

Mobile Technology Sees the Future of Computing

Mike Scammahorn of Mobile Technology Co., Hallsborough, N.J. has proven to be an excellent prognosticator—especially when it comes to new computing technology. As CAD Engineering Practices Group Leader, Scammahorn's charter is to provide technology support for Mobile affiliates worldwide, including development support for the building of facilities and new refineries and selecting and managing engineering contractors.

"We saw Windows NT emerging as the dominant operating system," says Scammahorn. "We felt strongly that everyone in the industrial market would eventually migrate to Windows NT, so we became an early adopter of the platform."

By doing so, Scammahorn's group gained valuable knowledge of the operating environment—an important factor as the group assists other divisions within the company to move to Windows NT.

New breed

The impetus for Scammahorn's decision to migrate to Windows NT was the emergence of a new breed of Windows NT-compatible computers from Intergraph that were powerful enough to compete with Unix machines.

Specifically, Scammahorn selected Intergraph's TD personal workstation series, which takes multiprocessing performance to new heights for Windows NT power users. These systems feature a distinctive processing architecture for Intel Pentium II and Pentium Pro processors, an architecture which Intergraph brings to the open computing platform. Indeed, according to Scammahorn, it is Intergraph's powerful multiprocessing architecture that opens the throttle on single, dual, and quad processors, which helps take the TD personal workstations to the top of the performance charts above all other systems based on the Intel processor, performing on par with leading Risc/Unix systems.

The new machines opened the door for Mobile to easily and economically access information and applications from a variety of sources—on one desktop—which streamlined business processes. With Microsoft's Object Linking and Embedding (OLE/COM) Component Object Model technology, the ability to integrate applications and share data on a single system can result in reduced cost for hardware, training, and support.

By Marty Weil
staff writer

According to Scammahorn, since switching to Windows NT, he's seen a 20-30% improvement in productivity. "For instance," says Scammahorn, "on the Unix machine, when you did an interference check on a drawing it would take 15 to 20 minutes to process. Now, with NT, it takes two or three minutes. We've seen this sort of speed increase on a number of issues like that—it's been dramatic."

Two independent studies by Deloitte & Touche's consulting group back up Scammahorn's claims of dramatically lower cost of ownership for companies running NT workstations versus those running Unix. These detailed studies considered acquisition and maintenance costs of hardware and software, technical support costs, and user self-support costs related to workstations. The results suggest that for a group of 25 workstations, savings in a three-year total cost of ownership can amount to over \$1 million.

In addition to greater power and reliability provided by the Windows NT solution, organizations like Mobile are able to reduce overall support costs because less training is needed to support the same set of applications across both the Windows NT Workstations and Windows 95 operating systems.

The lower cost of ownership associated with having all of the programs that an engineer uses running on one machine was not lost on Scammahorn. "The interaction with other Microsoft products is the key reason we are running CAD on NT," says Scammahorn. "When we were in the Unix world, we couldn't use spreadsheets or other Microsoft applications. The total integration of the packages we use daily—as well as being able to do heavy duty engineering applications—is why we switched."

Electronic workflow

In Mobile Technology Company's CAD area, Intergraph's Plant Design System (PDS) software is one of the software packages that Scammahorn's engineers use daily. PDS is a comprehensive, computer-aided design/engineering application for plant design, construction, and operations. Since the mid-1980s, firms like Mobile have used PDS to design more than \$150 billion of plant projects around the world.

The integration of software packages on one desktop has also allowed Mobile's engineers to take advantage of "electronic workflow" technologies such as Intergraph's Asset and Information Management (AIM) software. AIM pro-

vides object-oriented technology that solves a wide range of information management problems.

AIM modules are designed to manage all product-related data throughout the life cycle of a product. AIM offers a sophisticated information management solution for environments like Mobile's which manage evolving product configurations for the data which defines those products, and for the processes which are used to develop and modify the product information. The AIM system consistently guides the user to the correct configuration of components and information for any given product instance.

"The benefit to us is we can pass information about drawings via remote locations without having to print them out and mail them," says Scammahorn. "Now, a draftsman can receive a drawing request from an engineer, make changes to it, and send it to the engineer electronically. The engineer can review the drawing on the computer, make changes to it, and send it back to the draftsman who can correct it and send it back again for final approval. This capability has saved 5-10% of an engineer's time. It equates to probably \$100 per day per engineer on a project."

AIM is one of the more than 1,400 32-bit applications that are running on the Windows NT platform. Clearly, Windows NT has benefited from the success of Windows 95; hundreds of additional 32-bit applications are available now that run on both Windows NT and Windows 95.

Already, Scammahorn's team has converted approximately 30% of Mobile's facilities to Windows NT from Unix. The rest of the facilities, he says, will change during the next few years as existing Unix equipment contracts expire. □

Problem:

To identify and migrate to the best computing platform for the future of the company.

Solution:

The emergence of a new breed of Windows NT-compatible computers, powerful enough to compete with UNIX machines.

Payoff:

Switching to Windows NT, has led to a 20-30% improvement in productivity.

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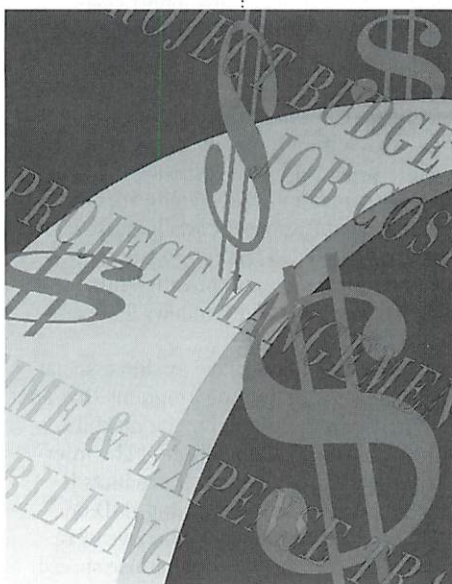
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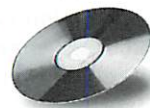
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