

Flash

Charon opens Montreal facility

TORONTO — Charon Systems Inc., an e-business systems integrator, has opened its Citrix Authorized Learning Center (CALC) in Montreal.

The company says the centre is the first of its kind in Canada to hold certification classes in both official languages. CALCs are authorized to provide hands-on technical instruction for the installation and administration of Citrix Systems software. This is Charon's second CALC authorization.

IBM, Sun team up on Java research

TORONTO — IBM and Sun have announced the availability of the Java Media Framework 2.0 Application Programming Interface (JMF 2.0 API) specification and reference implementation.

The JMF 2.0 API includes an open media architecture that allows developers to access and manipulate various components of the media playback and capture process, such as effects, tracks and renders, or to utilize their own custom plug-in components.

The JMF 2.0 API, developed jointly between Sun and IBM, is the unified architecture for the playback, synchronization, capture, and transmission and transcoding of media — including streaming audio and video — across most major operating systems.

This latest version of the Java Media Framework technology incorporates IBM's HotMedia, a Java-based technology that allows developers to add rich media effects to their applications.

Agresso cuts deal with college

VANCOUVER — Agresso Corp. has announced that Okanagan University College (OUC) has selected Facility CMIS Academic Scheduling Software to manage its scheduling and timetabling activities.

Agresso is a provider of business information management systems to the mid-tier business and education marketplaces.

Facility CMIS, from Dublin-based CCM Software Services Ltd., is a sophisticated scheduling and resource allocation application for colleges and universities for which Agresso has acquired exclusive North American rights.

Study links data loss to users

Viruses blamed for smaller percentage of loss

By Owen Ferguson

According to a recent poll, 88 per cent of NT system managers believe accidental deletions are a major source of corporate data loss.

Only three per cent of the managers polled by Irvine, Calif.-based Broadcasters Network International considered viruses responsible for major data loss, suggesting that accidental deletions result in 30 times more destruction of important data than viruses. Although there's been little research done into the cost of accidental deletions, Islandia, N.Y.-based Computer Associates International Inc. estimates the cost of virus attacks to corporations at around US\$500 million. Findings from the new poll suggest deleted data is costing over US\$15 billion each year. These costs may continue to rise as the results of the study indicate a significant increase over previous figures.

Two years ago, for instance, Minneapolis, Minn.-based Ontrack Data International found that human error, including accidental deletions, were responsible for 32 per cent of data loss. Last year,

only one year later, a study by Oslo, Norway-based Tandberg Data found that data loss due to human error had risen to 67 per cent.

Phil Proffit, director of research at BNI, says that "even though there is a tremendous amount of media coverage on viruses and the amount of damage that viruses can cause, the truth is that viruses only account for a small percentage of data loss when compared to the real problem of human error."

Gary Sutton, CEO of San Diego-based online backup service

@Backup, attests to the fact that people at many companies are accidentally deleting their own files. "We get dozens of calls each day to restore a file due to user deletions," he says.

Avoiding this kind of scenario is paramount for system managers. The poll also found 81 per cent of system managers say protecting company data is one of the most important aspects of their job. Although regular backup of company data would seem to be the obvious answer to the problem, the poll shows that almost 50 per cent of

system managers simply don't trust backup systems. Meanwhile, over 63 per cent had experienced cases where they tried to find lost data only to discover that the backup was faulty.

So what can be done to fight accidental data loss? "Currently, there are only three possible solutions to the problem," says Proffit. "The first is increased training, which can be extremely expensive with no real guarantee of the results. The second is restricted access to files which, aside from being a hugely controversial issue can end up impeding production. The third solution is using the correct data loss/recovery technology."



NEC to maintain Packard Bell PC brand in Canada

By Josh Kern

Despite a plea for help from its U.S. parent, Packard Bell is alive and well in the Great White North.

Executives at NEC Computer Systems Division (CSD) have confirmed that the Packard Bell line of PCs, though discontinued in the U.S., will continue as planned in Canada.

Meanwhile, at www.packardbell.com, the Webmasters have sent out a heartfelt plea for the departing 1,500 employees, most of whom are based in Sacramento, Calif.

"Help our people find jobs," the site read. "If you are seeking employees, we would be delighted to work with you to match your needs with our exceptional candidates." The site then gives contact information for prospective employers.

Canadian operations continue to move forward despite the changes in the south. Spokesperson at NEC CSD (Canada) informed *CDN* last week that, despite earlier reports, Packard

Bell-branded PCs would remain on Canadian store shelves "for the foreseeable future."

Greg Milkovich, Mississauga, Ont.-based NEC CSD (Canada)'s vice-president of sales and marketing, said despite the lack of an official statement from the company, the Packard Bell brand would continue in Canada.

Milkovich said the Packard Bell PCs would still be manufactured by NEC Corp., but not the CSD division. "As far as NEC Computers, the affiliation with the Packard Bell brand will not continue. However, there still is a market for the brand and we are looking at other ways of continuing the brand."

The statement was confirmed by Henry Porsch, vice-president of consumer marketing at NEC CSD (Canada). "The decision to eliminate the Packard Bell brand was in the United States," he said, "not in Canada. The brand will be going forward."

Ron Fuchs, spokesman for Packard Bell NEC in the Sacra-

mento, Calif., initially told *CDN* the brand would not continue in Canada. But when contacted this week, he agreed with his Canadian counterparts.

"The Packard Bell brand looks like it's going to continue in Canada," he said. "We're still working out the details of who's going to be responsible for it."

"Obviously we'll continue to distribute through Radio Shack as well as through the normal distributor channel, and we're now working on the product roadmap going forward."

Fuchs said he anticipated an announcement from NEC's European headquarters in the next two weeks describing changes in full.

As to why the brand will continue in Canada but not the States, he said it's simply a matter of demand.

"I think the feeling is that in Canada it's got a stronger likelihood of surviving and may not be as damaged, and they're relatively comfortable that they can have success there."

Fuchs didn't want to speculate on whether continued success in Canada could mean an eventual return to the States, but said

"anything is possible."

No decisions on what division would be making the PCs, or where they would be manufactured had been made at press time. Decisions on what specific models will continue, and where future research and development will take place, have not been made yet either.

Packard Bell's retail partners said they have not seen any impact from the changes so far. Eric Ommundson, spokesman for Vancouver-based Future Shop Canada, said the retailer is carrying on business as usual.

"We haven't received an official announcement that (NEC is) changing their business plan in Canada," he said.

James Gingerich, chief financial officer at InterTAN, the company that owns Radio Shack, said it's business as usual for his storefronts as well. Gingerich still hadn't heard final word from Packard Bell as to its plans in Canada.

"Packard Bell has been a very important brand to us for several years and it's been a good two-way relationship," he said. "Their products continue to do well in our stores."

Porsch told *CDN* the Packard Bell products would continue to move through retail.