

**PRESS INFORMATION****For immediate release: 19th August 2004****Bromcom Looking back 10 years...****Message from Ali Guryel, Managing Director**

Incredibly it is now over 10 years since the first pioneering schools took a leap of faith with Bromcom and invested in a revolutionary new product called EARS (Electronic Attendance Registration System). This invention, which many of you will be aware of, made mainstream news with, amongst others, The Times, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, The Express and TES. National and Local Radio gave very enthusiastic coverage and the system was even featured on both the BBC News and the BBC Tomorrow's World programme.

It all came about as a result of a call by then Education Ministers John Patten and Eric Forth for 'bright ideas' to solve the long-standing problem of truancy. At a time when 'wireless' was only used to describe radio stations' broadcasting or military and police communication systems, I set out to develop a low cost, total solution for attendance recording in schools. Using this little-known wireless technology to bring about a 'revolutionary system', as the media called it, was a very challenging innovation indeed.



School Minister Stephen Twigg (left) with Bromcom Managing Director Ali Guryel

This new invention in 1992 was duly patented going through stringent examination and due process. In fact the patent was awarded in most developed countries around the world, including the USA, Canada, Australia and the main EU countries. Over the last 2 years this patent has become a matter of huge controversy between Frontline Technology Ltd (Bromcom's associate company) and the DfES.. A public announcement by Frontline regarding this issue can be found on this page and on their web site [www.frontline-technology.com](http://www.frontline-technology.com).

In the early to mid 1990s the comments that the EARS system received such as 'ingenious', 'breakthrough', 'godsend to teachers', 'brilliant', etc., were a clear indication that something quite extraordinary was being achieved.

Of course, an equal part in this success story was played by those pioneering schools and colleges that were prepared to take a risk with Bromcom when the very first systems were installed around the UK. In particular, I would like to mention Spennymoor, Haberdashers, Frank F Harrison and Wilberforce 6th Form College.

After this successful start, EARS evolved into a school-wide system with many other functions in addition to attendance. Features such as messaging, alert, grade collection, behaviour recording and parent contact via pagers and SMS mobile phones have become popular options. With this added functionality, the name EARS changed to wNET and then



later to e-School as it remains today. On the way, Bromcom won many prestigious awards including Invention of the Year 1993 (finalist), BETT Gold award in 1994, The Queen's Award for Enterprise and a listing in The Sunday Times ARM TechTrack 100 and HotList 100 amongst others.

Today Bromcom continues to maintain its technological lead. The system supports an extensive range of input devices, making maximum use of any resources that a school may already have. These devices can be networked using wireless or cabled networks or any mixture of networks including GPRS. The core software has been developed in Microsoft's .NET environment and is fully browser-based for ease of use. No other system comes close to this level of flexibility and functionality.

With all this change and innovation, I am particularly pleased to see so many of the schools and colleges who took on Bromcom back in 1993, renewing their commitment to Bromcom by 'technology refresh' schemes and switching to the new browser-based software.

### **Teachers Folders**

Alongside the PC side of the software, Bromcom continues to develop handheld devices. These devices are able to run over a number of networks from Bromcom's ISM G2 network to IEEE 802.11b/g.

A common misconception, of course, is that the Bromcom system does not use laptops or PCs for attendance data entry in the classroom. On the contrary, in fact, our WinFolder product was designed specially for this purpose and has been in existence since 1999/2000. Many schools and colleges purchased WinFolder specifically to run on laptops with wireless networks such as IEEE 802.11b or g, taking advantage of WinFolder's very low demands on networks and host machines. WinFolder is capable of running on basic PI machines, which is a distinct advantage for schools looking to equip all teachers with a laptop or PC for entering registration.

Where we go from here...

The culmination of all our hard work and perseverance has been Bromcom e-School undoubtedly the most sound product of its type. All data entry is 'teacher-centric' and is input at the point of impact, usually in the classroom. This removes the bottleneck and burden of keying data into the MIS system and combines 'data capture' with 'data entry' at source. With its browser interface the system also removes barriers of access to data (subject to password security privileges) for staff in the school or even at home.

I encourage you to take a look at Bromcom's MIS operational approach and see for yourself the numerous benefits packed into this extraordinary design. I also hope you that those of you who are Bromcom customers will explore our new e-shop online purchasing facility which can be found on our users website

Ali Guryel

Managing Director



**Update On The Action By The Department For Education And Skills Against Frontline Technology Limited [Ftl] Relating To European Patent: Ep 0664 061 Current position:**

The Judgment handed down on the 17th of June held that the Patent ("European Patent: EP 0664 061") was valid in part.

We have previously explained that the vast majority of the grounds of attack on the validity of the patent made by the Department for Education for Education & Skills ("the DfES") were rejected by the court. The principal ground of attack where the DfES was successful related to a computer system using file-sharing architecture at Kingshurst City Technology College in the early 1990s.

The Court ordered that unless the Patent was amended, then it would be revoked. Frontline has therefore now applied to the court to amend the Patent, in the light of the Court's findings. The amendments seek to ensure that the Patent does not cover computer systems using file-sharing architecture, such as that used at Kingshurst City Technology College. The precise details of the proposed amendments will be published in due course.

Frontline hopes that it will be possible to conclude the amendment proceedings at an early date.

