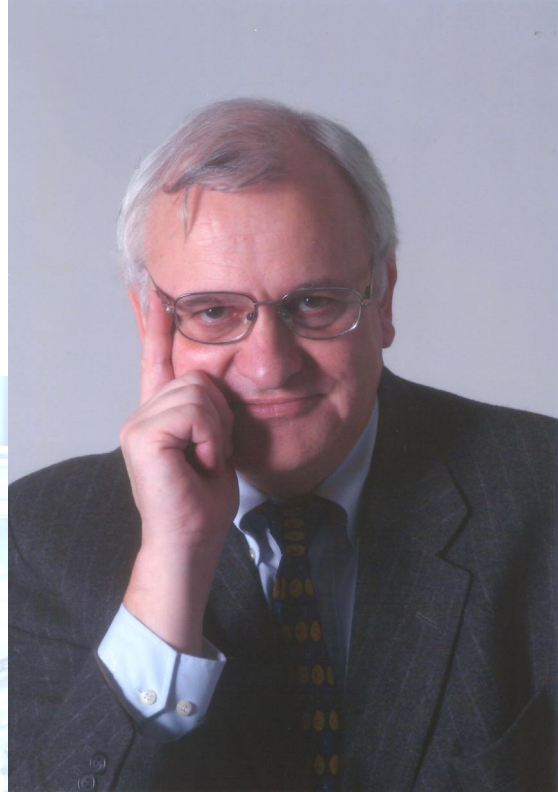


## ACCOUNTING FOR ALL TASTES

The role of primitive computers in the cracking of the Enigma codes during World War Two has been well documented. As has the importance of military applications in the development of computers. It is slightly less well-known that the World's first business computer was built by J.Lyons & Co of corner shop fame. Their aim was simple – to improve the financial administration of their business. In the early 1950s they used valve-based computers for payroll and accounting, and made impressive cost savings.

Over the next fifty years the world of accountancy was revolutionised by technological innovation. The twin objectives of cost-saving and increased information availability fuelled a move from paper-based systems to computers. That revolution continues, albeit at reduced pace, as organisations adopt integrated business systems using a common set of information to serve all facets of the business.



### SO WHAT?

So what does this mean for small and medium sized businesses? Quite simply, it means there is almost certainly more to come. Perhaps in terms of cost savings and reduction in administration, but almost certainly in terms of increased management information.

For almost any size of business, accounting and payroll systems that are still paper-based would almost certainly be more efficient and accurate if they were computerised. And even if you have already done this you will probably find that there are features of your software that could help improve efficiency. Why not have a discussion with your accountant, software supplier or IT organisation to find out what is possible?

The real benefits may well come when you consider making better use of the information you already have. Consider what information would be of value in the day-to-day decision making within the business. Do you know the profitability of your various product lines? Or your most profitable customers? Do you know how this year's sales by customer compare with last's? What are the trends? Some simple reports based on data you already have could make a vast difference to the efficiency of the business.

Even though we know it, few of us will actually take the simple steps it needs to unlock the information chest that is our accounting system. After all, "there's no accounting for folk".

This article was originally published in the Newbury Weekly News Business Review in March 2007.

*Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to [www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/](http://www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/). For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email [lisa@itsolve.co.uk](mailto:lisa@itsolve.co.uk).*

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