# IT Strategy

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# IT Strategy for Table Tennis England

## Introduction

This IT Strategy focuses on how to make IT work for our business and improve company performance, alongside examining ways of exploiting the full potential of information systems from existing and new IT products.

2014 represents the start of a new IT strategy with exciting times ahead. By the end of the strategy 2017, IT, its uses and implementation will look very different to the beginning of the strategy.

## Aims and Objectives

This is a strategy for the whole of the Table Tennis England. It is intended to encompass the applications of IT in all areas: Head Office (HO) departments, remote workers, Membership services and all other organisational structures and groupings such as committees. Therefore all members of Table Tennis England are stakeholders – staff, members, volunteers and all others associated with the Table Tennis England. .

It is also a strategy for IT in its widest sense:

• **Systems -** to support management and departmental needs (e.g. for financial, personnel and membership management); for project management, resource provision; coach education, learning and teaching and to support High Performance Coaching.

• **Services -** help, support, training, systems development, business and systems analysis programme and project management

• **Infrastructure -** networking, computing environments and machinery

All of these require clear, well defined and agreed IT management and governance structures in order to deliver the aims and objectives of this IT Strategy. Implementation of the IT Strategy will be managed through a set of inter-related programmes and projects. Inevitably it will evolve over time but the Strategy is intended to set direction for the period 2014 to 2017.

The Table Tennis IT solutions need to cater for Table Tennis as a Data rich sport. For example we need to add value to the staff, membership and the other stakeholders by the provision a first class communication, understanding of needs, production of results and ranking system which will include fast response between competitions and the Table Tennis websites.

Finally, we need to ensure maximum "value for money", over the long term. We have to fully justify every IT purchase decision in accordance with the best use of public funds.

## Purpose

Information technology, now more than ever, is crucial if the Table Tennis England is to deliver on its vision of *'a world leading, National Governing Body, delivering a diverse*

*and dynamic sport that transforms lives, connects communities, achieves excellence and inspires medal winning performances*. . The business processes of the Table Tennis England are all increasingly dependent on IT in one form or another.

Table Tennis England members, volunteers and staff increasingly expect that the IT services we provide will respond to their needs.

This changing environment presents us with several opportunities and threats:

- Delivery of more services to our stakeholders on their own computers;
- Increasing expectations of Table Tennis England Head Office as service providers;
- More remote delivery of Table Tennis England services and products online to clubs, leagues and volunteers
- Utilise data to understand, communicate, segment, market and so on driving forward informed initiates based on robust data and information.

## Open Standards for Development

Wherever possible Table Tennis England will be using open standards for the development of new systems. This will provide Table Tennis England with a number of benefits

- Common software and programming standards, which means that we are not (necessarily) locked in to the original developers, subject to contract

- Table Tennis England use a variety of standard products, such as MS Office, which again gives us wider standardisation and increased benefits in areas such as staff training

- Table Tennis England will always try to use web based ("cloud") systems and products to allow ease of access and cater for a wider user audience. Where access may be restricted, we will always use a "permission" based system to restrict access for web based solutions

- The CRM system will be web-based so that individual members can access and maintain their own details, thereby reducing HO administration costs

## IT Support

Table Tennis England made a decision to outsource the IT support function which was reviewed and retendered in 2014 and awarded a contract on a three year review basis. The rationale was:

- The size/turnover of the organisation does not warrant even a single fulltime resource

- There are a growing number of diverse IT applications, which one single employee would struggle to be an expert in all – e.g. Video Conferencing and Doc Handling systems

- A single employee would need cover for sickness and holidays etc.

- No line management function for the employee

- Also require staff training functionality – again difficult to get in one single person.

## IT Infrastructure

Table Tennis England will retain a central communications room at Head office, which will house the servers and communications equipment. The room is secure temperature controlled.

Changed critical data will always be backed up on a daily basis and stored off-site (with the external IT Support Company). This process was fully tested prior to implementation. If the HO function was destroyed or suffered catastrophic communications isolation, the IT support organisation would lend Table Tennis England a back-up server so that business operations at HO or at an alternate site could be recovered and some level of service resumed for the membership and other stakeholder groups. All emails are already held off-site on the web.

## Licenses

It is crucially important that we manage our live register of licenses. The reputational damage that would ensue from a prosecution would far outweigh the costs of keeping our software licenses up-to-date. With the implementation of Office 365 these will be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis.

## Data Storage

All data is stored in "Raid 5+1" configuration, which effectively means that there are three identical hard drives and all data files are shared on at least two drives so that in the vent of failure of any single drive, the data is still secure. We also have a hot spare drive installed in the server so in the event of a failure, the hot spare will automatically come online and data will be copied onto it.

## Data Management

With data and information becoming ever more important in both understanding the customer, driving initiatives and communicating a thorough review of our data is required. Currently two CRM databases exist whilst a large amount of data is held on excel spreadsheets. A thorough review of data and its management its required which will ultimately result in a new data management (CRM) system being put in place.  The expertise to do this internally does not exist and will require external support.


## Web Site

Increasingly the web and the Table Tennis England Website are a key communication and information tools that need to be on the cutting edge to support the needs of the organisation and the Table Tennis family.

A full review of the website is envisaged for 2015 which will both revolutionise it and link it to the ongoing data review and its outcomes.

## Web Hosting
We have the main Table Tennis England website and the CRM system externally hosted which means we are covered for security and disaster recovery.

## Apps
Increasingly mobile technology is becoming the way to speak to and contact customers. Linked to the data review, a key outcome will be the development of apps to help grow the sport and link to the database.

## Sage
Sage continues to be our accounting system of choice. However it is not utilised to its full potential. By March 2015 it is anticipated that the full business reporting function will be utilised providing appropriate reports to key internal and external stakeholders.

## Network Configuration
 Table Tennis England network contains multiple switches for contingency. The IT Support SLA with the IT supplier means that the external support organisation can remotely access computers and systems or alternatively will be onsite within 60 minutes of a call out.

In the event of a Head office power outage, UPS batteries will take over automatically. This UPS will ensure our outsourced IT company will make the decision when to safely shutdown the servers should the power not be restored within a short period.

The UPS will then continue to run and operate the telephone system so we can continue to receive and make calls.

In the event of a complete IT failure, the IT Support SLA with the IT supplier means that the external support organisation will be onsite within 2 hours of a call out.

## Telephony
The Head Office telephony system is based on IP technology and will allow convergence of voice and data on one platform. Given the large number of mobile handsets amongst the staff and the volunteers, there will also be mobile linked voicemail and email facilities.

Table Tennis intends to develop a series of sports development resources (coaching, communications or club development) which include the use of iPhone/iPod/iPad 'Apps'. Such 'Apps' are developed to enable remote use of resources and improve communication at all levels and across all population groups. To enable this progressive change Table Tennis England will use iPhones and iPads to develop and test any new 'Apps' and to use as a public demonstration tool.

Staff training will be ongoing in this whole area of voice and data convergence.

## Video Conferencing

Video Conferencing (VC) can deliver substantial benefits for the organisation, both in terms of reducing these costs (i.e. achieving payback on the initial costs within one year and saving at least twice the running costs each year and improving the quality and frequency of senior management communication).

This available internally through Lync whilst externally Skype is utilised.

## Conclusion

This is the 1st year of the strategy –

- a new organisation is delivering Table Tennis England's ICT support and the organisation is in the process of switching to Office 365

- A full data review is being undertaken by an external organisation and we are looking to have a new CRM system up and running by August 2016.

By the end of this strategy the whole of Table Tennis England's IT will be very different from the start.