

VotingMatters

YOUR OFFICIAL **OPT2VOTE** NEWSLETTER

OPT2VOTE
choices to suit you 

ISSUE01 DECEMBER 2006

IN THIS ISSUE:

INTRODUCTION TO VOTING MATTERS / BUSINESS UPDATE

THANET REFERENDUM / BLACKBERRY AWARDS

PARTNERSHIP NEWS / COMPANY APPOINTMENTS / FUTURE EVENTS





BUSINESSUPDATE

'Quality ISO accreditation'

As part of its ongoing commitment to continual quality improvement, **OPT2VOTE** has been working towards establishing a Quality Management System based on the strict requirements of ISO 9001:2000. This Quality Management System covers all company activities from dealing with customers, through design and development of new products, to producing and delivering a quality service based on a right first time philosophy.

To this end, **OPT2VOTE** was assessed by the British Standards Institute (BSI) in October 2006 and is proud to announce that it has been accredited with meeting the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard. The scope of the accreditation is:

"The design, development and provision of election management services to the public and private sectors worldwide."

A major element of the **OPT2VOTE** Quality Management System is the continual review of the activities and data resulting from internal and external audits and the analysis of customer feedback. As a result of these reviews, **OPT2VOTE** continues to amend and improve its Quality Management System and to improve the service offered to its customers.

OPT2VOTE is actively pursuing accreditation to the TICKIT standard for software development and fully expects to attain such accreditation in 2007.

In addition, the company is well on its way to finalising its Information Security Management System based on the requirements of ISO 27001. Whilst **OPT2VOTE** already adheres to the stringent security requirements of this standard, the company feels that achieving formal accreditation to the standard will give added confidence to its customers.

Commitment to the evolution of the total Quality Management System is supported strongly by the Board of Directors.

Welcome to VotingMatters

Welcome to Voting Matters - **OPT2VOTE**'s latest development! Voting Matters has one simple aim...to improve communication with our customers. The **OPT2VOTE** team is committed to improving communication...and Voting Matters is a direct result of that commitment. Voting Matters will cover a wide range of issues, updates on business activities, and the news and views of people involved with **OPT2VOTE**. We hope that you will benefit from learning about **OPT2VOTE** and gaining a better understanding of how the company can help with your elections. We hope that you will enjoy Voting Matters - and would welcome your feedback!

Finally, **OPT2VOTE** would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

From General Elections to Parish Elections, Local Elections and County Council Elections, voting definitely does matter! **OPT2VOTE**'s goal is to continually develop and provide innovative products that will increase participation in elections and decrease the effort required by Local Authorities in running elections.

Minister Electoral Modernisation Framework (2003-2005),

- delivering successful pilots for the Department of Constitutional Affairs in 2006, and most recently
- receiving an Invitation to Negotiate for a place on the Department of Constitutional Affairs Framework



"OPT2VOTE's goal is to continually develop and provide innovative products that will increase participation in elections and decrease the effort required by Local Authorities in running elections."

OPT2VOTE is a leading supplier of electoral services and has grown to become one of the UK's top suppliers. **OPT2VOTE**'s mission is to become **the** leading supplier of electoral services, initially in the UK, and to repeat that success in new markets. In order to generate, and then build on its success, the company has to be innovative and react quickly to customer requirements. As a result of its innovative approach, **OPT2VOTE** has designed and delivered a range of solutions to address the changing needs of the UK electoral services market. This has been reflected in providing electoral services to over 100 local authorities in the last 3 years. **OPT2VOTE** has been actively involved in the UK electoral modernisation process, shaping the introduction of technology and reform to UK elections, and has established an impressive track record including:

- inclusion in the DTLR Electoral Modernisation Programme (2002),
- inclusion in the Office of the Deputy Prime

- **OPT2VOTE** is also a member of two DCA committees relating to electoral administration, and is actively involved in shaping the regulations driven by the Electoral Administration Act of 2006.

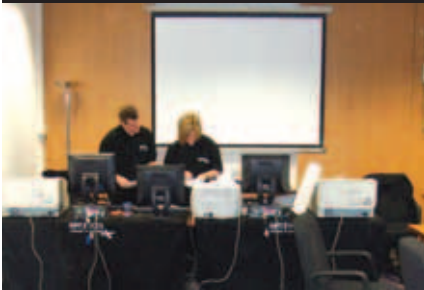
Achievements to date mean that **OPT2VOTE** has established excellent working relationships at both Local Authority and Central Government level and the company is committed to sustaining that success through continued investment and innovation.

I trust that this new publication will help you to appreciate and understand the company's commitment to providing you with innovative quality assured products. Voting Matters will help keep you informed about developments within **OPT2VOTE** but I hope that it will also serve as a reminder of our key principle:

Voting matters!
Ann-Marie Slavin (FBCS)



OPT2VOTE DELIVERS IN THANET REFERENDUM



OPT2VOTE Ltd. has demonstrated again that it is at the forefront of election management technology and is celebrating its latest achievement at the Thanet Parish Council Referendum in Ramsgate, Kent.

Thanet County Council reinforced its commitment to electoral modernisation by selecting the company's highly innovative, e-counting solution. **OPT2VOTE** had successfully worked alongside Thanet in a recent by-election and was the number one choice to provide electronic scanning and management of the Postal Vote Statements, and electronic counting of the ballot papers.

The Referendum, carried out in response to a petition presented to Thanet District Council, was to determine if the local electorate of approximately 29,000 wanted a Parish Council to be established for Ramsgate. The Referendum, a 'Yes or No' Vote, was 'All Postal' in nature.

As its E-Count capability had not been deployed in a Referendum before, this presented an exciting opportunity for **OPT2VOTE** to demonstrate its expertise. The E-Count,

which took place on 3rd November, incorporated the management of almost 12,000 ballot papers, which were scanned and returned for the count. This represented a turnout of 41.06% and the result revealed that 58.47% of local electors were in favour of a Parish Council.

Thanet County Council has been extremely impressed with the level of efficiency and expertise displayed by **OPT2VOTE**. The Chief Executive commented,

"OPT2VOTE's E-counting was able to handle this count effectively and efficiently. Compared to a manual count, it dramatically reduced the amount of time to complete the count. Seeing the system in action highlighted how much can be achieved by the latest technology."

The success of the E-Count and the competent service provided by **OPT2VOTE** was also noted by many neighbouring Local Authorities who observed the proceedings. The success of the Thanet Referendum reinforces **OPT2VOTE's** continued commitment to innovation and its ability to deliver cutting edge election solutions



Ann-Marie Brings Home Prestigious Blackberry Award!

Ann-Marie (centre) pictured receiving her Blackberry Award from Rachael Elnagh (left), BBC's Dragon's Den and Kate Silverton (right), BBC Breakfast.

Ann-Marie Slavin, the Managing Director of OPT2VOTE, has brought home to the company another major award from a ceremony in London to add to a growing collection of honours.

The Blackberry Women & Technology Awards aim to provide recognition to female role models and women who are using technology to make a difference in peoples' lives or the workplace. They acknowledge the success and competitive advantage that women have achieved through their application of technology.

Ann-Marie picked up the prestigious award in the highly competitive category of 'Best Use Of Technology By A Female Entrepreneur' amidst fierce competition. After successful selection as a finalist for the category, the process incorporated adjudication by a judging panel of ten high-

profile experts from the field of technology. The dazzling awards ceremony, which was held in Old Billingsgate London on 2nd November, included an address from guest speaker Meg Munn MP and was a fitting climax to the effort behind such an outstanding achievement.

The Blackberry Award is testament to Ann-Marie's driving force and commitment within **OPT2VOTE** which is continuing to provide innovative solutions to modernise the election process. In accepting the award she said *"It's very exciting to be involved in developing the technology to improve democracy"*.

In addition Ann-Marie has once more gained industry recognition by winning the 'Business Eye - IT Personality of the Year 2006' for outstanding use of information technology for business advancement and growth.

2006 has been a winning year for **OPT2VOTE** as the company has been successful in securing several other impressive awards including a 'Highly Commended in the Excellence in Service to Business category of the Belfast Telegraph Business Awards 2006'.

Furthermore **OPT2VOTE** has earned a SMART Award through the Invest Northern Ireland SMART Award scheme which aims to encourage new product development and innovation within small business.

The array of awards and accreditations acquired over 2006 highlights that innovation, quality and excellence in service provision is at the core of the **OPT2VOTE's** ethos and continues to be the recipe for success.

PARTNERSHIP NEWS

OPT2VOTE Join Forces With Northgate Information Solutions

One of the most exciting partnerships in the elections industry to emerge over recent weeks has been forged between **OPT2VOTE** and Northgate Information Solutions. To meet the new legislative requirements for capturing personal identifiers and comparing signature images and date of birth information, the partnership agreement incorporates **OPT2VOTE'S** comprehensive and robust solution into the Northgate Pickwick software.

Adrian Green, Product Manager of Northgate Elections, commented, "In the course of working in parallel to develop our own solution and in looking at other solutions available in the market, we have come to the certain conclusion that the solution designed by **OPT2VOTE** matches our

requirements and those of our customers completely and we believe that the quality of the solution is unmatched. We also believe that our partnership opens up exciting opportunities for both companies in a number of emerging areas and we are confident that this puts us in a far stronger position to move forward to meet the challenges posed by increasing technological demands."

Ann-Marie Slavin, Managing Director **OPT2VOTE**, commented, "OPT2VOTE has reinforced its commitment to providing cutting edge, quality solutions that meet changing industry requirements and are fully compliant with the regulations by building upon its portfolio of strategic partnerships. By embarking on joint ventures, **OPT2VOTE** aims to

Future Events

15th January 2007
SOLACE Enterprises Elections Conference, London

25th - 28th February 2007
AEA Annual Seminar, Brighton

gain competitive advantage through combining partner's resources so that a wide choice of innovative, integrated solutions can be offered to its client base. We are delighted to be working with Northgate Information Solutions in this partnership. As a market leader in election management systems, Northgate has extensive expertise and employs a truly professional, customer-orientated approach."

OPT2VOTE MAKE KEY COMPANY APPOINTMENTS

As a result of continued success and expansion **OPT2VOTE** has appointed the following personnel to join the team:



01

01 Joanne Whittle

Executive Assistant

Joanne joins the company as Executive Assistant and is responsible for managing **OPT2VOTE'S** Executive Team. She has extensive experience as a Personal Assistant at Director Level and will bring valuable skills to the team through her experience in researching and producing reports, in addition to managing tight deadlines.

02 Isobel McWilliams

Human Resources/Office Manager

As HR/Office Manager, Isobel ensures the successful day to day running of the office including all personnel duties within **OPT2VOTE**. Isobel has substantial experience in HR in addition to office management duties. She has strong interpersonal and organisational skills and will bring valuable expertise to the company.



02

03 Claire Neill

Marketing Manager

Claire fulfils the role of Marketing Manager and is responsible for developing and executing marketing plans and programs for **OPT2VOTE**, in addition to sales activity for new territories. Claire's qualifications include a Masters (MA) in Marketing and the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) Postgraduate Diploma. She has over five years practical sales and marketing experience at an international level.

04 Lee Tedstone

Sales Executive

Lee joins the company as Sales Executive and is responsible for sales activity in North West England. Lee has six years industrial experience including business development, sales, electronic design, IT and recruitment. Lee has obtained excellent experience in



04

05 Clyde Hunt

Software Development Manager

Clyde fulfils the role of Software Development Manager and comes from a development background. Clyde has significant experience in delivering I.T. projects for the financial sector specifically in the area of 24-hour banking and has project management experience employing PRINCE2 methodology. Clyde ensures that all software development follows strict procedures and guidelines as well as **OPT2VOTE'S** quality standards. He has worked extensively on the development of e-voting software since joining **OPT2VOTE** and has focused on accessibility, security and EML integration.

▶▶ We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please write to us at votingmatters@opt2vote.com
OPT2VOTE LTD., 25D BISHOP STREET, DERRY, BT48 6PR T: +44 (0)28 7137 1111 W: www.opt2vote.com

Opinions expressed in Voting Matters are not necessarily the opinions of **OPT2VOTE** or the editor. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in Voting Matters, no responsibility can be accepted for any errors or omissions. No part of this document can be used without the express permission of the editor. All photography is used with thanks to the respective owners. **OPT2VOTE** Ltd. All rights Reserved.