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# Welcome to Projections!

Thanks for all the positive responses that we received following the publication of our inaugural edition of *APCS Projections*. The emails and phone calls were very much appreciated - and often very funny!

It's been a busy month. First and foremost, APCS has been selected as a finalist in the [ZDNet Australia's Best IT Employer Award](#). - We're up against some very stiff competition in the form of respected companies such as IBM, Hewlett Packard and EMC amongst others. We're excitedly looking forward to hearing the winners announced some time during this month.

Our IT & Business Resilience Seminar at Crown was very well attended. In particular, the presentation from Paul Jerome of the SES was both thought provoking and entertaining. Paul has generously provided his PowerPoint presentation for [download](#) - but unfortunately we are not able to include any of Paul's humorous video material.

This month we are pleased to bring you an article from our guest columnist [Nicola Crawford](#) from the Business Resilience Group. Nicci's article discussed the importance of safeguarding your information in this new age of corporate compliance.

We also discuss the "war" between [Microsoft and Linux](#), how to [safely dispose](#) of that old PC and question the independence of [advice that resellers](#) give us. Finally, we close with the second part of Scott Coleman's popular series on [Project Management Principles](#).

Until next time.

[Craig Dennis](#)

**PS:** If you find APCS Projections interesting you might like to forward it to a [friend or colleague](#).

**Managing Your Information Assets**

***"Some day in the corporate balance sheet there will be an entry that reads 'information', for in most cases the information is more valuable than the hardware that possess it"***

**Admiral Grace Murray Hopper, United States**

INFORMATION IS THE single most important asset that differentiates you from your competitors, it is your organizational DNA as it is a key enabler of business resilience – without it you don't know what you don't know and you can't manage what you don't know! Is this a valid defence for inaction?

September 11 provided us with a fresh appreciation of the innumerable contingencies and interdependencies that make our modern economy work and organisations thrive, however most operational threats occur because of our inability to understand and adapt to changing risk contexts – our inability to harness our information assets appropriately.

We have all heard the true and tested cliché "Right information to the right people at the right time" but does it matter how this is achieved? Well, the answer depends on how long you want to stay in business!

Sarbanes Oxley, ISO 17799, BS 15000, APRA, Basel II, to name just a few, are driving the need for organisations to address the control of risks arising from the management of their information and the relationships that organisational information flows create. However, many businesses have put in place reactive strategies to provide a short term solution to what will be long term and ongoing compliance requirements. This short term focus has created the establishment of discrete projects to manage these compliance requirements independently of each other. This has resulted in:

- Duplication of work – loss of productivity
- Confusion of work priorities
- Knowledge is not always formally shared or recorded
- Effectiveness of management reporting is diminished
- Varying quality
- Risk controls can become ineffective
- Different work or delivery expectations are created

The disappointing truth is that this usually happens due to the belief that these projects have different information requirements because of differing reporting formats or the involvement of differing stakeholders, yet there is resounding evidence that they share common information needs – how many times have you been asked recently to provide the same information but for a different project?

The business case for integration is compelling – a coordinated knowledge repository of information assets that enables the creation, access, use and communication of pertinent risk information allows for the ongoing processes necessary to ensure conformance with compliance requirements. After all, information about your business allows you to manage the business, even in the event of changing risk contexts. This reinforces the need to focus on embedding compliance into organizational processes through risk management rather than developing projects to manage compliance risks that have no end date..... After all compliance is no longer about a "snapshot in time" but a continuous risk process that sustains stakeholder value by leveraging information assets to capture and manage opportunities.

Does your business have this view of compliance or is it viewed as a cost of doing business? Your response to this question may well provide an opportunity for your organisation to progress by improving its ability to adjust easily to changing risk contexts – **business resilience**.

# Windows V Linux - The Big Stoush

By [Glen Viney](#)  
**Principal Consultant**

DURING 2003, LARRY ELLISON of Oracle was quoted as saying that Microsoft risked being "wiped off the face of the earth" by Linux. Wishful thinking on his part maybe - but the debate concerning the security, application compatibility and supportability of Linux continues. I also recall a similar debate amongst techos I worked with during the mid to late 90's as to whether Windows was better than Novell as a file and print system.

These types of discussions will always abound within the IT industry, but will Linux kill off Windows? The short answer is "unlikely", but Linux does introduce some much needed competition, especially within the server environment.

Linux is not likely to threaten the desktop market just yet, given the ease of installation and use of Windows. The reality is that the vast majority of desktop users couldn't care less what operating system they are using, so long as they can read their email, browse the web, and play music or games.

However its a different story within the server environment. Today, tier 1 server vendors such as HP, IBM and Dell offer Linux servers as an alternative to Windows, with IBM offering Linux across their entire range from PCs to mainframes. Interestingly Sun is probably the biggest loser so far as Linux is seen as a cheap alternative to their Solaris Unix operating system.

While Linux is free as far initial software purchase is concerned, ongoing support is not. Is Linux dearer to support because specialist skills are required or is Windows cheaper to support because of market penetration? The jury is still out on this question - perhaps I should write a follow up article exploring this issue!

So what can we glean from all of this? I believe that, if you have the skills readily available to provide Linux support and a specific service or niche to fill, Linux should be considered as an alternative. However if you don't have access to these skills and already have an investment in Windows and associated software, it makes sense to stick with it, provided it is giving you the service you require. The bottom line is, will the system (Windows or Linux) meet your business requirements at a cost that is acceptable?

**Next Month:** Thin Client = Fat Server?

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## How Secure Is That Old PC?

By [Matthew Fisher](#)  
**Technology Consultant**

HOW SECURE IS YOUR data once you have formatted your hard drive?

Most companies retiring their old computers will run a cursory hard drive format before disposing of their machines. This process, while appearing safe, is fraught with many dangers.

Nowadays, with off the shelf software and a little time on your hands, you can recover almost any file from a formatted hard drive. The reason for this is when your operating system deletes a file on your hard drive, only the location of the file in the allocation table is removed. It doesn't actually erase the data! In other words, your data remains intact on the drive, but its just a bit harder to find!

So how do you resolve this issue and prevent your sensitive data from being recovered? This can only be done by securely erasing the data or physical destruction of the drive. The good news is that there are many free or commercial secure erase software products available that will erase the data by overwriting your files with random data preventing it from being recovered. Failing this I recommend going to your local hardware store and purchasing a good quality sledge hammer and taking to your drive in a more physical fashion!

## Independent Advice from Resellers?

By [Margaret Selianakis](#)  
**Business Development Manager**

IMAGINE THIS COMMON SCENARIO: Your favorite reseller has just been in and described a fantastic new product that will speed up everything, add loads of functionality to your network and save your business money while increasing sales. You are impressed by the technology and as the reseller has said it really does give you a plethora of new functions. You are waiting for the quote with an eager smile on your face....

Now is the time to stop and ask yourself the following questions

- 1 How does product this meet the requirements of my business plan?
- 2 Does this product fit within the boundaries of my IT strategy?
- 3 What financial or business improvements does this product truly deliver?
- 4 Is this product going to cover the important priorities that the business has outlined?
- 5 What is the return on investment (ROI)?
- 6 Is there a better product on the market?

It sounds brutal but if you don't know the answers to these questions don't buy the product.

Resellers provide information, not strategy, and whilst resellers have a vital place in the IT marketplace they are just one input. They understand that their business priority is to convince clients to buy their products.

Without a clear business strategy in place, it is too easy to be swayed into buying unnecessary products and services, particularly if you are unfamiliar with the "nuts and bolts" of the technology in question. You may need to seek some independent advice from a source that has a very clear picture of the requirements for your business coupled with a good grasp of technology.

If you want to enhance the value of your reseller, share your plans and priorities with them and let them work with you to meet your business goals and not just their sales targets. By sharing this information you both win - and it becomes very easy to filter out providers and products that don't meet your business priorities. You will find that if the resellers understand your goals they will work with you to achieve them.

**Next Month:** How independent is the advice is you get from your reseller?

## 12 Project Management Principles

By [Scott Coleman](#)  
**Managing Director**

## **Number 2**

PLANNING IS EVERYTHING.....Project management texts and the project management community agree that the single most important activity that Project Managers engage in is planning. Detailed, systematic, team-involved plans are the only foundation for project success. And when real-world events conspire to change the plan Project Managers must re-plan to reflect the changes. So planning and re-planning must be a way of life for Project Managers.

**Next Month:** A Sense of Urgency

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