

FlashPaper news so hot it might ignite

CSL Contributions still safe, but index sits in stealth mode. At last week's OpenMPE meeting, the 20-plus attendees in person and the 50 online got a brief report on the location of programs contributed to the Interex Contributed Software Library (CSL). Links to the CSL went dark when Interex cut off its Web access on July 18, but the programs are safe in the hands of Chuck Shimada, a longtime Interex volunteer and de-facto curator of this collection of HP 3000 utilities.

Shimada reported that he won't be releasing the entire CSL library for quite some time. Legal rulings over the years have established the group of programs in its entirety as a copyrighted Interex asset, he said. A few cases of outright piracy in Europe — where tech support companies simply put their label on the CSL and called it their own — led to a successful Interex defense of its rights, he added.

As an interesting aside, the CSL programs are not listed among Interex assets in its Chapter 7 bankruptcy filings. Shimada said that although that might be true, he's still going to wait until "several months" after the Dec. 5 bankruptcy claim deadline before making the full collection available to the 3000 community. OpenMPE would be a logical place to host the programs, if rights can be worked out among the contributors. Contributing a CSL program used to earn you a free copy of the CSL. (The CSL could be considered worth a lot more than that custom membership app which now comprises almost three-fourths of Interex's stated \$431,433 of assets. Interex doesn't own those CSL programs, just the right to offer them as a collection. Full rights revert to those who contributed the programs.)

But anyone can get individual CSL programs from Chuck, if you send him an e-mail (at his personal address, cshimada@verizon.net) and ask for an individual program. Knowing what to ask for becomes a matter of research if you don't have the full CSL index of programs. The index doesn't appear to be hosted on any server that's open to the entire HP 3000 community. We'd love to hear from you if you know where the community can review the CSL index. So the alternatives would be to look for swap tapes, the mechanism Interex used to create its CSL. Interex members would donate software to the swap tape, then receive a tape of all contributed programs.

Swap tape programs, Shimada believes, are open for redistribution by anyone who's received one by participating in the swap. He added that the full CSL should be available in the future "when we get rolling on this, with several mirrored sites where all the stuff can be had. After all, there's always the problem that Southern California Edison will do a brownout in my area, and then my 3000 might come crashing down and not come back up."

It might have been hotel bills that caused Interex to check out. A closer look at the Chapter 7 bankruptcy filing for the former HP users group showed its biggest creditors are hotels. Interex owes \$555,608 to the San Francisco Marriott, and \$365,364 to the Renaissance Parc 55 hotel, guarantees for blocks of room nights associated with the cancelled San Francisco HP World conference. Members at the OpenMPE meeting last week were curious about unpaid bills for the Moscone Center space, but only \$116,850 showed up for the San Francisco Convention Facilities. In comparison, Interex owed the hotels it contracted with ten times as much; the unpaid bills to six hotels in three cities totalled \$1.21 million. To be fair, some of those hotels could have recovered some of those room nights, since Interex called off its show four weeks before San Francisco check-ins. But the bills also included \$39,751 owed to the Chicago Hilton, the site of the last HP World in 2004.

Two Washington DC hotels were also listed, evidence of room block reservations for a future conference. Interex's Ron Evans, the executive director who signed the filing, listed just \$713,409 in 2005 user group income through July 20, compared to \$6.39 million for all of 2004. Evans' compensation was more than \$220,000 per year, according to court documents. Interex "estimates that funds will be available to unsecured creditors" in the bankruptcy, according to the group's Statement of Financial Affairs.

HP has filed to recover its share of Interex debt. Late last week, HP filed papers with the US District Court to recover its losses in the Interex bankruptcy. Interex collected \$137,800 from the vendor for its HP World sponsorships alone, a figure that does not include the many HP World registrations and memberships. There's also a booth bill of \$48,500 that Interex is disputing, which indicates that bill has not yet been paid. HP was the first creditor to file a motion in the bankruptcy hearing, which is set to kick off on Sept. 6. That Tuesday will be almost four years to the day after HP announced its merger with Compaq — an action the Interex board of directors blessed by voting its 100 shares of HP stock in the subsequent proxy battle. Among the user groups assets was two blocks of stock, 100 shares each of HP and Agilent.

MPE will need an emulator to attract hobbyists. HP reported at last week's OpenMPE meeting it will enable the time-honored tradition of a hobbyist's license for operating systems, giving the 3000 community a way to teach itself and experiment with MPE for non-commercial research and education. But HP's method of licensing MPE/iX

to the programmers and students of the environment will use the proposed emulator license, an agreement that appears to require an emulator to surface.

Another part of HP has already granted a hobbyist license for another commercial operating system, OpenVMS. That license was created in 1997 by Digital, and more than 40,000 copies have been granted to date. The license is free once a user registers with Encompass, the HP/Compaq users group, and Encompass registration is free at the basic level. HP is still supporting OpenVMS with no apparent end-of-life date for its service, so those OpenVMS hobbyists enjoy even more privileges than MPE/iX customers. The OpenVMS hobbyist license doesn't require an emulator. *(See our blog entry at 3000newswire.com/blog for more details.)*

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HP 3000 volunteers move onto other boards. A pair of longtime advocates for HP 3000 manufacturing users have moved onto the board of directors of CAMUS, the Computer Aided Manufacturing User Society. Terry Simpkins of Measurement Specialities and Terry Floyd of the Support Group inc. were elected in August, taking three-year and two year board posts respectively. Simpkins has been a good source of SOX compliance procedures and policy interpretations for the HP community for the past year, while Floyd joins the CAMUS board in a newly-created seat, Associate Member Director, a position that will bring the perspective of CAMUS' third-party members into the Board. Floyd's company provides support for MANMAN sites that supplements or stands in for vendor support from SSA Global. CAMUS is holding its annual conference Oct. 24-25 in Chicago. "Preparing for the Future: How to Get the Most from Your Legacy System - How to Prepare for Migration" will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. For more details on the CAMUS conference visit the Web page at www.camus.org/Conferences/2005-CAMUS/index.htm

While researching the other user group alternative for HP 3000 customers, Encompass, we learned that another HP 3000 volunteer is serving on that group's board. Chris Koppe, marketing director for Speedware, is listed on the board of directors page for the group that's reaching out to former Interex members. Koppe was serving as an Interex board director at the time the user group closed its doors last month.

Large Disk and LargeFiles are getting tested this month. The HP 3000 community is in the middle of testing HP's latest enhancements and repairs to the server's MPE/iX operating environment this month. HP made the Large Disk enhancement available in late July for beta test; customers with a current support contract with HP can download the patches. HP's got a Communicator-style article on the enhancement at jazz.external.hp.com/papers/Communicator/7.5/LargeDisk.txt. Donna Garverick, OpenMPE board member working at Long's Drug, reported that she installed patches MPEMXT1B, MPEMXT2B, MPEMXT3B, MPEMXT4B and MPEMXT7B on one of her systems, all related to supporting Large Disk: Any disk drive devices with more than 300GB of total capacity, MPE/iX's old limit.

Garverick noted in a message to the 3000 newsgroup that "the '7' patch in particular changes the output of [HP utility] DISCFREE. If anyone has scripts that evaluate DISCFREE output, you'll need to update your scripts following the application of this patch. In particular, if you're using Beechgen's 'volfree' script and want an updated version of this script that can accomodate any version of DISCFREE, let me know and I'll send it to you." Contact her at dgarverick@longs.com for your update.

Meanwhile, the repairs to a year-old flaw in the LargeFiles Datasets (LFDS) are in alpha testing the labs of one of the community's most dedicated IMAGE utility vendors. Testing on the HP's fix to LFDS will by nature proceed slowly, since the tests must be performed on some of the biggest HP 3000 databases anywhere. Tests that take more than three days to complete are not unusual. HP wants to put its fixes through this alpha-level of testing before rolling out the LFDS patches to the supported customer base in beta tests.

HP's shares stand at a four-year high after a Q3 report. HP's stock rose 13 percent in a single day after the company reported its third quarter results for fiscal 2005. The price of the stock was the highest since just before HP announced its deal to acquire Compaq in 2001. Even though the quarter's total earnings were a small fraction of last year's same-period, the company outstripped analyst estimates by 50 percent for the period — before subtracting a \$1 billion chargeback for repatriating nearly \$15 billion in overseas earnings. Andrew Neff of analyst house Bear Stearns set a target price of \$35 a share for the stock, which had not poked above \$24 a share for more than a year.

But the Q3 report pushed the shares to above \$26, where they remained throughout the week after the report. HP set a target of 44 to 47 cents a share for its earnings in the fourth quarter, the strongest period of each fiscal year. Revenues for Q3 rose almost 10 percent to \$20.8 billion, also beating analyst estimates. HP's Enterprise Storage and Servers business, home of HP 3000 alternatives for migrating customers, increased its profitability over the red-ink same period of 2004. The unit posted operating profits of \$150 million, after a loss of \$211 million a year ago. Revenue for the enterprise business rose to \$4 billion from \$3.3 billion.