



# IT Systems Update

September 2011

The speed of change in IT and control systems has outstripped developments in processing technology and it can be difficult to keep up. In this issue, Automation Account Manager Mark Day looks at

some of the practical ways we can help, even when the solutions sound "over our head". We also introduce new members of the Tetra Pak Processing team.

## How to keep your feet on the ground when your head's in "The Cloud"

Once it was a computer's 'blue screen' that spelt disaster. Such catastrophes may be less common but when a main server starts a 'go slow' campaign or the sweet purr of its hard-drive sounds more like a failing 'big-end' in the work's van, you know there's trouble in store.

At first glance, replacing the server may not look a big budget item. Unfortunately with a new server comes a new operating system, application software, compatibility problems, the cost of fresh licenses and perhaps even the replacement of control units on production lines.

It's a familiar scenario but there are economical alternatives to replacing the entire system. For example, we are increasingly finding effective solutions in "The Cloud" and its close relative, virtualization software.

Cloud computing offers multi-location access and can simplify hardware replacement.

The 'cloud' has been around for a while so the term is no longer followed by "cuckoo land". For an IT definition see the panel. Basically it means having access to computing via delivery of a service, rather than a product. Virtualization software is also well established but remains relatively new to the food production sector.

Recently we have been working with clients to help provide cost-effective ways to upgrade IT systems while at the same time making them easier to use, with greater functionality.

Virtualization applications are used to create virtual computers that can be used to run real, standard applications. In practice this means fewer servers are needed, it is easier to upgrade both hardware and software and systems become more flexible. The use of 'snapshots' means when disaster strikes - or you make a big mistake - it is easy to roll everything back to the last correct point.



### Cloud computing differs from conventional hosting in that:

- It is sold on demand.
- It is scalable, so the user can have as much or as little of a service as they want at any given time.
- The service is fully managed by the provider.

A small number of proprietary programs are available and we have identified which work best in different environments.

Virtual computers can be 'confined' to a local network but the possibilities increase when the full power of the internet is added. For instance, backing up data on remote servers, using services developed by internet providers, is already well established.

The next stage is subscribing to a virtualized server, managed by the provider. This is also becoming popular, especially with businesses that wish to avoid the overheads associated with an office, or are based in more than one location. Team members can share all

applications and files in 'real time' from any location that has acceptable broadband.

For the dairy or food processing plant this new technology means that older computer equipment can be given a new lease of life, while systems can be made more robust, more flexible and more efficient.

Tetra Pak Processing is in a unique position to help because we fully understand the production systems and the demands on your business as well as the developments in IT.

We can also provide remote support for Tetra Plantmaster control systems. The Service Platform is a remote support tool developed by Tetra Pak

which means that our Technical Services team can monitor the plant remotely, diagnose problems without being on site and often provide immediate solutions.

**For further information contact  
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## Meet the new members of our team



**Kevin Lawler**  
Business Development Manager

Kevin is a mechanical engineer by profession with experience in the food sector and in project management consultancy. He previously worked for Tetra Pak in an engineering and project execution role in the UK and Ireland.

Kevin is based in Ireland.

Contact: +353 87 6860695



**Sean Bell**  
Business Development Manager

Sean has over 20 years experience in the cheese industry including engineering, operations and general management with leading manufacturers including Dairy Crest, First Milk and Butlers Cheeses.

Apart from cheese, he has a passion for 4x4 off-roading.

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**Kim Barkus**  
Business Development Manager

Kim has rejoined Tetra Pak Processing in the UK, having first joined the group in 1989 as a proposals engineer. After holding several positions in different divisions she was promoted to project manager in 1998, before moving to Sweden in 2004.

Kim has considerable experience with the group's dairy, beverage and prepared food products.

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