training with Professional Services and enjoy the perk of relaxing for up to 11 hours non-stop on trans-Atlantic flights in economy class.

Commute in comfort. You can avoid the stress and hassle of rush-hour commuting by getting up earlier to arrive at work at 8am. Similarly, you can forego the stress of evening rush hour by working until 8pm. There is the extra benefit that working such long hours enables you to easily meet all your deadlines, thus avoiding stress caused by rushed schedules.

Defamation of character. As a last resort, you could relieve some stress by writing malicious and libellous articles for "i-contact". Do not underestimate how good it can make you feel to slag off co-workers.

**OUTRAGED ORIENTALS OVER ORBIX OBJECT ODDBALL!**

Tokyo Nov 22nd:

Orbix evangelist O'Toole-san left Tokyo today, amid a swirl of controversy. Locals were said to be "outraged" at O'Toole-san's behaviour, while an unnamed Irish dignitary claimed: "Frankly I'm embarrassed for the chap...he's shattered the innocent leprechaun image that we have been cultivating here for years."

According to insiders, some of the calamities that O'Toole-san was involved in included:

- Making paper airplanes out of business cards from "senior" Japanese business people
- Inflicting obscure Oscar Wilde stories on non-English speaking locals
- Saying: "Ahh, nobody speaks Japanese anyway..."
- Cracking in-jokes in the middle of presentations....

"Ehhh...there's been a lot of talk about objects, maybe too much talk, this object is not an OLE object, this object is CORBA..."

- Refusing the Japanese delicacies of Crabs brains and sheeps intestines;

Apparently, the Japanese authorities are considering O'Toole-san's right to enter the country again. When confronted with these outrages, O'Toole-san snapped; "It's a trivial country...I couldn't get a decent pint anywhere"

**A Very Merry Christmas With The Staff Of IONA...**

Christmas time - mistletoe and wine. Children singing Christian rhyme. And, of course - Object Oriented Technology. Although Sir Cliff neglected to namecheck IONA Technologies during the course of his many Christmas Hits, we decided to ask some of the companies more celebrated names how they like to enjoy the festive season.

First off was finance gaffer Orla Murphy, who warns i-contact readers to keep a close eye on the pennies over Christmas. "In the rush to buy presents you might forget to make out a PO for yourself, which could obviously spoil your enjoyment on the big day itself. If you've been out drinking always remember to get a taxi home - and don't forget to keep a receipt, just for fun".

Siofra Flood, our resident legal eagle, has a stern warning for present buyers. "Many people make informal agreements not to exceed a certain limit when giving presents. However, if you're not careful there maybe loopholes in these agreements - it's always best to have something written down and signed in the presence of a lawyer". Paul Hickey also agreed on this point, telling i-contact "I like contracts. They're great".

John Moreau, recently granted an honorary knighthood for his work on Orbix2, also has advice for present givers. "It's often a good idea to buy your presents a couple of months early, in order to allow time for extensive testing. You might even consider lending them out to friends who can use them for a couple of weeks and report any bugs to you". John also has a suggestion for anyone wondering about what to buy the kids for Christmas. "What about Orbix2?", he says, "if people don't use the product at an early age, where are the C++ developers of tomorrow going to come from? And it's educational too, probably".

Lastly, shipping expert Lisa Daly has advice for those sending presents through the post. "Shipping is really the same thing as posting, with a fancy name. The thing to remember is that if you are posting presents, allow plenty of time for them to arrive". Lisa also warns posters to "avoid perishable goods like cheese or milk, or any kind of live animals. You're really best of sending software on CD, like Orbix2 for example, or perhaps tea-bags stuck to bits of paper - available from myself for only £200".