



ESCHER GROUP™

21st-century solutions tailored to your requirements

# Insight Magazine

News from Escher Group

Financial • Postal • Retail

## Inside this issue...



Autumn Customer Forum held in Dublin



Posten Norge extends and expands Escher contract



Riposte® delivers data protection



Os Selos e os Sentidos!



Escher goes live in Iraq

## Certainty in an uncertain world

### Riposte® technology continues to deliver for Posts

The spring 2010 issue of *Insight* is upon us and inside you'll find a diverse range of articles. The new format emphasizes Escher Group's brand and presence within the postal world as the number one provider of counter automation software.

The 2nd Escher Customer Forum was concluded in Dublin, with many insightful papers delivered by customers and partners who were among the 60 delegates who came from 15 countries

to participate. With the theme, *Technology – the New Force in Retail*, Escher's postal customers and key leading industry companies shared their experiences and gave interesting perspectives on future developments in the postal industry.

From the rollout of *Riposte®* in Fiji to welcoming Iraq into the Escher family, (not to mention the allure of chocolate in Portugal!), many things have happened in the Escher world over the last twelve months.



# Certainty in an uncertain world

## A message from the President and CEO

The last twelve months has seen unprecedented developments in the convergence of technologies in the area of telecommunications and media. This revolution is changing, in the most radical way, how people, businesses and governments interact with each other. Postal organizations have been adapting their business to address this changing landscape and Escher has been aggressively developing its product set and working methods to coherently support its customers in this changing business environment. During this time we have also expanded our management team to enhance the international capabilities of the organization and to increase our service delivery capability.

Together with colleagues from Austria and the United States, I was delighted to present to the Universal Postal Union World Forum in Hannover last October on the part that Posts could play in this emerging new world of electronic exchange. Because of its longevity in the marketplace and its scalability, we believe that the core functionality of *Riposte*® is ideally suited to support Posts in taking a leading role in the exchange of messages between Governments, businesses and citizens. I look forward with much interest to working with you as this exciting opportunity develops during 2010 and beyond.

Also, the ongoing development of our products in 2010 will ensure that we continually offer cost-effective solutions that support your needs.

We recognize that we must also adapt as you adjust your business model to satisfy the requirements of your customers and you adjust your network model to realign your costs, allowing you to serve your customers at the location and in the manner that they need.

Once again, we thank you, our customers, for your business.

 Liam Church  
President and CEO  
Escher Group



## You have acquired *Riposte*® - what happens now?

Escher's products are rich in functionality and capability. The intuitive design of *Riposte*® reduces the need for extended training and many customers become proficient with one day's instruction. In addition, the Desktop training mode allows instruction to be completed in the office without off-site training classes.

However, Escher's Professional Services team is available to provide supplementary training when required. Training covers all stages in the project life cycle: from introduction through development to courses aimed at operational and maintenance staff.

Escher can also facilitate bespoke training courses for individual customers as well as public training courses aimed at all customers. Escher's technical trainers have direct experience with the product, either as software engineers or consultants. Sample training courses include:

### Fundamentals

Designed for 10-15 delegates to achieve optimal lecturer-student ratio. A full overview

of *Riposte*® peer-to-peer messaging solution and front-end components.

### Development Environment

Training to post office personnel to assist them in developing and maintaining Application and Services included in the counter automation solution.

### Riposte System Administration

Training for System Administrators from post organizations to facilitate them in the administration and operational management of *Riposte*®.

### 'Train-the-Trainers' Workshop

Escher recommends that end users of the system, such as counter clerks and postmasters, should be trained by post office training staff. This allows end user training to cover both the system itself and how it fits into the existing counter procedures. Escher can provide a 'Train-the-Trainer' course for post office training personnel to make them aware of the system facilities and operation, and to

outline the general features that should be covered in end user training. The sessions are highly interactive to enable post office training staff to gain a full understanding of the system in the context of their own business process. The ultimate goal is to enable them to produce final end user training material.

Platforms: on site; web & PC based; video & conference calling.

Steve Warwick, Senior Technical Consultant

## Cover captions

Left: Liam Church with Dara Calleary, T.D., Irish Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with responsibility for Labour Affairs & Public Service Transformation. The Minister opened the Customer Forum

Center: The sumptuous surroundings of the Westin Hotel, Dublin, forms the backdrop for the Customer Forum

Right: Escher Group's presence at the 2009 Post Expo, Hannover, Germany

## What's happening in the Escher world

### Post Fiji well equipped for "Go Back to School campaign" with *Riposte*®

Less than one year from contract signature with Escher Group, *Riposte*® has been delivered to thirty Post Fiji outlets across the island nation. The deployment was completed during Post Fiji's busiest period when 'Go Back to School' sales were at their height.

A key element of the success of *Riposte*® in Fiji is the support for geographically dispersed networks, as Fiji consists of 106 inhabited islands – most of which are mountainous and covered with tropical forests. *Riposte*® is running successfully in post offices located on all the main islands including: Viti Levu (home to Suva, the capital), Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Kadavu, followed by Mamanuca Islands, Yasawa Islands, Lomaiviti Islands, the remote Lau Islands and Rotuma. The second key element of the success of *Riposte*® is the solution

strong support for retail, as at the beginning of each year, Post Fiji postshops are on the front line to give shoppers assistance and supply many of the products required during the 'Go Back to School' season.

Post Fiji's portfolio of retail products comprises 5000 products including: stationery, exercise books, mathematical instruments, school shoes, school bags and much more. Using *Riposte*® this year for the first time, Post Fiji postshop is introducing the sale of school uniforms for multiple schools, making it an ideal 'one-stop' shop for Fiji Islanders school needs.



### Tickle your customers! - 'Os Selos e os Saentidos' a great success!

CTT Correios de Portugal has created an innovative campaign to emphasize the role that the post office plays in everyday life and how mail promotes positive relationships in both personal and business worlds. Running with the theme of 'five senses', CTT has printed a stamp series to celebrate the important role of human relationships in promoting development.



The series of stamps issued by CTT under

the theme 'the five senses', which is also designed for CTT customers to surprise friends and business partners, include: stamps with embossed words; stamps with the smell of coffee, vanilla or chocolate; stamps with holographic images; and stamps with the feel of touching a raw surface. For more details check out [www.ctt.pt](http://www.ctt.pt) and click on 'Store'.

Retail sales generated by this innovative campaign are facilitated through *Riposte*® counter automation technology.

From José Costa Leal in Lisbon

### Estafeta flying high with *Riposte*®

Mexico's leading shipping and delivery company, Estafeta, went live with *Riposte*® across fifteen locations after completing their own configuration of the PDV 2.0 (2.0 Plataforma dinamica, Nuevo modelo de servicio) point of sale solution.

Estafeta technical staff, located 100 miles south of Mexico City in Cuernavaca, were



trained by Escher's Professional Services team to configure a dynamic *Riposte*®-based solution.

The Estafeta team has continued to optimize the solution and deployed additional functionality during the live estate rollout through March 2010. Gastón Lambarry Arroyo, Director of District 3 and Sponsor of the PDV 2.0 project said: 'although the previous system has served us well, for some time we had felt that it was becoming obsolete for the necessities of the company. The new *Riposte*® system provides updates such as price changes and delivery frequencies; and routing information will be distributed much more rapidly, economically and effectively.'

### *Riposte*® message encryption solution deployed at An Post

An Post's technology partner, PCI, utilized *Riposte*® technology to deliver a comprehensive solution to ensure compliance with data protection obligations under the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and Irish Data Protection legislation.

The solution, based on *Riposte*® messaging, is developed as a C++ library with COM interfaces that utilizes the Microsoft CryptoAPI, a standard component of the Windows Operating System. No additional specialized cryptographic libraries need to be deployed.

The MS CryptoAPI (existing since Windows 2000), uses standards based symmetric and public key encryption techniques and has been enhanced and improved in subsequent versions to include a wider selection of cryptographic algorithms (most recently AES) and support for longer key lengths. The *Riposte*®-based solution delivered by PCI allows for flexibility in choice of cryptographic attributes including algorithm and key length through message configuration. The solution deployed in An Post currently uses unique 168-Bit Triple DES symmetric keys generated for each *Riposte*® message for which data elements are to be encrypted (the specific attributes for encryption are selected through *Riposte* message configuration).

The 3DES key is encrypted using an RSA public key common to the network, and is included in the *Riposte*® message along with a unique RSA key pair identifier (Key Pair UID) with the encrypted data stored as a message attachment. The RSA public key is stored in a *Riposte* configuration message and digitally signed to prevent impersonation. Once the encrypted message reaches its destination (in An Post's case, the *Riposte*® Correspondence Server) the message retrieval agent calls a function in the library to decrypt the message contents. This is accomplished by retrieval of the appropriate RSA private key in a password protected encrypted wallet (identified by the Key Pair UID in the message), decrypting the 3DES data encrypting key carried in the *Riposte* message and from there decrypting the encrypted message content stored in the attachment. Digital signing of outbound messages with verification upon receipt is also supported as is use of the unique client generated data encryption key for encryption of return messages from host to client in a single session based request/response message exchange scenario.

This encryption module also shows An Post improvement innovation under its ISO 27001 Information Security Management System and future iteration of the library will see a native .NET version developed in C# being deployed along with support for the next generation Microsoft Cryptography API (CNG).

Karl Coffey & John Cronin, PCI

## Riposte® to be deployed to Iraqi Post Office



Aziz Alnassiri, uRITS, with Liam Church

**uRITS** Escher has signed a partnership agreement with United Ramin Information Technology Solutions (uRITS) to deploy *Riposte*® for the Iraqi Post Office.

Aziz Alnassiri, General Manger at uRITS said: 'Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization and present day Iraq, developed the first postal system. In 1400BC, a courier system carried post between the Egyptian Pharaohs and the rulers of classical Babylon. Later on in 9-10AD, the Abbasi dynasty dedicated a Diwan (ministry) for post whereby ideas such as using

red wax for sealing letters and making use of homing pigeons were introduced. Today history comes full circle whereby the most advanced postal technology makes a comeback to Iraq via Escher's world-renowned postal counter's technology *Riposte*®.'

Liam Church, President & CEO, Escher Group added: 'we are delighted to bring *Riposte*® to Iraq. We see this as a wonderful opportunity to bring our innovative software to a new market and new users worldwide to support the development of modern day postal services based on a flexible and robust postal counter platform.'

## Posten Norge extends PULS contract with Escher Group

**posten** In an effort to leverage Escher Group's experience of the postal retail business, Posten Norge has formalized a contract which will see Escher play a key role in the continual enhancement of Posten Norge's *Riposte*-based counters system – PULS.

Under this new contract with Posten, Escher is extending its current service portfolio to assume the role of prime contractor for application management, application

enhancements and proactive maintenance. Escher will take the leading role for acceptance, integration and delivery of Posten's third party software providers with *Riposte*, further enhancing the strong relationship between the two organizations.

Posten Norge operates over 1500 post offices, business centers and Post i Butikk branches (*post-in-shop*), all of which are supported by the *Riposte*-based PULS system.



## Conference updates...

### Escher joins PAPU celebrations in Tanzania

**TANZANIA** - The Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) held its annual meeting in January. This year was a special year for PAPU, an agency of the African Union (AU), as it was celebrating its 30th anniversary. The one-week event was held at the Arusha International Conference Centre, Arusha, birthplace of PAPU. Escher was invited by PAPU to attend the celebration and was delighted to showcase *Riposte*® technology to

over thirty countries who attended the celebration.

Escher Group continues to work with PAPU and looks forward to assisting them fulfill their vision to deliver enhanced postal, retail and financial services across Africa. The celebration was officially opened by the Vice President of Tanzania and then closed by the Vice President of Zanzibar.

### RiposteMC™ launched at Post-Expo 2009

**HANNOVER** - the 13th annual Post Expo exhibition and conference was held from 29 September to 1 October and was attended by visitors from numerous countries including Botswana, Ireland, France, Britain, Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, Malaysia and South Africa.

Post Expo was the platform for Escher to launch *RiposteMC*™. The groundbreaking multi-channel technology allows post offices to access services through the web using a standard internet browser. Without leaving their

office, customers are able, with the click of a mouse, to manage: mail using standard services and rates; print mailing labels and barcodes; manage their postal authority account; view transaction history and monitor the status of mailings using a tracking system. *RiposteMC*™ is based on the *Riposte*® suite of products developed using Microsoft.NET 3.5. It delivers a service-oriented architecture (SOA) providing multiple implementation, deployment and integration options to maximize flexibility.



Khalid Sadki, Escher Group, enjoys lunch with Younouss Djibrine, CEO, Cameroon Postal Services (CamPost)



## Escher's travels!

After spending a week instructing NAMPost on using *Riposte*®, local staff encouraged Steve Warwick to see their country

### Ice cold in Windhoek!

Chris Viljoen said I had to go to Swakopmund. I hired a car and set off on the 350km drive to the coastal resort, travelling the Trans Kalahari highway with its breathtaking views of the mountains surrounding Windhoek, and the stunning red sands of the Kalahari Desert. Once in Swakopmund I was struck by the German-influenced architecture (in times past, it was a German colony known as South West Africa), but it was a delightful town full of shops, restaurants and vendors selling local produce.

I drove the coast to watch the rolling breakers of the Atlantic Ocean and to marvel at the dunes of the Kalahari, before setting off

on my return journey to Windhoek. Unlike the journey to the coast, I decided to return via a little-used desert road. In 40-degree heat I drove for two hours, without meeting another human being! My exotic and dare devil journey was complete when I drove over the mountain range, encountering roads that were so tight and narrow that I rarely moved out of first gear! It was a relief to return to the hotel!

Reluctantly, I returned to Britain and the winter chill of Manchester. A fantastic country and many thanks to Chris and his team for making me sample their local pleasures.

Steve Warwick, Senior Technical Consultant



## Jeremy's journeys

Escher does send me to some exotic places! New Caledonia in the South Pacific was my latest expedition, and unsurprising, being a French territory, it does not appear on the 'to-do' list for many English speakers. It is surprisingly large, with the long thin main island of Grande Terre stretching some 350km from end to end. The main city of Nouméa would not look out of place in the French Riviera, and some of the countryside would be at home in Scotland (albeit a bit warmer!).

Although a very long way from Europe, once you are there you can sometimes forget the distance from France - it feels (to me) very French. The French take pride in their architecture, with various *Grand Projets* built over the years, and this has extended to a quite stunning complex in New Caledonia, in the form of the Tjibaou Cultural Centre. It was created by President Mitterrand and opened in 1998.

The Tjibaou Cultural Centre was built to celebrate the culture of the Kanak tribes who

made up the original population of New Caledonia, and is dedicated to Jean-Marie Tjibaou, a campaigner for Kanak independence who was assassinated in 1989. The Centre (actually designed by the award-winning Italian architect, Renzo Piano) is made up of ten massive vertical, but unfinished, shell-like structures, which resemble the traditional huts of a Kanak village – the original shapes were apparently designed to maximize ventilation in the very humid Pacific climate. These contain various exhibition spaces, library and café, but are then linked by a long, gently-curved covered walkway.

We were there on a day when there were few visitors, with only the noise of the wind blowing through the Centre and over the surrounding trees. I found my visit to the Centre quite moving, in terms of the 'grand' but sensitive way in which it commemorates the serious issues of indigenous culture in such remote communities. If you ever visit Nouvelle-Calédonie then it's a must...

Jeremy Folkes, EVP Product Strategy



# Customer Forum 2009

Escher's 2nd Customer Forum was held in Dublin, Ireland. Customers and business partners from around the globe met with Escher's senior team and discussed a range of challenges facing the industry. The formal presentations were of a high standard and the question and answer sessions enjoyed a good level of participation from the floor.

The converging trends in technology are clearly creating new opportunities for Posts and many speakers discussed the emerging role of postal companies in the market for electronic messages. In many cases, new electronic services are being provided as an additional channel to the physical mail service. This is giving the mailer greater choice in communicating with customers and creates a new position for Posts in the market for electronic messages.

A presentation from José Costa Leal of CTT

Correios de Portugal illustrated how such a service can benefit the citizen, government and business in general. This trend is going to change the way consumers do business in the electronic world. Liam Church outlined Escher's commitment to continuous R&D investment in *Riposte*® and the development of *RiposteTrEx*™ which aims to be a core technology in this new market for electronic messages. Escher's business partners from IBM and Microsoft gave insights into their latest offerings and other speakers illustrated how retail outlets could be optimized for customer convenience to achieve more sales.

The closing dinner saw Anúna, the Irish choral ensemble, play for Escher's guests. This was organized with the support of Michael Dawson, founder of the Gift Voucher Shop. A more detailed account of the forum discussions is included as an insert with this issue of *Insight*.

## Riposte® Product Strategy shows future for counter automation

### Escher needs and values your feedback!

One of the exciting initiatives that Escher has implemented in recent months is a new department responsible for Product Strategy. This sits alongside its existing Technical Strategy, from CTO Dave Fleming, which is moving forward support for operating systems including Windows 7 and Server 2008 as well introducing new technologies and architectures for building products and solutions. Product Strategy has a clear focus on the *Riposte*® family and its features and functionality, particularly at the business and operational level.

Part of Escher's strategy is to identify incremental enhancements which may deliver significant benefits to existing customers; in addition to features for brand new customers. For example:

- Escher is investigating solutions to facilitate easy report reprinting in *RiposteEssential*: a counter clerk, manager or auditor wanting an exact copy of a report printed in the office a week or a month previously
- Developing a new Data Management Tool to ease the task of managing reference data within an organization: recognizing that

different parts of an organization may be responsible for different types of data and that some data may be best managed by business experts other than by an I.T. department

- Adding improved logging to central agents, providing greater visibility of transaction volumes and performance, thus assisting in planning future workloads.

One of Escher's greatest assets is its customers and their knowledge of Escher products working within their real-live environments. Escher would like you - our customer - to communicate what you feel is good about the product and should be extended and what new features would be of greatest value to you. These could be completely new business applications to run as part of your counter systems, or new features within existing products. They don't necessarily have to be big - sometimes even the simplest ideas can bring you a major benefit. Please let Escher know if you have ideas or suggestions!

Jeremy Folkes, EVP Product Strategy  
jeremy.folkes@eschergroup.com

## Escher news and updates

### International Roadshow

Escher Group has organized a series of meetings not only with its customers, but also with post offices worldwide. We'd be delighted to call in to say hello and to offer an overview of Escher's products and services. The current schedule is broken down as follows:

Geographical region	Time scale
Africa	July
Asia	May
Europe	May
Middle East	June
Pacific Rim	June
Americas and Caribbean	August

If you would like Escher to visit your organization as part of its world tour, please email: [roadshow@eschergroup.com](mailto:roadshow@eschergroup.com). Escher would be delighted to telephone you to discuss your requirements and to arrange a convenient date to visit.

## POST-EXPO2010

Escher Group will exhibit at the 14th International Postal Technology and Exhibition to be held on 6-8 October 2010 at Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark (stand 1130).

Want to find out more about Escher products? Please contact Ronan Gallagher, Marketing & Communications Manager, at 00 353 1 479 0555 or [ronan.gallagher@eschergroup.com](mailto:ronan.gallagher@eschergroup.com).



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