

Political uncertainty to slow down IT investments

By EDU H. LOPEZ

Investments in information technology had slowed down amid the current political and economic uncertainties coupled with the May 2004 elections.

Most companies are on a wait-and-see attitude at the moment until after the elections are over. "Business is very tough at this time as most companies are taking a wait-and-see attitude," said Edwin Boon, group director for small and medium business of Microsoft Philippines.

"Investments were not as free-flowing compared to 18 months ago," said Boon as he expects a recovery in IT investments toward the later part of 2004.

Andy Lau, regional general manager of ACA-Pacific Technology Group, an IT marketing company shared the same view with Boon. He

noted that the general market for IT products and solutions are down in the region.

Despite the weakness in the market for IT products and solutions, Lau said there are some opportunities for security and storage products.

ACA-Pacific Technology Group, a Singapore-based IT marketing company has tied up with Microsoft Philippines to market Microsoft products and solutions.

The company would be hiring at least 20 local personnel to focus on Microsoft products through its subsidiary, ACA Phils, Inc.

Lau said carrying Microsoft products in the Philippines is a different ball game. However, he is confident the local operations of ACA Philippines would meet its quota and contribute to the company's revenue.

On the other hand, Boon is also optimistic that the partnership with ACA Phils. could widen the coverage of Microsoft's network of 1,000 resellers throughout the country.

He expects ACA Phils. could contribute to the increased revenue for Microsoft and reseller coverage in the next six months.

Boon said that ACA Pacific has a good track record in the industry.

"We are positive that ACA Pacific will help us achieve our goal of expanding our coverage in the market and help more people realize their full potential through technology."

ACA Phils is the third major distributor of Microsoft products in the country. The other two are World Text, Inc. (WSI) and MSI Digidial. The local original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) of Microsoft are

Lameco International and Millennium Computer Technologies.

"We are pleased to be awarded this distributorship with Microsoft Phils. This is in line with ACA Pacific's strategies," said Chan Kok Lim managing director of ACA Pacific Group.

"ACA Pacific believes that the Philippines has a lot of talented IT people with proven learning skills. This makes the Philippines an excellent ground for serious IT development. We will assign 20 people to focus on integrating Microsoft products into our existing products," said Lim.

ACA Phils. is authorized to distribute Microsoft products such as Microsoft Office 2003, Windows Server 2003, SharePoint Portal Server 2003 and the current products like Windows XP and Microsoft Open Licenses.

Intel demonstrates 65nm technology

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Intel Corporation has built fully functional SRAM (Static Random Access Memory) chips using 65 nanometer (nm) technology, its next generation high-volume semiconductor manufacturing process. Intel is on track to start this process in production in 2005 using 300 mm wafers.

This new 65 nm (a nanometer is one-billionth of a meter) process combines higher performance and lower-power transistors, a second-generation version of Intel's strained silicon, high-speed copper interconnects and a low-k dielectric material. Building chips using the 65 nm process will allow Intel to double the number of transistors it can build on a single chip today.

Intel has used its 65 nm process to make fully functional, four megabit SRAM chips with a very small 0.57µm² cell size. Small SRAM cells allow for the integration of larger caches in processors, which increases performance. The SRAM cells have robust operating characteristics, with a solid noise margin indicating very efficient on/off switching properties. Each SRAM memory cell has six transistors: 10 million of these transistors would fit in one square millimeter, roughly the size of the tip of a ball point pen.

The 65 nm semiconductor devices were manufactured at Intel's 300 mm development fab (called DID) in Hillsboro, Oregon, where the process was developed. DID is Intel's newest fab and contains its largest individual cleanroom measuring 176,000 square feet, which is roughly the size of three and a half football fields.

Epson mono laser printers sets new printing standard

Epson Philippines Corp., the country's leader in digital imaging solutions, recently unveiled monochrome laser printers which are suitable and affordable choices for SME and SOHO users — the Epson EPL-6200L and Epson EPL-6200 are perfect for users who need high levels of laser printer quality and productivity at a low investment.

Epson EPL-6200L and Epson EPL-6200 are not only affordable, they also set the market's printing standard with its 20 pages per minute (ppm) printing speed which is the fastest among its class, helping users save more time and increase work outputs.

Both printers also feature a powerful print driver that allows for 4-up printing which compresses four reduced size pages into one single A4 sheet. This feature helps save paper and toner when printing documents that are still in the draft stages.

While other printers require data for a whole

page to be transferred before it starts printing, the printer's driver features PictStart printing begins immediately upon receiving data transfer. This reduces waiting time and thus makes the printers the ideal printing solutions for small and medium workgroups and personal users.

Designed with contoured curves, both printers look great on the desk or even at the retail shop front. Epson EPL-6200L's compact footprint of only 385x279x261 mm (width x depth x height) makes it ideal for retail shops. On the other hand, Epson EPL-6200 has a slightly bigger footprint, but it is also more versatile with more available options. The Epson EPL-6200 features an optional Duplex Unit for double sided printing and 500-page paper cassette tray, which is needed for high volume printing. Even with the additional paper tray, its footprint is only 407x436x261mm.

The Epson EPL-6200L and Epson EPL-6200 are offered for the suggested retail price (SRP) of P10,450.00 and P17,995.00 respectively and are available from leading outlets nationwide.

IT NOTES

SAS products win awards

SAS, the leader in business intelligence, announced that the readers of Intelligent Enterprise named four of its SAS products as tops in their respective categories.

Winning four out of 16 awards, SAS is the only vendor to receive multiple awards in the Intelligence focus area.

For the second year in a row, SAS Enterprise Miner surpassed the competition in the Data Mining Tools category, and SAS Text Miner outranked the field in the new Unstructured BI Applications category. Readers selected SAS/STAT, which provides comprehensive data analysis tools, as the leader in the Predictive Modeling Tools category, while SAS IntelliAdvisorSM, the company's first application service provider offering, ASP service, led the Clickstream Analysis Tools category.

Witness bares new SME offering

Witness Systems, a leading global provider of performance optimization software and services, has announced the availability of its new ContactStore Express offering for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The new offering extends the company's contact center customer interaction recording and performance analysis software to include a powerful, easy-to-use, 100 percent recording solution that requires minimal technical skills to deploy and use in either traditional or IP telephony environments.

ContactStore Express assists SMEs in developing a true understanding of what their customers want from them by providing feedback from the front line contact with customers. This information can give a critical competitive advantage in today's highly demanding markets and can also be a valuable tool in giving clarity in times of customer dispute.

Witness Systems will offer ContactStore Express to the Philippines through its channel network, which includes Basic Tech Trade Distribution, Inc. and AG Datacom Phs, Inc.

Allied intros triple-play Gateway

Allied Telesyn, a global leader in IP networking solutions for the access edge, has announced the RG613, the first in its new family of residential gateways for carriers offering triple play voice, data, and video services. The 600 Series Residential Gateways bring new, advanced data and IP voice capabilities to triple play service providers and their subscribers, enabling more efficient and secure Internet access. In addition to IP voice, video, and high-speed data capabilities, the RG613 includes Layer 3 data functions such as network address translation (NAT), a stateful inspection firewall and virtual server/DMZ functions for added security; and support for more IP signaling protocols to support a broader range of network equipment and applications.

The RG600 Series is another step forward in our mission to deliver the most advanced networking applications for carriers delivering triple-play services over fiber or copper, said Howard Kammerer, president and COO of Allied Telesyn. We will continue to be aggressive in rolling out new, end-to-end solutions that accelerate the cost-effective deployment of advanced and profitable carrier services.

Internet empire rises out of the dot-com ruins

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes of the DotCom industry, WSI Internet is turning other companies' internet failures into new found profits. "Our position is simple," explains Louis Zalany, WSI's Chief Executive Officer, "most websites don't work, and our unique systems turn these internet failures into success stories... day in and day out."

It all started in Toronto Canada in 1996 and today, with over 700 franchised offices serving small to medium sized businesses in 87 countries internationally, WSI is rated the world's #1 Internet Franchise. This is #1 ranking, bestowed upon WSI by Entrepreneur Magazine in its annual Franchise 500 report, is also accompanied by WSI's ranking as the 14th fastest growing franchise of any kind in the United States.

So what drives all of this growth in an industry that has been literally decimated by the bursting of the dot com bubble? According to WSI, it's their results. "The Dot Com bubble was built on a fairy tale theory that the Internet would magically materialize new profits for any business with a website," proclaims Zalany. "It's taken most companies a few years to figure out that their half-baked strategies aren't working, and that's where we come in."

Zalany's way of getting the word out to small and medium sized businesses might seem a bit shocking, considering WSI is in the business of developing websites. They've deployed a "virtual soapbox" strategy by registering the domain http://www.websitestowork.com. Here they set the record straight on some of the common misconceptions small business people have about the web.

"Without a complete analysis of a company's business it's impossible to best develop or deploy a business strategy. Our Internet Business Analysis examines all aspects of a client's business and then identifies Hidden Profit Centers within their business that they can exploit through the Internet."

And exploit they have. Every year WSI develops thousands of websites through a global network of almost a dozen certified production centers located in low cost, high-tech regions like Asia-Pacific and Central America. This production network is all tied together through a central business management software system known as MARS.

WSI's business processes are so unique and sophisticated that they are now patent-pending with the US Patent and Trademark Office. But surprisingly, when recruiting new franchisees WSI is not looking for technical people. "Our success is built on proven business processes," asserts Zalany. "Success in this business is not dependent on any person's background. We look to attract the best caliber of people possible, but we don't look for any specific technical expertise. Our comprehensive training system ensures that each franchisee is certified as an Internet Consultant with all the skills necessary to deploy our systems and deliver results for their clients."

ASUS M3 CENTRINO: GET CONNECTED WIRELESSLY

ASUS M3 is an exceptional mobile PC from today's new generation of sleek and powerful laptops. M3 is not just powered with a cutting edge processor, it also combines a combination of advanced computer technologies specifically designed for the challenges and demands of wireless world.

M3 is stylishly designed less than 20mm thick and weighs only 2.5kg. It is also amazingly light since it is powered by Intel Centrino Mobile Platform — a revolutionary processor that combines the Pentium Mobile Intel Pro Wireless LAN, and 855 chipset. At 1.8 GHz, you can perform demanding applications, which can be further pushed by the 256 DDR and 40 GB hard disk drive. Watch or write texts, pictures, or music with the built-in DVDRW combo drive on the fly. And 16MB of your eyes to the rich graphics through the 14.1" TFT Active LCD Display.

ASUS M3 gives you an option to configure it for dual battery so you can continuously work and play up to 9 hours. Browse the net connected to your network at any time, anytime, wireless using the Intel Pro Wireless 2100 LAN Built-In. You can choose from the Windows XP Home Edition, Windows XP Pro and Windows 2000 for your operating system.

For only P99,900 you can have all these wonderful features with a bonus carrying case, Trend PC, Dellin Anti-Virus and optical mouse.

Yes, ASUS M3 is an ideal gift for yourself or your loved ones this holidays. For more help, you can call Bantros Commercial, Inc. at 727-3009, 718-2808 or visit www.bantros.ph, email asusnb@mediantelekom.net.

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3.1 Mega Pixel Digital Camera
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My solution provider has recommended that I implement image backups for some of my Windows servers. How can it help my Windows servers?

Standard File Backup

In a standard file backup process, the data in a server are backed up in a file-by-file manner. Every file is processed and backed up one by one. The backup system accesses the files via the operating system to ensure data integrity. Files that have been opened in an exclusive mode during backup will be skipped, so that only files that can be safely backed up will be processed. Since the files are backed up sequentially to tape, it is easy to restore an individual file from the backup tape.

However, the standard file backup takes longer to perform due to the way the files are stored in the disk of a server. Basically, a file is stored in multiple blocks of data within the disk. These blocks of data are usually not stored in a continuous area but scattered all over the disk. So when a file is being backed up, the disk read/write head needs to move all over the disk to piece together the individual blocks of data that make up the file in the correct sequence before the file can be written to tape. This is very time consuming, if the server has a large number of highly fragmented files.

Image Backup

An image backup works by reading the data on a server's disk at the block level sequentially independent of the file system. This means that there is no need to move the disk read/write head all over the disk to piece together the individual blocks of data that make up the file. This translates into faster backup performance.

Traditional image backup technology requires an entire disk volume to be inactive so that an image backup can be done successfully. It cannot differentiate between actual used blocks or empty space, so the entire volume will be backed up, including the empty space. Individual file restores are impossible and restoration can only be done at the volume level.

Image Backup Option

Better backup solutions in the market today have improved on the traditional image backup. When looking for an image backup option for your Windows environment, consider the following points:

- Able to perform image backup at partition/ drive level, instead of disk volume level — to provide better granularity
- Does not lock the partition/drive being backed up, thus allowing other applications to access the files
- Able to maintain the data integrity of the backup, even if applications write to the drive during backup
- Able to selectively restore individual files as well as full volumes from the image backup tape for greater flexibility
- Able to identify and back up only occupied space in the drive, to reduce backup time

With a proper image backup option, you will be able to perform very fast backups of your Windows servers, while at the same time, enjoy the level of flexibility that file backups provide.

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