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 **Terrabase Newsletter - January 2007**

Remember us? We provide off-the-shelf and bespoke software solutions for the business community.



Tony Harris  
(Managing Director)

*"Well, Christmas and New Year are over and, as [reported by the BBC](#), there is a lot of interest in truly interactive web-based systems. This month's newsletter is dedicated to this type of solution in a business context, read on for more"*

### What's the difference between a Web and an Internet?

No, it's not a joke from a cracker. For those who aren't sure, or need a reminder, the [web](#) is just one way of using the [Internet](#) and manifests itself as web-pages for humans to read.

### Why is a web-based database good?

1. They work on any operating system (Windows, Mac OS, Linux)
2. They are much less vulnerable to the idiosyncrasies of your computer's configuration
3. They can be easily patched and supported remotely
4. They can enable global access from Internet cafes through to mobile phones
5. The latest [AJAX technology](#) makes the web pages fast and intuitive
6. They are much easier to secure than desktop database systems
7. They provide the potential for a much closer relationship with your customers
8. Your own customers can do half the data-entry work for you
9. They look great.

### Web-based database systems

Web database systems, or web applications, are quite definitely not the same as websites; a website being an online version of a corporate brochure.

A web application on the other hand looks like a website but is designed to be mainly used

by staff to manage company data in a similar way to a normal database system. Before embarking on any development we always ask whether there are good reasons not to make it web-based.

### **Data rich, information poor**

You probably know this law:

$$I + N = H$$

Where:

I = Information overload

N = Need decision now

H = Hurting head

This is where a well crafted database system comes into its own. Budgets, expenditure, income, cash-flow, time planning all integrated into the business equivalent of an enjoyable strategy game but with serious, real-life benefits.

If you, or your clients' systems are more 'stress' than 'success' let us come and give them a free review.

### **MoveOn quick case-study**

The MoveOn database is a web-based database we developed for Cheshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning department. It is used to manage information on people taking part in adult learning classes in Cheshire.

It uses a high-speed, AJAX based web-interface with searching and management of data in related categories (tutors, courses, course types etc). This data is then shown in user customisable reports and queries. MoveOn is discussed in detail below:

### **MoveOn in detail (if your interest is sparked)**

MoveOn provides Cheshire County Council with global access to their records on adult learners, courses, tutors, venues etc, etc, etc. A secure logon lets authenticated users view and manage this data using a series of AJAX enabled forms and searches.

One AJAX (I know we keep mentioning this, but..) highlight is the real-time data de-duping that takes place while the user types. As a learner record is entered, any possible dupes (i.e. duplications of that learner record) are shown alongside the form. This AJAX de-dupe is a Terrabase technology that lends significant advances to web-based databases, data-entry staff no longer have to type in full records before it is checked for uniqueness. This means records can be typed in, one after another, and dupes automatically clicked on and resolved. There is no interference or speed issue for the operator and the whole process is smooth and intuitive. The new terrabase website will provide a demonstration of the AJAX de-dupe technology in practice.

Searches are all AJAX driven. As you search on the data the results are shown underneath, on multiple grids if necessary, without any need for confusing or slow page refreshes.

Related information is entered in real-time within the context of the data-entry screen. For

instance, if you are entering a learner on to a course you will want to select which course that learner is on. What if the course has not been entered yet? Well, just click on the New Course button and the screen will morph to allow you to enter the new course information, without taking you away from the record you are entering. You should see this to fully appreciate how much this improves your experience of database work. Next week the new terrabase website will be launched which will include video footage of these features.

Our web-based database systems are built with a careful design eye and, beyond the obvious efficiency advantages gained by such a system, a terrabase system will add substantial kudos to any organisation.

### **Call for a free meeting.**

Next month: A tour of some of the more exciting features of the new terrabase website

#### **About terrabase**

Terrabase creates bespoke software, software products and educational systems. Visit [www.terrabase.co.uk](http://www.terrabase.co.uk) or call us 0845 644 1643 if you have any questions not addressed on our site.

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