

In a brewery? Better yet – in Number 11 Downing Street!

The **National Payroll Giving Awards 2011** took place last month. In our capacity as hosts of the Payroll Giving Centre, Z/Yen (by which we really mean Linda Cook and Sonya Raymond) worked closely with Institute of Fundraising people to organise the event. The Treasury (nudged by the Cabinet Office) were especially kind to the Payroll Giving Awards this year, allowing the event to be held at Number 11 Downing Street.

Unsurprisingly, the event was extremely well attended. Even The Chancellor himself popped in for a while to see what was going on. The Institute of Fundraising's new Chief Executive, **Peter Lewis**, was the master of ceremonies and steered the event with great gusto. The event was hosted by another newbie; **Chloe Smith**. Indeed, the awards were her first ministerial engagement, as she was appointed Economic Secretary to the Treasury just a few days before the event. Chloe, together with **Sir Gus O'Donnell**, presented the awards.



Once again, Ian Harris had chaired the panel of judges. Ian's work was done before the event; he could therefore spend the evening mingling while trying not to give away the results before the awards ceremony. Ian claims he is actually able to forget the names of all the winners by taking some special medicine early in the evening; as you can see from the following photograph, his glass of special medicine is empty.

The Best Large Employer and Best Overall Campaign awards went to Whitbread – jokes about

organising things in a brewery should be confined to the headlines. You can see a list of all the category winners and their case studies [here](#). The event was a huge success; Z/Yen is enormously proud to play its part in the Payroll Giving Awards.

Golden Touch

Z/Yen can be pretty flexible about strategy, such as the time we moved into multi-lingual children's publishing a decade ago; but that's another story. It won't surprise regular readers of Now & Z/Yen to learn that after the amazing success of last year's blockbuster, **Ultrahedge™**, we returned to films this past summer. One of our clients was launching an innovative and



environmentally-conscious gold exchange in China. They asked Z/Yen for help with the international marketing. Instead of flying people to China or organising a big tour for them abroad, we suggested a short film and video link to their big Beijing launch in order to keep down the emissions, and the costs. With a lot of help from a lot of friends, we managed to produce a film in under two weeks - wrote the script, turned our offices into a studio, then turned our offices into a cinema on the big day with live links to senior officials in Beijing. We even managed to create a lot of homework for Michael by making him translate the script into Chinese with huge amounts of help from his teacher (*didn't he only get a "B-" in this easy subject?, ed*). A big part of the effort was getting international coverage. We're very pleased that YouTube viewing figures for the different video segments are now over 100,000, while web mentions of the client went from nothing to over 300,000 in just three months. Just click for a two minute introduction to our client, **Pan Asia**

Gold Exchange (and an after-boost to the figures too!).

Character Research

In partnership with animators at the **London Film Museum**, Z/Yen has begun a six month Technology Strategy Board (TSB) research programme called "Avatars In Rich Data Worlds". The research aims to graft animated characters onto **PropheZy** trading programmes so that the avatars' expressions convey an algorithm's evaluation of complex data environments. For example, an Avatar tipster might frown and point, indicating that something is probably the best choice, but a bit confusing. Or point angrily when you ignore something it's sure is good for you. Naturally, we hope to let people create their own avatars to do their trading.

Michael originally had an idea for automated PropheZy bots to make our **ExtZy** game experience more interesting. Ben Morris and Nick Danev worked up some ideas and backtested PropheZy's predictive performance. All of Z/Yen participated in developing characters for the automated players – what's their favourite film? Avatar. How do they get to work? Spaceship. What's their favourite colour?



[*enough - Ed*] Some clients in financial services, gaming and gambling wondered aloud if they too could use automated tipsters to make their own websites simpler and livelier to use. Then Stephen Haggard noticed that "Avatars In Rich Data Worlds" was eligible for partial funding under the TSB's Creative Industries stream, pulled together a formal project, found an exciting partner in the London Film Museum, and roped in our new recruit, Damee Adesokan, to help him.

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People using information-rich environments, such as financial services, often feel they've opened a Pandora's world of information [I'll let that slide, but no more - Ed]. When all of the data is displayed, most of the people turn off, because (research thesis) people need an opinion against which they can react. However, in information-rich environments, particularly fast-changing ones, it's too expensive to provide human opinions to help users Na'vi-gate. "Avatars In Rich Data Worlds" provides new ways for users to interact online with complex information. By way of analogy, if one imagines going to the horse races, avatars perform the role of "tipsters", telling you how an experienced race-goer evaluates the forthcoming races. Z/Yen is seeing if we can build automated tipsters for large and important, but boring, sites that will help people make better decisions with copious information. The project builds on earlier work Z/Yen did in **The Financial Laboratory** visualising risk in virtual worlds with military technology, which inspired PropheZy and **VizZy**.

We could probably have proved the concept with smiley faces, such as Cameron's, but it is far more interesting to work with the cartoon wizards at London Film Museum. The London Film Museum is a creative hub to some of the digital animation teams who brought you Star Wars and other CGI films. Our animation partners have a hunch that we can go further and build Hollywood characters to organise your online world. Now & Z/Yen's hunch is that a lot of Z/Yen folk are going to "pimp their avatars" with blue skin. Must be all the Smurf fans.



Z/Yen's Very Own Ethics Boy Made Good

Z/Yen is delighted to announce that Ian Harris has been appointed Chair of BCS, The Chartered Institute For IT's Ethics Group. As a result, Ian will also join the Institute's **Professionalism Board**. Ian has been a member of the Ethics Group for several years now, during the last couple of which he served as a vice-chair. Why ethics groups have someone responsible for vice is a bit of a mystery to most of us, but Ian assures us that it is all right, proper and above board.

Joking aside, one of Ian's main projects with the Ethics Group has been to lead the development of a meta-methodology for the ethical assessment of new technologies. Coincidentally, almost as if to celebrate Ian's BCS elevation, the Ethics Group's paper on that subject has just been published by the **Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society**. Any Now and Z/Yen readers interested in this groundbreaking and practical work should contact ian_harris@zyen.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it – BCS (through Ian) is actively seeking people who want to help test the methodology and/or collaborate in other ways to help take these fascinating ideas forward.

Z/Yen Tennis Event Rated 'Alpha'

Mid July and that means the annual Z/Yen Tennis "Tournament" at Boston Manor Tennis Club. In the absence of Jez, Monique did an amazing job organising the tournament, with a little help from Ian who ducked out of playing to give everyone else a chance to win...OK, to even up the numbers. A combination of Monique's fiendish pairings and

the adverse weather conditions early on made the playing field remarkably even, talent-wise, as evidenced by several really close games between the nine pairs. One early encounter had Steph on one side and Janie on the other, a sledging death match if ever there was one, with Janie's more extensive experience of ladette sporting behaviour earning a narrow victory.



In one semi-final, Michael & Chris pipped Dima & Janie by dint of a tie-breaker, while Heinrich & Nick won a seemingly-never-ending deuce game to win their semi without a tie-break. Michael & Chris then won the final quite decisively, with Michael displaying some out-of character alpha male body language once he realised he was closing in on a tournament win. Rumours that Michael only won by dint of a bung to Ian the umpire are strongly denied – there is no evidence whatsoever.



But as always the winner was tennis... ..well actually the winner was food and drink. Dennis and Victor produced an amazing barbeque, the rain stopped and the sun came out to smile on us as the tournament drew to a close. The post tennis eating, drinking and merry-making went on long after the tennis was (almost) forgotten.