

Kate Brown

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PROFILE

- Ten years' work in National Health Service Information Management and Technology.
- An experienced systems designer and M Technology programmer.
- Four years as a freelance professional in both the private and public sectors, a period during which each of my three clients offered contract extensions.
- Currently an employee and co-director of a small IT Consultancy.
- Experience in working on major NHS projects using the full Prince methodology.

KEY SKILLS AND QUALITIES

- Extensive experience in the design, programming and implementation of complex M Technology applications.
- Rapid assimilation of unfamiliar applications.
- Ability and willingness to adhere to local standards and practices.
- Effective verbal and written communication with clients, customers and system users at all levels.
- Comprehensive documentation skills – both as an author and as a quality reviewer.
- Success in the design, implementation and delivery of training programmes for a range of abilities, from inexperienced system users to computer-literate colleagues.
- Ability to view situations from multiple points of view.

CAREER REVIEW

March 1999 to present day

IT Consultant: Reality Consulting Limited

Reality Consulting Limited is a small IT consultancy delivering a variety of services (primarily to the National Health Service), including bespoke software development, product support, project management, M Technology training courses and contract programming in M Technology, Pace, Pick and C. The company is run as an ethical co-operative.

In addition to being involved in all aspects of technical work on Reality's various bespoke projects, and support of Reality's standard range of products written in M Technology, I also do pre-sales work, including meetings with potential clients and production of estimates and quotations, and enjoy playing an active role in the quality assurance of software and documentation.

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My largest technical projects to date since joining Reality have been the extraction of data from the obsolete patient systems of a major acute NHS hospital, and also an NHS community healthcare trust. The relevant data (from their patient index, accident & emergency, waiting list, inpatient, outpatient and community systems) were subsequently uploaded successfully into their replacement systems. A considerable amount of communication with system users, and technical “detective work”, was required to track down all the required data, since some areas were not accurately documented. These projects also involved extensive liaison with the third party suppliers of the replacement systems, regarding their requirements for the extracted data.

I have gained some Caché experience as a result of being required to modify one of Reality's products to run on this new software platform at customer sites.

Another major task undertaken by myself was the design and production for Reality of software licence agreement and software support contract documents, along with documentation of various associated procedures. This document set has been very well received by Reality's customer base, who have commented favourably upon its clarity and simplicity, considering the complexity of the subject material.

July 1995 to March 1999

M Technology Contract Programmer: Kroma Consultants Limited

Kroma Consultants Limited was a private limited company, of which I was the sole employee and director. It has ceased trading since I joined Reality Consulting Limited.

July 1995 - May 1996: BP Oil UK (Quantech), Bridgwater

Quantech is the small company providing support and enhancements to BP's CODAS system. CODAS was the main operational system used by all BP Oil Distributors in the UK.

This contract involved tidying old code which had evolved over a number of years; optimising it for efficiency; improving and standardising the user interface; ensuring year 2000 compliance; incorporating library utilities; and ensuring portability across hardware platforms prior to a planned migration to PC's. I was also required to update and improve the comprehensive user and technical documentation relating to the modified areas.

This was initially a 6-month contract, but I was retained for a further 3 months to help bring this very large project nearer to completion.

May 1996 - August 1997: Cunningham (UK) Ltd, Bristol

Cunningham (UK) Ltd (formerly Cunningham Hart) was a large company of loss adjusters used by major insurance companies worldwide, forming part of the international Cunningham Group. The department in Bristol provided software support and enhancements for the company's fifty-plus branches throughout the UK, all of which used a standard, in-house system written in MSM.

Note: In 1998 the Cunningham Group was involved in a merger and has now become “Cunningham, Ellis and Buckle”.

I was contracted to help tackle a long list of tasks arising from a “Business Process Re-engineering” exercise. This involved specification, coding and documentation of new functions, and modifications to existing ones. My main project was to implement major changes in the printed material produced by the system upon entry of each new insurance case. I was entrusted with a high level of autonomy in the running of this project, which involved much liaison with system users, senior management and fellow analyst/programmers.

Subsequently I became the “resident expert” on an ancient, complex and undocumented suite of programs used by the director of finance to estimate, on a monthly basis, crucial indicators such as the value of the company's work-in-progress.

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I was also given responsibility for designing and coding numerous new reports for a range of users, from UK senior management, down to the individual loss adjusters. The majority of these were coded in MSM but used an in-house software product which downloaded report data into Lotus 1-2-3, allowing the programmer to insert Lotus 1-2-3 macro text and thus produce PC-based reports. I was given the task of documenting this relatively new product, then training and subsequently advising some of my colleagues in its use.

Other jobs included design and coding of a background job scheduler; the standardisation and enhancement of an in-house report generator; also some user support.

This was initially a 6-month contract, but it was extended for two further periods of 3 months and 6 months respectively.

February 1997 - June 1997: BP Oil UK (Quantech), Bridgwater

This was my second period of contracting at Quantech.

I was asked to make some urgent modifications to the CODAS system sales reports, as required by BP (UK)'s senior management.

As I was already on a full-time contract (at Cunningham UK) when this work was offered, Quantech secured my services by arranging this contract on a part-time basis, with a large proportion of the work being done "out-of-hours" at my own premises.

January 1998 – June 1998: FHS, Exeter

FHS provided and supported the main computer systems in use across NHS Health Authorities throughout the UK.

Note: FHS is now part of the NHS Information Authority.

This contract required me to join a temporary team comprising a mixture of permanent and contract staff. The job in hand was to modify the financial and reporting areas of their main Health Authority system, to split data according to newly defined boundaries based upon post code areas.

Upon completion of the software modifications, I was among the reduced number of contractors retained to help carry out full testing of the modified systems. This involved my temporary incorporation into the organisation's in-house testing team, and use of their BS EN ISO 9001 quality testing procedures.

This was initially a 3-month contract, but it was extended for a further 3 months.

July 1998 – March 1999: Cunningham (UK) Ltd Loss Adjusters, Bristol

This was my second period of contracting at Cunningham UK.

My role this time was more flexible, the main purpose being to maintain an acceptable level of user support during a period when the permanent staff were developing new systems in readiness for an approaching merger. As the merger progressed, I was also required to code numerous "ad-hoc" financial and statistical reports for the managers of the new company, often working to aggressive deadlines.

This was initially a 6-month contract, but it was extended for a further 3 months.

March 1987 to July 1995

From Trainee to Team Leader: SWift Information Technology

SWift Information Technology was responsible for developing complex medical applications used in hospitals and community units throughout the South West and elsewhere in the UK. The organisation was at the forefront of developing and implementing a number of major NHS initiatives in Information Technology, including the development of a second-generation Hospital Information Support System (HISS). SWift was a major supplier of systems to the NHS. Systems were developed in DSM for open VMS running on DEC VAX and DEC Alpha AXP machines under VMS, in MSM running on UNIX platforms and in DSM-11 running on DEC PDP-11 machines.

Note: In September 1995 SWift Information Technology was purchased by Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and is now known as 'EDS Healthcare UK'.

1987-1989: Analyst Programmer

Initially appointed as trainee Analyst/Programmer in Pharmacy team. Responsible for design and development of modules of a major Pharmacy system used in NHS hospital pharmacies throughout the UK.

- Gained a solid grounding in 'M' programming whilst supporting and developing the Pharmacy system. The system offered label printing, stock control, ordering, invoicing and monthly financial analysis.
- Tasked with the analysis and design of a major Pharmacy sub-system, including liaison with users to define their requirements, and supervision of a small programming team.
- Implemented the Pharmacy system in three districts, including a major implementation at the largest teaching hospital in the South West with nine satellite Pharmacies.
- Designed and produced the Pharmacy system's first on-line and hard copy user documentation.

1990-1994: Senior Analyst/Programmer

Selected to design, code and subsequently manage the implementation and support of the security and user interface elements of SWift's new HISS, as part of a major NHS Information Technology initiative.

- Further 'M' programming, both hand-coded and using a new, in-house software generator.
- Selected for a temporary team which was tasked to urgently modify an in-house data dictionary; the resulting product was subsequently adopted as the departmental standard.
- Involved in development of implementation standards and major software upgrade procedures.
- Created and delivered training programmes to numerous hospital system users.
- Responsible for the delivery of implementation and support services.

1994 – 1995: Product Services Team Leader

Team leader of the support and implementation team responsible for SWiftCORE, the central modules of SWift's HISS, including its security aspects and the SWiftENCORE enquiry package.

- Management of a team of ten analyst/programmers.
- Allocation of resources within the team's budget of £1/4m.
- Negotiation of deadlines and formulation of contracts with users.
- Project management of the development of customer support procedures and standards as part of SWift's BS EN ISO 9001 quality initiative.
- Project management of the implementation of the four SWiftCORE modules at various customer sites.
- Design of the configuration management procedures for development and implementation of the SWiftCORE functions.
- Provision of in-house support for application teams implementing and supporting within the SWiftCORE environment.

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TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

HARDWARE: DEC VAX, DEC Alpha AXP, DEC PDP-11, HP 9000 UNIX platforms, PC.

LANGUAGES: *M Technology* (formerly "Mumps")

'M' PROGRAMMING TOOLS: *DMS* - the Micronetics "Display Management System"
SGEN - the SWift Information Technology in-house software generator

OPERATING SYSTEMS: DTM, DSM for Open VMS, MSM, Caché, DSM-11, VMS

PACKAGES: Microsoft: *Word, Excel, Access*
Lotus: *1-2-3, AmiPro*
WordPerfect

TRAINING COURSES

Advanced DSM
VAX DCL
VAX DSM System Management
CASE communications
Basic systems analysis
SSADM
BIS Team Leading

QUALIFICATIONS

Honours degree - Bachelor of Music (Upper Second) at the University of Birmingham (1986)

PERSONAL

Date of Birth: 7 March 1964

Interests: I lead the cello section of the Bristol Concert Orchestra (an amateur group which gives regular public concerts in and around Bristol), and play cello in a string quartet. I also enjoy playing tennis and badminton, swimming, surfing, horse riding, Tai Chi and camping.