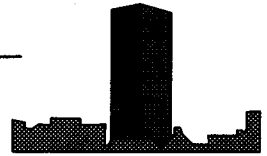


TOWER POINTS

The regular news journal from CFM LOLA

CFM

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Open Options

Ever diminishing budgets and Central Government open competition legislations are changing the internal relationships of Local Government. Directorates and departments are now making way for neighbourhoods, trading units and out-source services, each of which may have its own information processing system.

To meet the processing needs of a Strategic Centre many customers are turning to Open Systems, which offer customers the ability to run applications on the platform of their choice.

By having applications independent of the platform on which they run and providing access to any system containing data relevant to the business, an Authority can satisfy its information processing requirements.

CFM LOLA offers a comprehensive range of high quality, cost effective services. Our applications, which are fully functional on PCs, minis and mainframes, are truly Open System applications. We can guide you through the data jungle and help you to deliver crucial management information to your desk.

Hello from Keith!

Well, after a few months in the job, let me first say hello to those readers I have not yet met. I am very enthusiastic about bringing together all that is good about CFM and LOLA.

After 25 years in the business I feel I am entitled to say that LOLA has some of the best technical staff in the industry.

It is good to have the opportunity to bring CFM's Customer Service to the partnership.

We are going to meet and exceed our client's expectations, first time, everytime.

This means ensuring from the outset that everyone understands what the expected outcomes are.

Then, by all of CFM putting the client first, we will deliver services second to none! That's customer care in action.

As I said at the start ... it's great to be part of all that is best in the business.

Keith McDowall
Deputy General Manager
CFM LOLA

PC and FOCUS Training

Bookings for all scheduled CFM LOLA training courses are now handled by Micro Computing Services (MCS). So, if you would like to book a place on one of our PC or FOCUS courses, MCS is the team to contact!

For mainframe FOCUS users we offer both a one-day Beginners course and a two-day Report Writing course.

All our PC courses are available at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, and we have recently extended our range to include Windows and WordPerfect for Windows. CFM LOLA training courses can be held at your premises, and can be tailored to suit your individual requirements. We also offer training needs analysis and post-training assessment services.

Whatever your training requirements, we offer a high-quality, cost-effective solution.

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AS/400 Services

CFM LOLA is a recognised specialist in the delivery of quality IBM-based services to the Public Sector.

Our experience in the mainframe environment is complemented by our AS/400 technical expertise.

This was originally developed to support the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' investment in AS/400 mid-range computer technology.

In the last year, further customers have entrusted their AS/400 operational support to us.

These contracts have led to an increase in experience and skills which enables CFM LOLA to offer a wide range of high quality AS/400 services to our customers.

Cricket Match

CFM LOLA v CFM Eastbourne

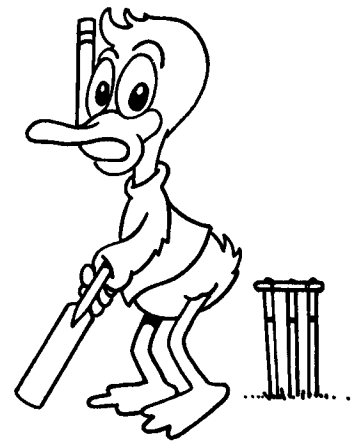
On a sunny Friday afternoon in June, CFM LOLA travelled to Eastbourne to compete for the inaugural CFM trophy. CFM LOLA struggled to reach 100 for 8 at the end of their allotted 20 overs.

An unnamed batsman (sic) who failed to score was ceremoniously dumped in the sea, whites and all, after the match.

Eastbourne were cruising to victory until a sustained spell of fast bowling from the sea-end helped to change the scenery and thus slow down the run-rate.

Eastbourne managed to score the winning runs in the last over. Beer and sandwiches were consumed in the evening to complete an enjoyable day.

If your cricket team fancies its chances against such formidable opposition, then please contact us to arrange a match.



Personnel - the CFM way

by Judith Bell, CFM LOLA Personnel Manager

It was J F Kennedy who said "the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable".

After many weeks of nail biting the transfer to CFM took place and we can take stock of what has happened and, more importantly, where we go from here.

The Personnel Office was in the thick of the arrangements for the transfer.

Sets of forms had to be distributed to all staff, briefing sessions arranged, questions answered, loan arrangements made, more questions answered, forms chased, and as the deadline drew close - the ultimate threat - complete the forms, send them back, or you won't get paid! We made it! None of this would have happened

without establishing close relationships with Chris Yexley and Linda Stelling, who coped with the vagaries of our terms and conditions and got everything right within a very tight timescale.

What happens next? Well, all our terms and conditions have transferred over with us, but there are obviously some areas where changes have been needed - CFM's 13 period pay cycle for example!

CFM's commitment to its staff is set out in the Staff Charter, the overriding commitment is respect of the individual. CFM is firmly committed to communicating with staff and acting on feedback received. Staff opinion surveys are held with feedback on a site basis and managers are asked to cascade information. Objective setting, reviews, and annual appraisal interviews are part of the CFM culture as is pay progression based on performance.

Promotion from within applies where suitable candidates exist and a close watch is kept on the competition to

ensure competitive terms and conditions and good employer status.

In return, CFM expects its staff to recognise that the client comes first, to improve personal performance, to seek solutions and accept that change is part and parcel of life in CFM, to commit to success through team work, take initiatives and generate ideas.

One major area of resolution remains from the transfer - pensions. Tower Hamlets are working hard to provide full pensions information for all fund members. Then CFM will let us know our transfer values and individuals can make their decisions.

In the midst of all this, the day-to-day work of a busy Personnel Manager goes on as usual.

Some things never change!

What is BS5750?

"The national manufacturing standard covering quality systems for the design, development, production and installation of products and services, where the customer has specified performance requirements".

BS5750 is also referred to as ISO9001 or EN29001 - they are synonymous.

A BS5750 certificate indicates that the organisation's quality system - its management practices, standards and procedures - has satisfied an

independent external assessor of its effectiveness. In the case of CFM, the assessor is BSI.

Here at Enfield we are in the process of developing our CFM LOLA Quality System. This involves reviewing and updating all our standards and procedures.

Considerable work has already been done, particularly in our Computer Services Division. We are now progressing administration areas and Micro Computing Services, and we are implementing our systems development methodology.

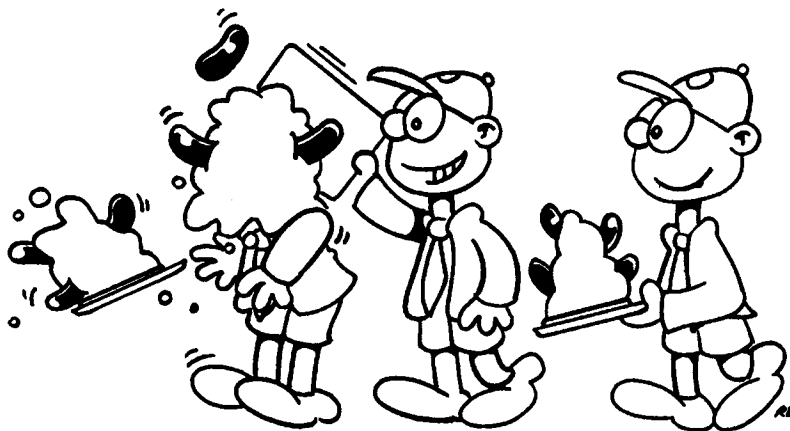
The CFM Group assessment will begin at five "phase 1" sites in September 1993. CFM LOLA will be assessed as a "phase 2" site by June 1994.

Food for Thought

CFM LOLA have designed and developed a system to maintain a register of children eligible for Free School Meals.

The system, commissioned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, is currently running on the CFM LOLA mainframe at Enfield and can be downloaded to many other platforms.

The register is updated automatically whenever a change is made to the other benefits systems used by Tower Hamlets, thus radically reducing the resources required to maintain the system. If a change is made, notifications are sent out to the schools and letters are posted to the families. This process is again fully automatic.



Internal charging made easy

Is your authority implementing an internal market, so that sections must invoice each other for jobs or services?

Are you worried about all the pen pushing, form filling and time wasting?

Well, the London Borough of Hillingdon are using a paperless system to make the whole process much quicker, easier and environmentally friendly.

CFM LOLA have developed a computer system for them which allows a contractor to raise an invoice and send it electronically to the client.

When the client next logs on to the system, they will be able to view all outstanding invoices, and pay them on the screen.

Not a scrap of paper anywhere! And all the general ledger codes are debited and credited, as you'd expect.

The next stage is now being developed, so that orders can be sent electronically from client to contractor.

For Sale

The London Borough of Hillingdon have a number of nearly-new IBM Token Ring 16/4 cards for sale. Both PCA and MCA versions are available, and are complete with cables. A real snip at only £75 each! Please call Simon Wane on 0895 250313.

10 Years Ago

Micro Computing Services (MCS) was established in 1983 to support the 29 Superbrains purchased by the local authorities. Superbrains were the very latest thing in personal computers and ran under an operating system known as CPM. They could even be bought with *two* floppy disk drives!

During 1983, MCS took delivery of one of the UK's first IBM Personal Computers. Finally that year, we demonstrated that the PC could access mainframe data and that, with great skill and patience, this data could be merged into a personalised letter written in a text editor called Spellbinder!

The Central Help Desk, CHD, was established to respond to queries about those CFM LOLA applications which are covered by Base Service Agreements (BSAs).

CHD undertake scheduling of all overnight production work. They also play a pivotal role in tracking production work failures using CFM LOLA's Information, Problem and Change Management system.

In addition to supporting Hackney, Haringey and Tower Hamlets, CHD also do work for other customers.

CHD has been providing support to Dial-a-Ride since January, for computer systems in their six regional centres.

CHD is an important link between CFM LOLA and our Customers. If you have any queries relating to items covered by BSA's or if you have a query and you do not know who to ask, then contact CHD.

If they cannot provide an answer, they know someone who can!

Central Help Desk

"If they cannot provide an answer, they know someone who can!"



CFM LOLA solution for Tower Hamlets Council Tax Benefits

When Tower Hamlets chose an IBM AS/400 based Council Tax system for revenue collection, they asked CFM LOLA to produce their Council Tax Benefits application to integrate with the existing Housing Benefits system.

CFM LOLA began developing the Council Tax Benefits solution in April 1992, and it was successfully implemented in March this year. This involved close co-operation between CFM LOLA, Tower Hamlets IT staff, the Council Tax system supplier (IBS) and user representatives. A true partnership!

The applications exploit some of the latest technology in systems integration. Overnight, files of data are passed over the network between the Tower Hamlets based AS/400 and the CFM LOLA mainframe, keeping both systems in step. Automated job scheduling ensures that the arrival of each file triggers the running of the relevant update procedures. Similar techniques are used to transfer cash and direct debit data, to update

FMA and to transfer Council Tax data for printing on CFM LOLA's high speed laser printers.

The development culminated in March, with the production of 70,000 bills and 26,000 letters. These were all matched, printed and despatched from CFM LOLA.

The system is running smoothly, as Mick Jackson, Tower Hamlets Benefits Co-ordinator reports:

"Neighbourhood Benefits Managers are delighted with the system. Not only are staff able to calculate both Housing and Council Tax Benefits on-line from a single source of input, the overnight interface provides for automatic recalculation as and when changes in Council Tax liability occur. Additionally, the system allows linked Council Tax Benefit cases to be set up where liability for Council Tax is shared between a number of people. All of these features save considerable resources and allow us to provide a reliable and consistent service to claimants".