

1 Introduction to Fern

1.1 Company Background

Fern was incorporated in 1979 and since that time has focused on providing solutions for savings and loans organisations. Fern is a privately owned company and has funded its research and development from internal funds. It has a proven track record with over 300 savings and loans organisations worldwide using its software.

1.2 Global Supplier to Savings and Loans Organisations

Fern has customers in over 20 countries including Europe, SE Asia, S Africa and the Caribbean. It has an office in the Philippines and has been adopted as the **standard system** in several regions: Hong Kong League, Philippines Teachers and Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives, S Africa Credit Cooperative Organization, Cambodia Savings Banks

Fern's main products, Cubis and Abacus, have been translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Tagalog and Chinese Mandarin. Fern will extend this list as the system is introduced to further countries. Fern has also worked with groups in several regions of the world to translate the user documentation and online help into the local language.

Fern is also working directly with the World Bank for introducing its products into several regions around the world.

1.3 Continuous Development

The table below is a chronological list of Fern's products development.

	Year	Fern Savings and loans organisation System	Operating System
1	1979/1980	Cubis 1	CP/M MS DOS
2	1986	Cubis 2	Unix, MS DOS, VMS
3	1992	Cubis 3 for Windows	Windows 3.11, 95,98, NT, ME, 2000
4	1997 / 98	Cubis 4 for Windows	Windows 3.11, 95,98, NT, ME, 2000
5	1998	Abacus - Server	Windows 3.11, 95,98, NT, ME, 2000, IE 4 and

			upwards. Based on MS SQL 2000
6	2000	Abacus	Use a browser on any operating system (Unix, Windows etc.) with IE4 plus
7	2000	Cubis 2000 International	Windows 3.11, 95,98, NT, ME, 2000
8	2001	Cubis 2001 International	Windows 3.11, 95,98, NT, ME, Server 2000
9	2001	www.creditunion365.com Home banking for savings and loans organisation members updated by file transfer from Abacus & Cubis to a secure separate server	Use any browser on any operating system (Unix, Windows etc.)

Table 1– Chronological List of Products

As you will be able to see above Fern has now developed **nine** different packages for its savings and loans organisation customers. Fern also offers excellent data conversion tools to let customers “translate” their historical records. Non-Fern users have found to their cost that historical records have been consigned to very old equipment for which the prospects of keeping it maintained become slimmer every year. On the other hand, Fern has long-standing customers that have records going back to the original time that Fern’s products were introduced.

1.4 Quality – ISO 9001

Fern obtained certification in the internationally acclaimed quality standard for software development, support, administration and sales & marketing. This was relatively easy to achieve because the company had, over the last three years, carried out a review of procedures and had introduced several innovative procedures and internal processes to raise the level of customer care.

1.5 Microsoft Certified Partner (MCP)

Fern is a registered MCP with Microsoft which indicates the level of development skills within the company using Microsoft products. This allows Fern access to additional support services and advance notice of new releases. Fern is automatically invited to pre-release events and participates in Beta testing of new products.

1.6 Customer Support

Fern has introduced an automatic call logging system, which is used to record any customer problems. A user can request a statement from the Customer Services Department at any time to validate outstanding issues; Fern has also sent out these “statements” from its call-logging system to have the customers carry out a self-audit and to help keep its system as up-to-date and accurate as possible.

This database of customer inquiries and support requests may be updated directly by the user. They simply go to the Fern web page www.fern.co.uk at any time, complete the standard form and submit it directly to Fern where the details will update the customer support database automatically.

2 Fern Products

2.1 Overview

With Fern as your **strategic software partner**, you can select from a family of **integrated products** that allows you, the user, to expand the range of services confident in the knowledge that the new future systems will be compatible with the existing ones. Major re-investment and associated costs will be avoided and the savings and loans organisations can safely plan for the future. Fern has a proven track record of continuous development and the latest family of products from in-house stand-alone systems to Internet banking for members demonstrates its ability to deliver technological advantage to its customers.

The products described in this section are:

- Cubis 2001 International
- Abacus

2.2 Cubis 2001 International – www.fern.co.uk

Cubis 2001 International is the latest in the Cubis series and was specifically designed and developed for the overseas markets Fern entered since 1997. There has been continuous development since that time and has become one of the most widely used standard international savings and loans organisation systems available today.

- Multiple share, savings and loan accounts – each member can have up to 99 sub-accounts within each member account number
- Integrated General Ledger
- Comprehensive Teller functions
- Comprehensive Loan Management functions
- Comprehensive parameters to allow each savings and loans organisation to customize Cubis to suit its individual way of carrying out its business
- Pearls ratio analyses
- Internet banking for members
- IVR link for telephony services to members

Cubis 2001 International is the cornerstone of our products at present and is totally integrated with our web-based products, **Abacus**.

2.3 Abacus – www.abacus-e.com

Abacus is the most advanced in a series of savings and loans organisation software systems designed and implemented by Fern for over 20 years. Fern

has used new web based technology to develop this state of the art shared services and in-house solution for savings and loans organisations.

2.3.1 Abacus Development

The design of Abacus started in late 1997 and programming began in 1998. The original development tools were Visual Basic 6 and SQL database version 6.5. Since that time, Fern has studiously upgraded its development tools in line with ongoing developments. Currently, Fern is using the latest development tools:

- C#
- C++
- Visual Basic.NET (VB.NET),
- ASP.NET
- SQL 2000
- XML

Abacus has been developed using the latest web development tools based on object-oriented design and incorporating Microsoft SQL 2000.

2.3.2 Three Integrated Modules

Abacus consists of three tightly integrated modules:

- General Ledger
- Administration and security
- Sub Ledgers – savings and loans

Also the integration of Crystal Reports allows the user maximum flexibility and control when extracting the necessary reports and management information from the system. A useful feature of the report generator is the ability to “drill down” from the summary total to the underlying details.

3 Purpose of Meeting

3.1 Main Reasons

The main reasons for requesting this meeting are as follows :

- To discuss the need for standard systems in savings and loans organisations, which will help :
 - Regulation
 - Efficiency, and
 - Internal control
- To introduce Fern as a worldwide supplier of standard computer system to savings and loans organisations and to demonstrate our unique expertise.
- To introduce our new Internet based product, Abacus. This product is ideally suited to the savings and loans organisations in China, as it requires only centralised support and can be delivered easily using the Internet Virtual Private Network (VPN) as a low cost delivery platform.