



ISSUE I

# Absoft Bi-Annual Newsletter

An insight into Absoft, SAP industry  
news and hot topics

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# HELLO & WELCOME



**H**i and welcome to the Absoft customer newsletter.

We have changed the format of the newsletter, as you are about to see, and therefore are resetting the counter and calling this edition **Issue I**.

In **Issue I** of our bi-annual newsletter we've chosen to focus on two main themes:

- Absoft's perspectives on some of the "hot topics" out there in the business and SAP world including GDPR, Cloud, S/4HANA and Single Sign-On
- Insights into the work week of our team members as well as some of the activities we involve ourselves in when we are not being SAP consultants

Our "hot topics" perspectives are not just based on concept and theory. We also share our knowledge and practical experience of implementing S/4HANA, GDPR solutions, SSO and helping our

customers to maximise the value of moving their SAP systems to the Cloud.

I hope that experience comes through and you find the articles thought provoking and useful.

In a similar vein, I hope you enjoy reading about some of the new faces in Absoft, what a day in the life of one of our consultants entails and what our people think are some of the key questions and issues currently out there in the SAP world.

Enough spoilers from me! I hope you enjoy our re-vamped newsletter.

**Ian Mechie,**  
*Managing Director*

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# A WARM WELCOME TO THE TEAM



## **Barry Moar- Technical Payroll Specialist**

Barry joined the Absoft HR/Payroll team back in March 2018. With over 20 years of experience working within a payroll environment we are very excited to have him on the team.

An interesting fact about Barry is that he appeared in a music video for 1990's rock band Suede!



## **Arpitha Krishnamurthy - Lead SAP Developer**

Arpitha joined Absoft in April 2018, having graduated with a B.E in Computer Science at the Visveswariah Technological University in India and starting her career as a SAP ABAP Developer for one of the top 5 MNC companies.

In her spare time Arpitha enjoys travelling and immersing herself in Scottish culture.



## **Eilidh Clarkson - Sales Manager**

Eilidh joined the Absoft Commercial team back in February 2018. Since starting her career Eilidh has worked in a wide range of technical roles from IT Support, Procurement, ITIL Implementations and IT Operations Management before switching to Sales.

Outside work Eilidh is a keen athlete and is currently training for an Ironman competition. We wish her the best of luck!



We are very proud of our agile team and take great care in finding the right fit. Learn more about the individuals behind the 'Absoft Ltd.' name - here are the latest additions:



## **Lucy Holmes - Marketing Executive**

Lucy also joined the Commercial team back in January 2018. Having graduated with a BA Hons in Media Studies from RGU in 2015, Lucy has worked in a variety of marketing roles from management, design, branding, social media to video content.

In her spare time Lucy is an avid gamer and can be found building computers. She is also a freelance photographer and videographer.



## **Stewart Pether - Junior Functional Consultant**

Stewart recently joined the Functional team in June 2018. Initially trained as a geologist, Stewart's background is in geoscientific software, he then moved into oil & gas technology and helped operators to identify new technology needs.

During the oil downturn Stewart worked in a lab distilling volatile raw crude oil - at 350 degrees C and under vacuum!



## **Veronica Akioya - Senior Project Manager**

Veronica is a seasoned project manager with over 14 years of diverse experience delivering high value projects with an MBA and MSC from the University of Manchester in Information Technology.

She joined Absoft in June 2018 as a Senior Project Manager. She's married with 3 lovely boys who keep her very busy, that, according to her, is itself a full-time job!



# INTRODUCING ABSOFT ADIMA

Specifically built to meet the needs of UK Small & Medium Enterprise manufacturers, Absoft Adima is a pre-configured, affordable ERP solution, covering the key functions of a manufacturing business.

Meet Absoft Adima! The name meaning and origin explains that Adima is "Noble, Renowned". In the world of Manufacturing and SAP the name means: "The Future of ERP for SMEs – Advanced Discrete Manufacturing

[Absoft Adima is the first and only SAP qualified partner-packaged solution of its kind in the UK for Discrete Manufacturing, you can find us on SAP's Solution finder.](#)

Truly a single-system solution, Absoft Adima provides real-time insight into the performance and financial health of your business across mobile, tablet, laptop and desktop devices and can be up and running in your organisation in as little as twelve weeks. Here is a snippet from our press release:

"Leading SAP® consultancy, Absoft, has secured a six-figure, seven-year contract win in the Discrete Manufacturing sector.

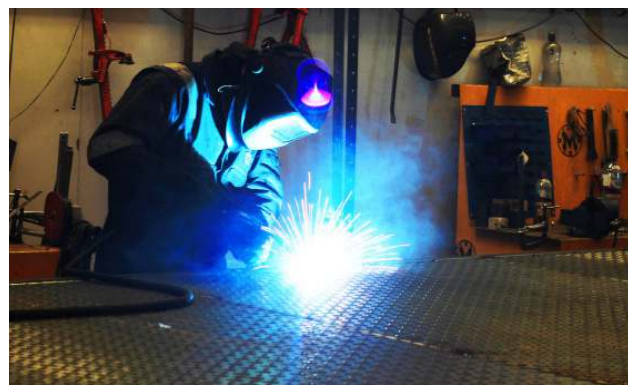
The win reflects the company's strategic focus to drive improvements within the UK's SME manufacturing market, with the aim of helping the sector realise its full potential.

The contract with Scottish agricultural machinery manufacturer, Marshall Trailers, involves the implementation of Absoft Adima, the company's pre-packaged version of ERP software technology, SAP S/4HANA. Based on advanced in-memory database technology, it provides real-time analytics and business insight to enable improved business processes

and informed decision-making."

Charles R. Marshall, the firm's Sales Director, said: "We needed a solution to support our production growth targets, whilst managing costs. We researched several solutions and concluded that Absoft Adima was the only system that was tailored to support our processes, whilst giving us a future-proof functionality. Absoft's 20-year track record and experience in SAP ensured we were in safe hands when we selected them as our implementation and support partner".

--> [Read the full press release here](#)



# IS YOUR COMPANY GDPR-PROOF?

GDPR and SAP? - There is much to consider in terms of system, process, data and people implications to ensure that your SAP Production system and data management protocols are GDPR compliant. And GDPR applies to non-production environments too! Several Absoft clients have already approached us to help them on their journey to GDPR compliance and we are sure you will also find the below tips and guidelines quite useful.



In a blog post, Principal SAP Consultant Glen Cameron has listed ways in which your company can use some already available standard SAP tools to address key requirements of GDPR – specifically in the HR & Payroll modules of SAP. He has identified five of the key requirements that you should look at when reviewing GDPR compliance in your SAP HR/ Payroll system:

**Scope** - Where is this personal data held?

**Secure** - What can I do to secure that data?

**Scramble** - Should I scramble/mask personal data in non-Production environments?

**Retain/Delete** - What do I need to do to increasingly restrict access to personal data and finally to actually delete data from my HR/ Payroll system?

**Audit** - What can I do to keep on top of my GDPR compliance status?

[In this blog post](#) Glen examines each in turn to review what can be done using SAP delivered tools to address each requirement.

Your biggest exposure may actually be in your Development, Test and Training environments – that's right, GDPR Applies to Non-Production SAP Environments too! **Then what data do you need to protect, retain, delete and manage? What is the best way to organise your efforts to achieve full compliance?**

There is much to consider in terms of system, process, data and people implications to ensure that your SAP Production system and data management protocols are GDPR compliant. Equally important, if not written about as often, is the fact that this same sensitive personal data is often available in a host of non-Production SAP instances.

[You can find a downloadable version of the guide here.](#)

\*Contact Absoft or your Account Manager directly for more information and help with your specific case.



# 2018 EVENTS OVERVIEW



## UKISUG Connect 11/11/2018 - 13/11/2018

Absoft exhibited and presented at this year's Ireland SAP User Group (UKISUG) Connect at The ICC in Birmingham 11-13 November 2018.

A special presentation was made by Lyons Seafoods' IT Project Manager - Joe Slaughter on the topic of "Have You Planned For Your SAP Future" as he discussed Lyons Seafood's journey to S/4HANA and the digital age with Absoft.

**Main takeaway:** Numerous people came to the stand to discuss future planning with Cloud, S/4HANA and Fiori in mind which is yet another confirmation that 2019 will be the year of Digital Transformation in many ways.

**Highlight:** UKISUG Connect has always been an event we look forward to throughout the year as it is an excellent opportunity to catch up with old (and make new) friends from the SAP world.



## Smart Factory Expo 14/11/2018 - 15/11/2018

Absoft returned to the Smart Factory Expo, Europe's Biggest Digital Manufacturing Show, at The Exhibition Centre Liverpool 14 - 15 November.

**Main takeaway:** People that are in the market for a new ERP system were enthused by our Absoft Adima package. All the power of SAP S/4HANA but in a 'lite version'. We've removed the bulk and fear people have of implementing a globally support ERP system and given them class leading user experience.

**Highlight:** Seeing that manufacturing in the UK is still going strong. If a bit quieter than last year there were still lots of companies showcasing their latest and greatest products and there was a really positive atmosphere in the room. It was also great to see that the room was packed for Bjorn's presentation on "Enabling Digital Transformation from Shop Floor to Top Floor with S/4HANA".



## Public Sector SIG 27/09/2018

Absoft recently sponsored the UK & Ireland SAP User Group's Public Sector SIG in September, based at Gloucester Folk Museum the event comprised of various presentations and discussions by industry leaders and SAP experts around the current challenges and innovations facing the sector.



Absoft ISS Sales Manager Eilidh Clarkson and Principal Consultant Brian Reid presented the topic "Optimising Your SAP Estate During Run and Maintain" for the SIG, showcasing that run and maintain doesn't have to mean 'requires no attention' and time spent simplifying your estate now can pay dividends when it comes to the evolution of your systems in the future. Overall the day was a great success!



# SINGLE SIGN-ON WITH AZURE AD AND SAP

As a response to some common questions Senior SAP Consultant Robert MacDonald covers the 'How to' for Single Sign On with Microsoft Azure AD Premium and SAP.

Many of our customers are using Microsoft Azure for different purposes now, and there's a common requirement for Single Sign-On (SSO) from Azure AD to their on-premises SAP systems. People would like to use the Microsoft account they use for Office 365 and other Azure technologies to log into SAP.

A user attempts to access an SAP web resource, such as Fiori Launchpad, Neptune or even an older solution like NWBC or Enterprise Portal. Instead of getting an SAP logon screen, they will get a Microsoft logon screen similar to logging into Office 365.

If they are already logged in to their Microsoft account, the SSO is silent and they are signed in to SAP immediately.

Azure AD really simplifies the process of setting up SAML2.0 based single sign-on for SAP. I have previously worked on quite a few projects with Microsoft ADFS as the SAML2.0 identity provider, and I have found that Azure AD is far easier to configure and works well with SAP with default settings.

Using Azure AD for single sign-on is a great example of integrating an on-premises SAP landscape (or an Azure VM hosted SAP landscape) into Azure. You get a single user experience for all enterprise applications if you launch SAP from Office 365, and you gain all the usual benefits of single sign-on.

**We are seeing customers looking to integrate different cloud products far more, and picking the best options from a range of vendors including**

**SAP and Microsoft is becoming the obvious choice, with an associated expectation that they will integrate nicely.** SAP and Microsoft have both made extensive progress towards open standards in recent years, and more integration is definitely a big part of the future.

For more information on Single Sign-on click on the links below or contact us:

- [Single Sign-On with Azure AD and SAP](#)
- [Management Considerations for Single Sign-On in SAP](#)
- [Custom Single Sign-on for SAP Mobile Applications](#)



## STATE OF SAP HANA IN THE IAAS CLOUD 2018

**In the year prior to August 2018, all of the cloud vendors have made a real drive to win SAP HANA workloads. Read below as Senior SAP Consultant Robert MacDonald gives an overview of the current state of SAP HANA in the Cloud for 2018.**

There are seven public IaaS cloud providers certified to run SAP HANA workloads in the public cloud. (Data from Absoft Ltd. report August 2018. Latest December 2018 report available upon request)

As an in-memory database platform, SAP HANA is sized primarily by memory size.

Microsoft Azure offers the widest range of memory sizes available, ranging from 192GB to 20480GB, with strong offerings from Google Cloud Platform, Amazon Web Services and IBM Cloud.

**In the year prior to August 2018, all of the cloud vendors have made a real drive to win SAP HANA workloads. Six out of the seven have added new certified machines, with the exception of Amazon Web Services who were, by far, the strongest and earliest player in the SAP HANA cloud infrastructure market.**

The current 2018 marketshare for public cloud providers places Amazon Web Services and

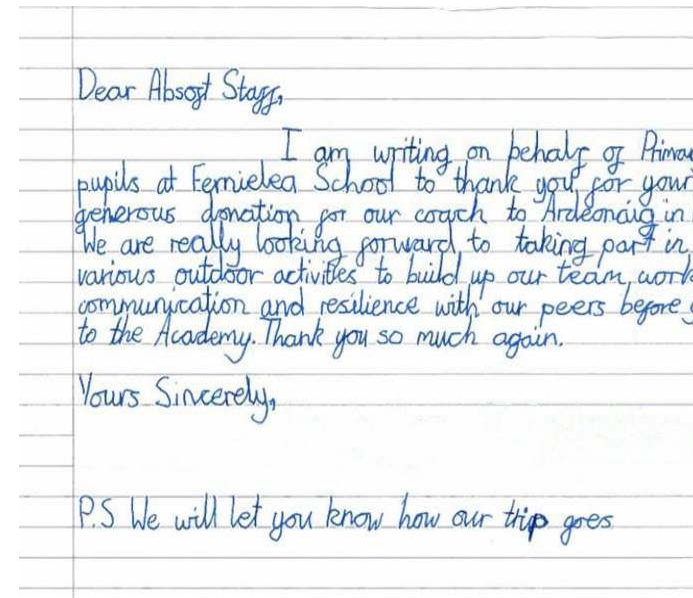
Microsoft Azure in the lead, with Google Cloud Platform a distant third place. No other vendor has 3% or more marketshare.

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) for availability is of highest importance for a business-critical application like ERP, as any organisation needs to be able to plan for potential downtime. There is variation of the SLAs on offer from the top three market-leading IaaS cloud providers, which can be a deciding factor in selection a cloud partner.

Price becomes a major factor for the large infrastructure requirements of SAP HANA. Public pricing available from the online calculators offered by the vendors is compared, although it should be noted that individual customers secure different discounts, by through different resellers, and that the price calculators offer only an estimated cost.

Contact us to request the latest version of the complete guide.

# LOCAL CHARITIES REMAIN FOCUS FOR ABSOFT



These days, it's not unusual for major charities to promote their causes via a number of high-profile channels. Social media campaigns, TV, radio and outdoor advertising together with an on-street presence can combine to create a massive awareness of the amazing work they do.

**This is, of course, a real positive for the charities that have the manpower and backing to do so. However, does this have an effect upon the support received by smaller, local charities - who cannot promote themselves similarly?**

This is a question that Absoft's charities committee asks itself every year, and to that end, we ensure that a number of less-well-publicised, local charities are amongst those that benefit from our annual raft of donations.

Donated by the company's Directors, a proportion of annual profits is given to the charities committee, which is then tasked with identifying the recipient organisations. The committee

currently comprises seven members of staff, from across the company, and we take into account a wide range of causes – many of which are close to the hearts of Absoft staff. From nationwide charities - such as AgeScotland, VSA or Guide Dogs - to smaller, local organisations such as the children's charity, Charlie House or Willows Animal Sanctuary, Absoft's charities committee is always looking to provide the assistance that can make a difference in the community, whilst giving our colleagues here at Absoft a real sense of satisfaction.

No request is too small for us to consider. For example, we recently helped fund a school trip for a group of local primary seven pupils; certainly not your standard "charity donation", but a need that we identified, and something that had a real impact on those who benefited.

We know this, because the organisations we donate to are kind enough to let us know how they feel. For example, recent recipients, The Grampian

Mention

Inchgarth Community Centre shared a Page.  
28 September at 14:36 · 🌐

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ABSOFT- £500 DONATION TO OUR INCHGARTH YOUTH CLUB CAMPAIGN.

(These guys deserve a like and share to show our thanks)

We are extremely grateful to the wonderful folks of Absoft Limited who have kindly made a whopping £500 donation towards our crowdfunding campaign to save Inchgarth's vital youth club.

This is such a wonderful, kind and caring donation from Absoft and really does make a difference to the lives of so many children.

Well done Absoft.....for caring about our local children, being so generous, and helping us reach our goals of keeping the kids club open.

THEY DESERVE A THANKS AND SHARE FOLKS

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Established in 1991, Absoft is a leading independent SAP consultancy based in the UK.

Flyers, told us exactly how our donation had helped them.

It was great to receive the following feedback from the Flyers' coach, Grant Wilson: *"This donation is very gratefully received and will go towards funding new athlete-specific wheelchairs to allow our athletes to compete in higher level competitions. We're hopeful of progressing to national league standings where we can represent Grampian with pride."*

Absoft's most recent donations also include the local Inchgarth Youth Club. A very vital and positive influence to the community the youth club is host to over 280 children with an average 100 attending every week during term time. However, due to lack of funding, the club has been at risk of closure this December. Paul O' Conner, the Chariman for Inchgarth Youth Club got in touch to let us know the impact of your donation *"It was such a welcome boost towards our target and one which all of us at Inchgarth are genuinely grateful for"*

Take a look at the list below, to get an idea of

range of organisations we have supported so far this year and perhaps learn more on how you can help as well:

- Charlie House
- The Light House Support Centre
- Aberdeen Cyrenians
- Willows Animal Sanctuary
- AgeScotland
- Cash4Kids Coat Appeal
- Alhikmah Foundation
- Scott School of Dance
- Euan Will
- Fernielea School
- Instant Neighbours
- Guide Dogs
- VSA
- Hippo Chair

--> [Visit our Corporate Social Responsibility web page for more information.](#)



# MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS IN SAP

## What is the hottest topic in SAP for 2019?

### **Stuart Reid (SAP Consultant - Development Team)**

"From a developer perspective, this year has been all about [Fiori & SAPUI5](#). As these evolve, and we acquire more experience, demand increases to deliver both custom and standard solutions with improved user experience.

I expect this will continue into 2019, where the focus will be on accelerating implementation time."



### **Brian Reid (Principal Consultant) -**

"Throughout 2018 the hot topics from an SAP technical perspective have definitely been [cloud hosting and planning for S/4HANA](#). The majority of our clients use cloud hosting for non-SAP applications and there is a definite push towards migrating SAP workloads into the cloud also.

We're working with our clients to ensure that their SAP estates are simplified where possible prior to the migrations and also to make that migration process as efficient as possible when we look at the source and target platforms."



**"We're working with our clients to ensure that their SAP estates are simplified where possible prior to the migrations and also to make that migration process as efficient as possible when we look at the source and target platforms."**

**- Brian Reid on S/4HANA "**



### **Bjorn Harzer (Solution Architect) -**

"The perennial for all businesses or organisations is still to drive down costs and increase services and revenues.

SAP continues to improve their core system S/4HANA and have just released the new version 1809 with the UK best practices for manufacturing. It again provides more and improved apps to drive efficiency in day to day transactions as well as providing top floor real-time analytics all in the same system

At Absoft we are going to look at how we are going to incorporate those new features into our [Adima solution](#) and help customers make the most of it in the year to come."



### **Robert MacDonald (Senior Consultant - Technical Team)**

"Moving [SAP landscapes to the cloud](#) has entered the mainstream in 2018 and everybody is talking about it if they haven't already done it. We need to change how landscapes are sized, designed and managed to realise the benefits of infrastructure as a service."



# PARTNER UPDATES

An insight into what Absoft and our wide range of partners have been collaborating on since the beginning of 2018.

Absoft live and breathe SAP. It is the basis for all of Absoft's revenues in some form or another. As such, a strong relationship with SAP and a deep understanding of its latest S/4HANA product is crucial to the future of our business. Both strengths have been demonstrated in recent months as Absoft have worked jointly with SAP to achieve the **"SAP Qualified Partner Package Solution"** accreditation for Absoft Adima, Absoft's new S/4HANA solution.

"Out of the box", single-system ERP solution for Small and Medium Enterprise companies – Absoft Adima is based on the latest version of S/4HANA and recent implementation experience.

Why is SAP's "Qualified Partner Package Solution" stamp of approval hard-won?

- SAP want to make sure that partners are leveraging the full power of S/4HANA when taking products endorsed by SAP to market

- As part of the product qualification process SAP require partners to demonstrate that their solutions fully utilise the new User Experience offered by Fiori

- The processing power of the HANA database

- Most importantly of all, have re-imagined and improved business processes using the live actionable analytics available in S/4HANA

Over a three month period, Adima was put through its paces by SAP and passed with flying colours.

We were delighted when Adima was accredited and formally introduced to the [SAP Partner Package finder](#) website in September 2018.

We are very proud of Adima and glad to observe how much attention she attracts on daily basis! If you are considering embarking on the journey to S/4HANA and would be interested to see what it looks like in the flesh then do get in touch and we'll arrange a demo.



The Neptune development platform is an add-on to the ABAP development workbench produced by Neptune Software, a Norwegian technology company and is fully endorsed by SAP as a 'go-to' Rapid App Development tool for those running ECC and wish to enhance User Experience (UX). Once deployed into the SAP development workbench, the Neptune platform supports the rapid development of Fiori UX web-app and offline mobile apps. Absoft are one of Neptune's original app development partners and have been developing apps using the Neptune workbench for over 3 years.

Last month we've attended the Government Digital Technology Congress in London together with our amazing Rapid App Development partners Neptune Software to showcase how using the Neptune platform, we can develop bespoke solutions that fit your processes and empower users to do their job efficiently and without fuss.



Neptune allows ABAP developers to develop applications and means that your in-house SAP development team can create and maintain applications based on their existing skills ensuring that the apps can be maintained and optimised as your business changes and that the Total Cost of Ownership of your solution is minimised.

Absoft currently offer:

- [Accelerator Apps](#) for Self-Service Procurement
- Plant Maintenance
- Shop Floor Apps
- Storeman Apps
- Approvals Apps
- Analytics Apps

--> [More about Absoft's Partners here.](#)



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CONSULTANT

An insight into the people behind SAP - in this edition we will be speaking to Absoft Consultant Ross Hamilton.

## Hi Ross can you please tell me a little bit about your career background?

*After graduating from the University of Edinburgh, I started on Absoft's graduate programme.*

## Since starting your graduate programme what is your current role and history with Absoft?

*I started out as a Trainee Technical Consultant, and have worked my way to Senior Technical Consultant, and am now an Analytics Architect at Absoft.*

## What is a typical work day for you?

*One of the interesting things about working for Absoft is there is no typical day.*

*The range of things we engage in as consultants ranges broadly from delivering on-site training to a customer, to developing new products.*



## What would you say has been your career highlight working with Absoft so far?

*My most recent highlight was developing Absoft's Predicative Analytics solution, which we now use on our Monitoring solution, and is also available to customers.*

## Do you have advice for anyone looking to work within SAP?

*Not to be afraid to get stuck in to the technology – the most successful experts have both functional and technical experience. Oh, and learning German helps too!*

## What is the best thing about working with Absoft?

*You are given a lot of freedom and responsibility to develop as a consultant.*

## If you could describe your job role in three words what would they be?

*Lots of diversity.*

## What are your aspirations for the future?

*To continue to deliver cutting edge technologies to the market.*

## What do you like to do outside of work?

*I enjoy travelling and keeping fit.*

[For more information on our people and vacancies please visit our careers page here.](#)

Absoft is a dynamic, forward thinking, growth-orientated SAP consultancy, with a recruitment philosophy to match. We are proud of our first-class reputation both as an employer and as a provider of excellent services to our clients.







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**Absoft, SAP Partner and SAP Value-Added Re-Seller (VAR), has been specialising in SAP since 1991, uniquely combining business process and SAP expertise to deliver best practice solutions in implementation, development and support of SAP solutions.**

**In their words, our clients value our “flexibility, willingness to go the extra mile, full transparency, being proactive in suggesting and providing the right solution, not just overhead”**

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