

CARBON TRUST AWARD

Latest Details

The Carbon Trust funded project—Improving the Usability of Building Controls—is well under way. Our two partners are BSRIA and the Usable Buildings Trust, with BSRIA undertaking the brunt of the work on our behalf.

The objective is to produce best practice guidance and training material for manufacturers of controls; the aim being to improve the design and usability of controls, particularly controls provided for building occupants. Building services designers and architects will also be targeted to improve the specifications for controls systems in ways that highlight usability as well as functionality.

An important element of the project is the views of ordinary users of buildings, particularly those who work in buildings that rely on occupants to control lighting, heating and ventilation. You can play your part by directing your customers to an on-line survey developed by BSRIA. The address is http://www.bsria.co.uk/content/usable_controls.

This address will take them to the BSRIA web site where they will be able to read more about the project

and its objectives. On the page is a direct link to the survey form that should only take a few moments of their time to complete—but for us the resulting information could prove invaluable.



Making business sense
of climate change

There are also pictures of some *not very usable* controls. No doubt their designers thought the layout and presentation perfectly understandable at the time, but subsequent use by perfectly intelligent, but non-technical, people have proved them wrong.

With the Carbon Trust funding we have an excellent opportunity to encourage the correct use of our controllers by making them easier to understand and, therefore, use.

Market Stats:

Everyone agrees that one of the most important pieces of information to come out of the BCIA are the market statistics compiled by Fred Ranson. But without your help he is stymied.

So, please make every effort to supply Fred with the data he needs to produce meaningful statistics. This also applies to the Remuneration Survey recently commissioned by Skills Development Working Group. You can reach Fred on (email) fni.ranson@boltblue.com.

Dates for the Diary

November:

22—Members Meeting and **BCIA Dinner** at the Village Hotel, Coventry

December:

6—Marketing at York, Hampton in Arden

12—Skills Development at TAC Satchwell, Ashby de la Zouch

13—Technical at TAC Satchwell, Ashby de la Zouch

January:

10—Management Committee at DDE, Manchester

16—Contracts at TAC Satchwell, Ashby de la Zouch

BCIA Annual Dinner

Don't forget to apply early for the BCIA's **annual dinner**.

The date is Wednesday, 22 November at the Village Inn, Coventry. The dinner will follow the Members meeting, to be held earlier in the day—so now there's two good reasons to put that date in your diary.

These social occasions are a great time to get together and compare notes on what has been happening in the industry and make a few predictions about the future.

They also present the opportunity for managers to say 'thank you' to those staff that have put in an outstanding performance during the year. And don't forget your customers; a marvellous way to entertain clients at the industry's official annual dinner.

Full details and a booking form were sent (email) 28 September. If you haven't received this information, then contact Ann Hull (bcia@feta.co.uk).

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR BMS?

This has been the question that the Marketing Working Group has been debating. At the last Members' meeting Paul Fileman, management consultant with Strategic Planning Solutions, presented the findings. In short, these were the conclusions reached by the Marketing Working Group:

Products:

In 2000, proprietary protocols were still prevalent with little product integration. By 2005, open protocols were in common practice and, as a result, integration was rising.

But with Europe working towards standard common protocols, it is anticipated that protocol numbers applied in the building controls industry will drop, with IP dominating.

Web browser technology has the capability to ensure that all approved staff can interrogate and adjust building management system (BMS) programs (not just the BMS operator as in 2000), which means that the building controls industry will be tracking future developments in IT even more closely - even trying to influence IT thinking.

Project Management:

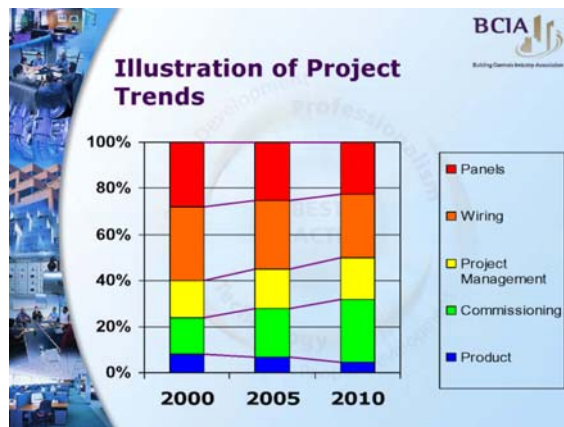
Project management has seen enormous developments since 2000, when it was purely viewed as a means of coordinating the workload. Today, the project engineer is responsible for the management of packaged controls, integration, health & safety, risk assessment and more.

With integration on the increase, plus government legislation demanding more metering, and as VSDs become an integral element of motors, the skills involved in modern project management will grow.

Panels & Wiring:

It is predicted that both panels and wiring will decline. By way of packaged controls and VSDs, the industry is already experiencing a reduction in panel building and this will continue into 2010.

Wireless controls are beginning to impact on the market, demonstrated by the soon to be released wireless standard. Although most manufacturers have wi-fi products, some of the BCIA members surveyed believe that the growth in wireless controls could be stymied by the lack of real 'plug and play' products.



The IT industry has successfully addressed this issue. Purchase a computer and the choice of manufacturer and the type of printer, scanner, PDA, laptop, telephone, web-cam, etc that can be connected is vast. For wireless to really fly, this approach needs to be replicated in the building controls industry.

Maintenance:

Meanwhile, in the maintenance sector, routine checking by the controls manufacturers, as was common practice in 2000, has been replaced by performance-based remote maintenance (2005) and is predicted to lead to a total facilities management offer including remote monitoring in 2010. As for the visiting maintenance engineer, his/her role will grow to provide building services solutions and not be focussed purely on equipment servicing and remedial work.

To sum up, current information leads the Association to believe that as protocol choice becomes easier due to standardization, plus the increased use of IP, integration will become more commonplace, the one constraint being the lack of 'plug and play' products that will also hold back wireless installations.

Help us to help you.....

For many years the Contracts Working Group has been running a series of successful seminars, from Pre-Contract Commercial Awareness for staff not directly involved with contracts but who require a working knowledge, through to the more involved Monitoring of Site Operations and Essential Contract Management, suitable for senior engineers and managers.

The seminars have always been highly successful, in some cases having to be repeated in order to meet demand. This year has been an exception and two seminars had to be cancelled due to lack of delegate numbers. Contracts would welcome your thoughts on the current series of seminars. Have they been so successful that, with the exception of the odd newcomer, we have reached saturation point? Should Contracts consider revising its seminar programme and if so, can you suggest suitable subject matter?

We need to hear from you so that Contracts can structure its training programme to meet your exact needs. Please email your thoughts/suggestions to Ann Hull at bcia@feta.co.uk.