British Computer Society – South West Branch
Annual General Meeting

13th May 2008
University of Exeter, Exeter

Chairman's Report

The last 12 months have seen another period of enthusiastic activity from the South West Branch. Our primary link with the regional membership continues to be the events programme, and we have had a number of very successful presentations addressing a range of topics:

- The State of Spyware: Protect Your Network from Evolving Spyware Trends (Colin Smith, Webroot Software)
- The impact of IT on the Marine Navigator (Andrew Eccleston, School of Earth, Ocean and Environmental Sciences, University of Plymouth)
- Turning IT Security Inside Out (Jon Collins, Freeform Dynamics)
- ProBlogging: Money, Metrics and Mentalism in the Long-Tail world of the Web (Dr Michael Evans, University of Reading)
- Health Informatics (HI): what's all the fuss about? (Dr Max Hughes)
- Run silent, run deep: today's threat landscape (David Emm, Kaspersky Labs)

The Committee would like to acknowledge the support that these presenters have given to the Branch, and to thank them for delivering an exciting and topical programme.

A further development this year is that we have begun to video the presentation sessions, and then make the results available online via the Branch website. This has been happening since February, and is likely to be standard practice from now on. We hope that this will help to make the presentations more accessible to members across the region, especially those for whom our normal meeting locations in Plymouth and Exeter are too remote. Particular thanks are due to Paul Dowland for his efforts in making the recordings and handling the subsequent formatting for web-based delivery.

If there is a self-criticism we could apply this year it is that our events programme has ultimately been rather skewed towards the topic of security, with half of the presentations addressing this theme. Although it is doubtless an important area, we are conscious that other topics could usefully merit representation, and thus if any members have topics of interest or speakers to suggest we would be happy to receive details.

We have continued in our attempts to support and encourage computing-related students in the region, with our ongoing sponsorship of degree prizes for the universities of Exeter and Plymouth. In addition, we have again operated a competition to encourage students to share their work with the region. However, rather than link this to presentation at a Branch event, our approach this year was to solicit submissions of posters describing projects, and allow them to be judged online (via an open call to the Branch membership).

As usual, I shall end by acknowledging the contribution of the Branch Committee. The team has continued to work enthusiastically throughout the year, and its number has increased during the year as a result of new co-opted members from FlyBe and the University of Exeter. This has been very useful in further diversifying the membership, with valuable inputs already having been provided into our activities. I would like to end with thanks to the entire Committee for the time and effort they have given to support the Society in the region.

Prof. Steven Furnell CEng FBCS CITP
May 2008