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Beta users wowed by Daytona's speed

(May 16, 1994)

Abstract (summary)

Since 1993, Microsoft Corp. has been promising that Daytona - the code name for both Windows NT 3.5 and Windows NT Advanced Server 3.5 - will be smaller and faster than the 3.1 version it will replace. Beta users said Microsoft has delivered solid enhancements to the Windows NT upgrade. The software includes a more efficient TCP/IP stack, better management support, and enhanced remote access capabilities.

Full Text

Early users of Microsoft Corp.'s Windows NT upgrade are impressed with its performance and features, including a more efficient TCP/IP stack, better management support and enhanced remote access capabilities.

Microsoft has been promising since last year that Daytona--the code name for both Windows NT 3.5 and Windows NT Advanced Server (NTAS) 3.5--will be smaller and faster than the 3.1 versions will replace. Microsoft announced details about the software in April and shipped beta copies to 10,000 customers two weeks ago.

Besides improving its performance, the company promised that the client-side software would consume less memory. For the server, Microsoft developed a faster Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol stack, better ties to Novell, Inc. NetWare local-area networks and enhanced management features for control of Windows NT workstations across enterprise nets.

Beta users said Microsoft has delivered solid enhancements.

Boro Marinkovich, manager of advanced systems at George Weston, Ltd., a holding company based in Toronto, said he will need the faster TCP/IP transport in Daytona because of his company's growing use of TCP/IP. He is running a beta copy of the server version of Daytona and has noticed a sizable increase in the transport stack's speed.

J. Allard, program manager for TCP/IP connectivity at Microsoft, said Daytona's TCP/IP stack supports the Network Basic I/O Extended User Interface (NETBEUI) transport protocol and runs up to 30% faster than the stack used in Windows NT 3.1 and Windows NTAS 3.1. Microsoft licensed the earlier stack from Spider Systems, Inc. of the U.K.

Other users are running extensive tests with the Advanced Server version of Daytona and like what they have seen of the software's network capabilities.

Briscoe Stephens advanced science information systems manager at the U.S. Space Science Laboratory at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., has been running pre-beta versions of Windows NT 3.5 and Windows NTAS 3.5 on a dozen Intel Corp.-based machines for more than a month.

"We are pushing some heavy-duty mail and file-transfer applications across our networks, and we're only finding a few very minor bugs," Stephens said. "I'm so secure with using this operating system that I installed it on my boss's machine," he added.

Stephens has been most satisfied with Daytona's support for Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP), which allows him to manage a dozen Daytona workstations from a central site. He also is taking advantage of Daytona's ability to support TCP/IP, Novell's Internetwork Packet Exchange (IPX) protocol and NETBEUI.

Using DHCP has helped Stephens cut in half the time it takes to configure a Windows NT network.

"We're in the process of putting in a lot of TCP/IP subnets, and to have their IP addresses automatically set up for you is going to be a godsend in terms of saving money and manpower," Stephens said.

He also gave a thumbs-up to the remote connectivity technology embedded in the Advanced Server version of Daytona. The remote access services included in the software feature has support for a new multiprotocol Point-to-Point Protocol that allows remote users to gain access to enterprise corporate TCP/IP, IPX and NETBEUI networks.

Some beta users are also finding Daytona attractive as a client operating system.

"We're using Daytona as a souped-up client in lieu of Chicago [the code name for the next version of Windows], and it's running 16-bit applications better than Windows 3.1 ever did," said Arthur Tisi, chief systems officer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. "It has a lot less overhead, which is allowing us to use it in a more widespread fashion as a client than we would have ever thought of using Windows NT 3.1."

DAYTONA RACES

Microsoft's move toward Windows NT 3.5

AUGUST 1993

General availability of Windows NT 3.1

MARCH 1994

Announces Daytona, also known as Windows NT 3.5 and Windows NTAS 3.5

MAY 1994

First beta copies of Daytona shipped

JUNE 1994

Second beta version of Daytona is expected

AUGUST 1994

Daytona to be generally available

LATE 1995

Cairo, an object-oriented version of Windows NT, expected to debut

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