

VotingMatters

YOUR OFFICIAL **OPT2VOTE** NEWSLETTER

OPT2VOTE
choices to suit you 

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BUSINESSUPDATE

DCA Framework Agreement

OPT2VOTE is delighted to announce its inclusion on the new DCA Framework Agreement for the delivery of Electronic Voting Services. The Framework provides for the delivery of services in 3 key areas:

- Remote Electronic Voting - voting using the Internet or Telephone
- Electronic Polling Stations
- Electronic Counting

As one of only 7 companies included on the Framework, and one of only 5 who have been appointed across all 3 key areas, this is a great achievement for OPT2VOTE. This maintains a successful track record as OPT2VOTE had been included on the original DTLR and ODPM Frameworks. Under these Frameworks OPT2VOTE successfully delivered pilot projects involving voting using the Internet, Telephone and digital TV. In 2007, OPT2VOTE will be working with Local Authorities in Shrewsbury, Sheffield and Dover to deliver pilot projects involving the following:

- Internet Voting
- Telephone Voting
- 'Vote Anywhere' Electronic Polling Stations
- Electronic Counting

Inclusion on the DCA Framework will enable OPT2VOTE to continue to provide exciting product innovations to Local Authorities.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council enthusiastic about software solution

The last edition of Voting Matters announced the exciting partnership between Northgate Information Solutions and OPT2VOTE. The product produced by the newly formed partnership addresses the new legislative requirements for capturing personal identifiers by incorporating OPT2VOTE's Personal Identifier and Comparison software into the Northgate Pickwick software.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was one of the first customers to install the new software and following the resolution of some minor set-up problems the feedback has been very positive.

Rotherham has been scanning approximately 6,000 forms per day and John Walker, Electoral Services Manager commented, "Credit is due to OPT2VOTE and Northgate who have worked hard to find a solution for this difficult challenge at very short notice."

Welcome to VotingMatters

Welcome to the second edition of Voting Matters - OPT2VOTE's customer newsletter! In this edition Voting Matters covers a wide range of issues including the company rebranding, an update on the DCA Framework Agreement and news of a four year partnership with Birmingham City Council - plus much more!

We have also included a new feature to address the most frequently asked questions - the principal focus for this issue is on OPT2VOTE's print provision. If you have any questions or topics that you would like addressed please send them via email to votingmatters@opt2vote.com We would also welcome your feedback or suggestions. We hope that you enjoy our newsletter.

We trust that by learning more about OPT2VOTE you will have a better understanding of how we can help with your elections.

>> OPT2VOTE LAUNCHES NEW LOGO

OPT2VOTE unveils its new logo in this issue, replacing and refreshing the current look, which has been in existence since the company was established in 2002.

The fresh, new look demonstrates a renewed confidence that will reinforce the company's position as a market leader. Complementing the new logo, the slogan 'Because Voting Matters' has been introduced to marketing

material to reflect OPT2VOTE's commitment to serving the electoral services market and emphasising the company's fundamental concept that voting really does matter.

An integral part of the re-branding programme will be the launch of the new website and marketing literature at the AEA event in Brighton from 25th - 28th February 2007.



>> QUALITYUPDATE

As part of OPT2VOTE's continued efforts to promote information security within the organisation, it has committed to attaining the ISO27001 Information Security Management System certification. This is the acknowledged international standard for information security management.

In order to demonstrate that effective information security governance arrangements and controls are in place, OPT2VOTE has an ISO27001 project underway and is seeking to

achieve certification during the first half of this year. This will provide OPT2VOTE with the means to benchmark its security arrangements thereby providing stakeholders with the requisite assurance.

The OPT2VOTE Information Security Management System encompasses all activities carried out by the company. It includes but is not limited to the work practices of Operations, Development, Sales & Marketing, Finance, Administration and all third parties.



OPT2VOTE AND BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL AGREE 4 YEAR WORKING PARTNERSHIP

OPT2VOTE is pleased to announce that it has been successful in its bid to provide election products and services to Birmingham City Council for the next 4 years, ensuring a partnership extending to the elections in 2010. Birmingham City Council is the largest Local Authority in Europe with a total electorate of over 900,000 - around 60,000 of whom choose to exercise their right to a postal vote.



Birmingham City Council (BCC) selected OPT2VOTE as its supplier of choice after it led the way in a detailed tender bid and rigorous assessment phase to design, manufacture and issue postal ballot packs for every election through to 2010. In addition to the production of BCC's postal votes, OPT2VOTE will provide a unique scanning service to facilitate the management of returned postal votes, underlining its premier position in the provision of election solutions in the UK. OPT2VOTE is one of the leading suppliers of printed election products and a market leader

in the development and delivery of innovative software solutions to enhance electoral services in the UK and further afield. Given the company's vast elections experience and excellent track record in postal voting solutions and associated services, BCC believes that OPT2VOTE is the ideal partner to assist with the successful delivery of all its political elections for the next 4 years. These elections will include the UK Parliamentary Election, European Parliamentary Election, the Birmingham City Council Elections and also any by-elections that occur during this period.

Cheryl Mulvihill, Electoral Services Manager at BCC stated on the appointment of OPT2VOTE, "Birmingham is delighted to announce our long term contract for the production and management of Postal Votes. We look forward to continuing to work with OPT2VOTE, building on our excellent working relationships."

OPT2VOTE will provide postal voting packs designed to address the complexity of postal voting in the UK and also ensure a quality, secure product to comply with strict statutory legislation and the demanding requirements of Europe's largest municipal authority. The postal

pack design has been used by BCC since the last UK Parliamentary Election in 2005. BCC has also utilised OPT2VOTE's unique Postal Vote Management Solution - another area where OPT2VOTE has led the market with electronic innovations to assist the management of returned postal votes.

OPT2VOTE's postal scanning solution provides an automated system to manage the growing number of postal votes being processed by BCC. The system scans all postal vote statements and ballot papers. It verifies personal identifiers provided by postal voters and determines the validity of the ballot paper. The system also provides a number audit checks to monitor any potential postal voting fraud, a key benefit to BCC. Furthermore, by using a secure online portal, each postal voter can check if their postal vote has been received by the Local Authority, something that has not been possible in previous elections.

OPT2VOTE is fully committed to providing quality solutions within a very demanding market. BCC's decision to extend its partnership reinforces OPT2VOTE's position as the election provider of choice for election staff in the UK.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Introducing the latest feature in Voting Matters - a column dedicated to answering the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) by Election Managers on various topics. Our Director for Research and Innovation and founding member of the OPT2VOTE team, Roy Hill, has more than 30 years experience in the election sector and has utilised his vast experience and knowledge to answer your most common questions on the topic of OPT2VOTE's printing provision.

What is OPT2VOTE's print capacity and what contingency arrangements have you planned?

All our print partners are required to guarantee their capacity and ensure that at least 30% of their capacity is kept available for contingency purposes. In addition all of OPT2VOTE's printers receive the data in a standard format and in the event of an issue arising at a print site, the job can be transferred to another site without any adverse effects on timetable arrangements.

Where are your printers located and will my job be completed locally?

It has always been the policy of OPT2VOTE

to place work with the best and most suitable printer available. We have undertaken a rigorous assessment of printers throughout the country and are delighted that the following printers meet our stringent requirements and standards:

- GI Direct (Leicester)
- Benrose Booth (Derby)
- Real Digital (Croyden)

Allocation of printers in specific locations will be dependent on the actual requirements of the customer but care will be taken to ensure that the site used is available for the Local Authority personnel to visit if and when required.

Do OPT2VOTE plan for printers to sub-contract any part of the job?

All printers are required to ensure that they have all required services available in-house. As part of the OPT2VOTE contingency plan, additional availability in the immediate surrounding area is identified in order to meet any issues during the course of the contract.

>> EVENTS ROUND UP OPT2VOTE FOCUS GROUP EVENTS

In January Roy Hill, Research and Innovation Director of OPT2VOTE, led customer focus groups in London and in Daresbury, in the North of England. The aim of the OPT2VOTE events was to build and develop relationships - bringing current customers and potential customers together to see the current product portfolio and to discuss potential enhancements.

Martyn Harris from Shepway District Council who attended the focus group in London, commented,

" On 16 January this year I attended, along with my Electoral Services Officer, OPT2VOTE's Focus Group meeting held at the Strand Palace Hotel in London.

The event went beyond our expectations, resolving most of the issues over which we had concerns and giving us plenty of clarity that we had not been able to obtain up until this point. A lot of thought had gone into organising the event with contributions from Louise Stamp (on secondment to the DCA) who was able to answer a lot of questions about the new Regulations and Louise Cooke (Dover District Council) who had recently deployed OPT2VOTE's E-counting solution at a referendum at her former authority.

What impressed us most was the depth of knowledge which OPT2VOTE had of the requirements of the Elections Administration Act 2006, the strong grasp of customers' needs and wide range of products available to assist Electoral Registration Officers meeting their new statutory requirements."



Future Event

25th - 28th February 2007

OPT2VOTE look forward to seeing you on Stands 14 & 15 at the AEA Annual Seminar in Brighton.

>> OPT2VOTE MAKE MORE COMPANY APPOINTMENTS

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



01 Roisin Meenan Project Controller

Roisin joins the company as Project Controller. Within the Operations Department she will initially be working on Postal Vote Refresh and Bureau Service projects. She will then assume responsibility for the successful delivery of election materials for the May 2007 election.

02 Daniel Ferguson Software Development

Daniel joins the Software Development team as a Java Developer to assist with the development of Personal Identifier Capture and Internet Voting capabilities. Daniel has previous experience in this field and has formerly worked at Oracle and Pramerica.

03 Raymond Lyttle Software Development

Raymond also joins the Software Development team and is currently working on the requirements for e-voting applications and will be taking the project through to implementation. Raymond has seven years experience in the software industry.

04 Patrick Daly Software Development

Patrick joins the Software Development team as a Java Developer. He has 6 years experience in software development and his previous post was with a telematics company in Tuam, Co. Galway.

05 Paul Sharkey Desktop Support Engineer

Paul will provide support for all Windows based hardware within the company and will work closely with the operations teams in configuring the infrastructure necessary to run successful elections.

06 Ciara Murphy Receptionist

Ciara fulfils the role of receptionist in OPT2VOTE. She was previously based in Dublin and worked in RTE Radio.

>> 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

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