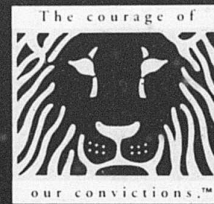


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NEWS

Microsoft set to ship NT 3.5

Will bolster push into enterprise with SMS release

BY DOUG BARNY

Microsoft Corp. is ready to launch what may be its boldest push yet into enterprise-wide computing with the release of Windows NT 3.5 this month and is preparing a second line of attack with several related server software offerings.

NT 3.5, with both Workstation and Server versions for Intel, MIPS-based, and Digital Equipment Corp. Alpha-based platforms, should be widely available by the end of the month, Microsoft officials said. A PowerPC version will be delayed but is on its way.

Among its new features, the release of what was code-named Daytona will offer 32-bit to 16-bit OLE 2.0 interoperability, long file names, support for Silicon Graphics OpenGL three-dimensional libraries, faster IPX stacks, and new administration tools.

Many users are looking forward to NT 3.5, not necessarily because of its new features, but for the increased stability it offers.

"3.5 is the mother of all bug fixes. It is a worthy production product now," said Grant Smith, systems engineer at Cogito Economic Systems Inc., a data systems design firm in Hillside, N.J. Smith has already moved four production servers over to the beta software.

With NT Server 3.5 out of the way, Microsoft hopes to ship its Systems Management Server — code-named Hermes — SQL Server 4.21A, and SNA Server 2.1 before the end of the year, according to Mike Nash, group manager for NT Server.

The final weapon in Microsoft's arsenal, the Exchange messaging and groupware system, is scheduled to enter its final round of beta testing in

January, although no final release date has been set.

"The real significance is that now people can not only understand intellectually that NT is part of a family, but they can actually stitch them together," said Robert Guaraldi, president of Valinor Inc., a systems integration company in Manchester, N.H.

Now that Microsoft is pitching this integrated software family, the company's marketing heads have decreed that a more consistent pricing model is also required, sources inside the company said.

With NT 3.5, Microsoft will launch a new per-node graduated pricing scheme that will apply to all future and existing Microsoft server products, according to a source within Microsoft.

Customers will be charged \$699 per copy of NT Server, plus \$39.95 for each NT node running on the network.

"We want to make it more affordable, so you will pay for what you get as you add users," said another source close to the NT team.

The previous version of NT

Advanced Server cost \$1,495 for an unlimited number of users.

Microsoft is also devising a plan that will allow third-party software developers to bundle NT 3.5 and other Microsoft server products with their applications, said Dwayne Walker, Microsoft general manager of worldwide sales and marketing.

Microsoft is not yet in active negotiations with software vendors, according to Nash.

But the plan has been put on the table with the goal of garnering third-party endorsements of NT and expanding the numbers of sales representatives, spreading the word about Version 3.5.

Some ISVs said last week that the bundling scheme may also help them get their own software to customers.

"It could be a good way to let someone experience our product, even if they don't [already] have NT," said Kirk Cruikshank, vice president of marketing for Arbor Software Corp. in Sunnyvale, Calif., makers of the Essbase OLAP database server.

Windows NT 3.5 not alone: pair of suites to back up OS

BY ILAN GREENBERG

Microsoft Corp. isn't going to let Windows NT 3.5 hit the streets alone.

By year's end, Microsoft will also deliver a server suite, called BackOffice, that will bundle Windows NT Server with the Systems Management Server, SQL Server, SNA Server, Windows NT Server, and Mail Server, said Rolf Skoglund, vice president of Microsoft's organization business unit in Europe, at a European analyst briefing last week.

Compaq Computer Corp. has already indicated it will start selling ProLiant servers optimized for BackOffice in the fourth quarter, said Gary Stimac, senior vice president and general manager of Compaq's systems division.

BackOffice will cost \$2,199 per server plus \$399 for each PC connected to the server. Microsoft plans to support the new Workstation version of the OS with the release of

Office for NT within 30 days of Daytona's debut.

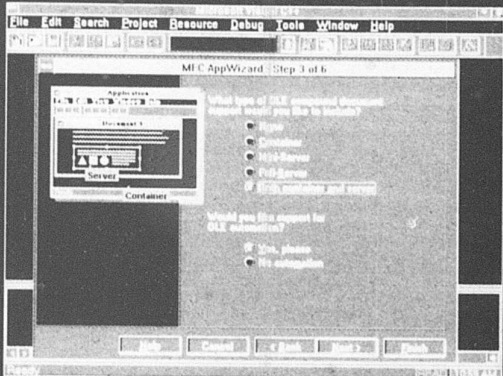
The Office for NT Workstation applications will retain the core code and appear identical to the Windows Office applications. But the NT versions will be faster and have better resource management, said Joan Morse, Excel group product manager.

The NT version of Word 6.0 will also offer multi-threaded printing, which allows users to work on a document while the file is fed to the printer.

Both Word 6.0 and Excel 5.0 for NT will be 32-bit. The third Office application, PowerPoint 3.0, will be offered initially in a 16-bit version.

Office for NT will be priced at \$499. Any single Office for NT application is priced at \$399; an upgrade for Windows 3.1 users is \$129.

—Carla A. Cunningham and Torsten Busse, European correspondents for IDG News Service, contributed to this report.



Visual C++ 2.0 Includes new Wizards for adding Microsoft Foundation Class Libraries to applications.

Some developers balk at Microsoft's 32-bit push

BY MIKE RICCIUTI

As Windows NT 3.5 heads for the final stretch, Microsoft Corp. is not-so-gently nudging developers toward a 32-bit world with a 32-bit update of its Visual C++ development tool, to be unveiled this week at Windows World in Dallas.

But some developers said last week they may not be ready to make the move.

When Visual C++ 2.0 ships 30 days after final delivery of NT 3.5, it will run on and develop applications for Windows NT 3.5 and the upcoming Windows 95 on Intel-based platforms, Microsoft officials said. (See First Look, page 148.)

Add-ons that will allow developers to develop applications for the Macintosh, as well as NT for MIPS-based and Digital Equipment Corp. Alpha-based platforms, are due to ship by the end of the year.

Visual C++ ships on a CD-ROM that includes both 16- and 32-bit versions. But the 16-bit version is an older release, Visual C++ 1.51, that doesn't

include Visual C++ 2.0's new features, and company officials confirmed that Microsoft is not planning to update its 16-bit offerings.

Some developers consider this unabashed attempt to move the development community wholesale to Microsoft's 32-bit platforms an affront.

"I wish Microsoft would acknowledge that there are some users who can't yet target 32-bit operating systems," said Joe Schwartz, a consulting software engineer at Bankers Trust Co. in New York. Like the overwhelming majority of Windows developers, Schwartz develops applications for the 16-bit Windows 3.1.

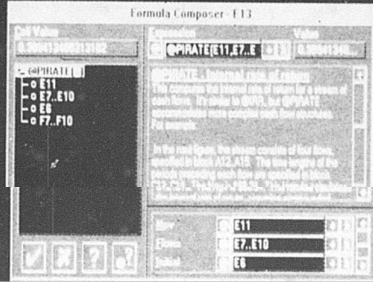
Until Windows 95 ships sometime in the first half of next year, Windows NT 3.5 and the Macintosh will offer the only target platforms for Visual C++ 2.0 development.

"That's a problem if you have older code to support," said Jim Bohannon, a software engineer with Perkin-Elmer Corp.'s Applied Biosystems Division in Foster City, Calif.

Product Spotlight

Novell/WordPerfect improves Quattro Pro with 6.0

Novell/WordPerfect's Quattro Pro 6.0 for Windows offers substantial improvements over the previous version. Highlights include redesigned menus and toolbars, one-step hot-linking to external databases, and in-cell editing. The new Formula Composer exceeds Microsoft Corp. Excel's Function Wizard in some ways. After you choose a function, Quattro Pro displays a tree diagram of the function that expands as you add arguments. While working, you view a detailed description, often with an example. The product is rumored to be announced next week; details on pricing were not available. For complete coverage of the new product, see the First Look on page 147.



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