

THOSE SUPPORT

People

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HARDWARE UPGRADES: HOW TO NEGOTIATE COSTS

by Terry H. Floyd and Donnie Poston

Negotiating Across Fiscal Periods and Sales Careers

Many companies using MANMAN™ on MPE will want to upgrade their systems to the new HP e3000 "N" and "A" Class machines in the next year. One reason for the upgrade is HP's plan to phase out support for MPE/iX 6.0 and Series 9x7 Models in the spring of 2002. A more important reason is that running MANMAN™ on a 937 or 967, compared to a new low-end "N" Class system with PCI bus support, is like using 386s as the PC desktop standard in your user community.

Here's even bigger news: HP has decided to end its former practice of licensing MPE "by the seat." From now on, buy a new "N" or "A" Class HP e3000 and have an unlimited user count at no extra charge. That will cause some interesting ideas and discussions about how to price the software upgrades associated with going from one CPU serial number (and HPSUSAN) to

CAMUS Meeting in San Diego in early March

A new Common Interest Group was formed within CAMUS called CIG SUPPORT, focusing on the needs and problems of companies who depend on anyone outside of their own company for help. That eventually covers everyone because even the most self-reliant company cannot deal with all of the hardware and software it uses and the problems that can occur. From HP to Microsoft to dozens of others, there are many ways to get and pay for assistance.

**Come to the first annual meeting
of CIG SUPPORT at the Spring
CAMUS Conference in San Diego.**

Trusted Advisor Use Support Proactively?

When I think of calling some company for support, it's seldom a pleasant thought. That's because something is not working and the documentation does not provide ample clues about how to "fix" it. Whatever "it" is, it's something we think we wanted to do, but if there are very many options we might not really even understand what we are expecting to happen anyway. Software can be so complex! Problems don't happen if we have only one viable alternative or we really know our knowledge domain well. It's when we are in doubt that we call for help.

As a support company, we want to encourage our clients to call and utilize our services. This primacy of support in our business plan is unusual;

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Hardware

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another. Some software is priced by the seat and some by the CPU tier; some may be either way depending on what your contract specifies.

The performance improvements in MPE/iX 7.0 coupled with the processor power and upgradability to IA-64 architecture make the “N” Class the choice of those companies expecting to stay with MPE for at least 5 more years. The new low-end “A” Class e3000, which reaches up into the slower configurations of the “N” Class product line, is an impressive powerhouse but will probably never be upgradable to IA-64. The “A” has an excellent price/performance curve that makes it the right choice for those planning to stay on MANMAN™ for less than 5 more years but needing the boost in performance the users have been wishing for.

The big cost problem with hardware upgrades in MANMAN™’s mid-sized “mini-computer” market is the added expense of all of that MPE add-on software. Some third-party vendors require no fee for movement of their software from one CPU to the next, while other vendors can charge whatever the market will bear. Several companies have been mentioned by name in conversations I have had with my customers. You can form your own opinion as to whom I might be referring.

Since you have a year to negotiate, now is the time to begin. Negotiating across fiscal periods has its obvious advantages. You can go to all of your e3000 software vendors and tell them the machine you have now and the one you would like to convert to. Ask them what it will cost if you upgrade. Do this next week. Find out when the fiscal year of each third-party vendor occurs. Talk to your sales contact about fitting into her/his quota and ask when their next quarter will close. What’s it worth for your sale to be in this quarter versus next quarter? How about this year versus next year?

I call that negotiating across fiscal periods. Another similar concept is negotiating across sales careers. Ever notice how much turnover there is among the sales contacts for some of your software vendors? It’s

probably related to “making their numbers” on a monthly or quarterly basis. You can help them by being predictable and establishing when you expect to make a decision, based on the price they offer. “Everything is negotiable” means more if scaled across a year or two. Especially if there are some viable alternatives, like for instance keeping those old 9x7’s going, spending less, and using network access to MANMAN™ through a GUI interface.

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HP Discontinuances

The 989KS/x00 servers and add-on 969KS/x20 processors will be discontinued as of May 1, 2001.

The 918RX, 928RX, 929KS/030, 939KS/030, 979KS, 989KS/x50, 997 Servers; the upgrade kits to become a 928LX/RX Server; and kits upgrading 996/995/992/991/990 Servers to 997 Servers will be discontinued in the second half of 2001.

MPE/iX Release 6.0 and all 9x7’s support ends in April 2002

Add-on processors for 979KS, 989KS/x00, 989KS/x50 and 997 Servers as well as upgrade kits to become a 988 Server and a 989KS/x50 Server are expected to be discontinued during 2002.

All of these discontinued HP e3000 Servers will remain supported by Hewlett-Packard through at least February 1, 2006, except 9x7’s, which reach end of support in April, 2002.

“End of support” means HP cannot offer a maintenance contract on the hardware or software and that spare parts and expertise will begin to become difficult to locate. “Discontinuance” means being dropped from HP’s price list; no longer offered for sale. HP’s end of support has traditionally been at least five years after discontinuance.

We are excited to be involved in providing you with the new line of HP3000’s. Please call us for additional information, clarifications, or a quote.



Hardware

(Continued from page 2)

Some of my software practitioner friends think that it isn't very ethical to charge high prices for "airware upgrades." An airware upgrade is defined as software that can be moved from one platform to another during an upgrade and requires no re-installation or re-implementation. Some software is written so that it takes advantage of any operating system version-dependent functions and some isn't. Some operating system vendors (like HP's CSY division) try to release new versions that will continue to run anything that ran on a prior version, some don't.

Applications like MANMAN™ (especially the versions before Release 10) seem able to run on any version of MPE, but system utility software is more version-specific. For any software on a new platform and/or operating system release, only thorough testing will determine if there are any failures where a workaround cannot be easily provided. If code must be fixed, a new version of the application or system utility software is needed, and that is not an airware upgrade.

I think that software providers are entitled to a reasonable fee for upgrades, even airware upgrades. But, I think it should cost more if a new version has to be installed than if the vendor just has to dial in and "activate" the old version for the new serial number. I'm somewhat dubious of the amount of value added if there is no activity required of the software vendor other than to send an invoice and update its files about their customer's new CPU number. Yet, even that small amount of activity, coupled with ownership of the product, deserves reasonable remuneration.

So, if you think you'll want a new HP e3000 in the next year give us a call. We know more about MANMAN™ on all of HP's e3000 systems than anybody else. And start calling those software vendors. Three-year savings in HP hardware support costs will probably pay for most of their up-charges. The more "unreasonable" ones may require some long-term negotiating, though, so get started early. ►

The New e3000's Are Here!

by Donnie Wayne Poston

HP has announced the release of their new A and N class e3000's. These new boxes are the best to come out of HP in a long time! Their reduced hardware support costs alone are enough to entice many of you thinking about replacing or upgrading your current hardware. Their performance is amazing. The official release date was February 1st with shipments beginning in March. As a channel partner participating in the testing of these new boxes with users in the MANMAN™ community, we were very impressed with their performance and pricing.

The HP e3000 A-Class offers 65% more performance than the 9x8 and 9x7 class HP e3000 Servers do. The A-Class also is an ideal replacement for those older HP 3000 servers for which support already is discontinued or for which support soon will be ending.

The HP e3000 N-Class provides mid-range and high-end performance for today and scalability for tomorrow. The N-Class is the most cost-effective alternative for consolidating several old servers into one.

The rising cost of support for older servers, combined with a growing scarcity of parts, mark them as prime candidates for replacement. You can partially fund your new server with savings from the old server's support cost. It is important to note that MPE/iX Release 7.0 is not even supported on older high-end 9x7 servers. MPE/iX Release 7.0 offers many Internet tools such as Java, and is the platform on which most new MPE/iX functionality will be implemented in the future.

(See HPe3000, page 4)

**Thank you, Abby at Team
Media, for six great years.
We couldn't have done it
without you!**



Trusted Advisor

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most software companies treat support as if it were to be minimized or eliminated. "Call avoidance" is the aim of the good software R&D lab manager, and many times the support department is just a cost center, despite the fact that it generates a lot of revenue for new R&D efforts (enhancements).

If service is the only thing we sell that isn't a commodity, how do we get people to call us? It's the same dilemma you have with your customers. As a manufacturer, your company knows the value of support for generating new revenue opportunities. That's what the new integrated CRM package your Sales manager wants would probably be telling him.

You want me to call support when there's no problem? Actually, there are always plenty of problems and you know it. The hard part is assigning someone to handle them. That's where we come in. Your internal IT staff can more easily be assigned to creating needed functionality for your unique business if we handle their "unusual" situations for them.

We want your people to call us. That's the value we add. If you have doubt about functionality, call the experts on MANMAN™. If you don't have any doubts, then congratulations, you must be doing very well. ►

Your Data Is An Important Asset

By Charles Anton

One of the things that I see consistently when I visit tSGi's clients as a consultant is the lack of integrity in the master file information stored in MANMAN™. Sure, everybody backs up their data and many have very elaborate disaster recovery schemes. But when I ask who has custody of the Item Master, or the Vendor Master, or the whatever, I seldom get a clear answer. When I ask who is responsible for purging or archiving out-of-date or unused records and for ensuring that there are no duplicates, I get a blank stare. These answers are very important, especially if you plan to ever migrate from MANMAN™.

Why is this data control of critical importance? There are several reasons, but I will give you the more important ones. Some of you already have initiatives underway to replace the venerable MANMAN™ for various reasons. I won't help you with the reasons, but I can almost guarantee that you are not going to purge everything and start over again. You are going to have to find a way to move that data into whatever replacement product that you have chosen. You don't want to also move duplicates and unused records, much less broken and dangling data entries caused by crashes or "unexplainable" events.

(See *Your Data*, page 5)

HP e3000 A-Class servers

Number of CPUs	1 - 2 PA-8500
HP e3000 relative performance	~2.2 - 5.4
maximum memory	8 G
maximum disk storage	72 GB (interior) 37 TB (exterior)
Available I/O Slots	2 - 4

HP e3000 N-Class servers

Number of CPUs	1 - 4 PA-8500 PA-8600 (IA-64 ready)
HP e3000 relative performance	~9 - 72
maximum memory	16 GB
maximum disk storage	72 GB (interior) 37 TB (exterior)
Available I/O Slots	12

All servers come with Unlimited User License!



CONVERSION

by Terry H. Floyd

Upgrades are a necessary pain, not only because of new features, but also because of compatibility with the rest of the world. Annual or bi-annual upgrades are a way of life in today's IT world. Big conversions, on the other hand, are events that should happen only once every ten or twenty years.

Most of the outright failures in ERP system migration are the ones that go ahead and convert when they know the conversion data is either inaccurate, too complex, or poorly structured (or a combination of those three). The usual reason for conversion problems is not in the conversion programming, but in the source data or source application system's design. The latter reason is a difficulty when converting to MANMAN™, but not as much of a problem when moving from it to a new system because MANMAN™ does work, does have good integrity controls built in, and does have fairly well normalized data structures.

Time spent analyzing and fixing problems in the old system, *before* planning, “demo-ing”, and testing the new system will prevent up to 50% of the conversion problems. Maybe you'll clean up your data so much that you'll wonder why you wanted to move off of MANMAN™ in the first place.

Data quality audits! That's what we are talking about. You've probably got lots of “exceptions” in your MANMAN™ data. There are dangling records (headers with no details or vice versa). Stuff is lurking in the “dead ends” of your data files, waiting for you to try to access it, which you may never attempt until you begin to migrate.

Stuff happens — systems crash, communication lines and network connections just go away in the middle of transactions, before completion. MANMAN™ has no easy recovery and rollback mechanism built in. Aside from outright hardware failures, there are PO receipts, RTVs (Return-to-Vendor transactions), changes, re-receipts, and CMs on DMs on invoices with cash receipts that have been backed out, with write-offs thrown in for good measure. Users have made mistakes. They've compounded their mistakes with their corrections.

These events and their corrections have crossed fiscal periods and fiscal year boundaries. They have accumulated in the corners, waiting to be forgotten. Some people may use the conversion as the only way to fix their tangled records. How strange. ►

Your Data

(Continued from page 4)

tSGi can tell you, from our extensive experience moving customers from other systems onto MANMAN™, that “weird data” does happen. I have almost gotten into a round of fisticuffs because I was accused of making up part numbers or vendors to add to the new database. Aside from the fact that I have better things to do than make up items to add to the master files, the extraneous items are there because there was no procedure for purging them from the database after they were no longer used. There was no audit procedure to check the quality and usefulness of the data in the master files. This old data was never purged and never archived. It was just sitting there waiting for something to happen, getting in the way as reports read it over and over, skipping it week after week, forever...until the conversion!

I believe that one of the biggest time wasters in a system conversion is deciding what data needs to be propagated to the new system. This topic should have been addressed long before consideration of moving off of MANMAN™. This review should have been done by users who own the data, not just someone with the word “information” in their title. Many companies that seem to want to migrate don't have a plan for data retention, just data back-up. Those who fail or foul up their ERP migration wait to make these decisions until their backs are to the wall to get the new system implemented.

My advice in this instance is that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. If you are converting dirty data, the usual approach is to convert with rigid guidelines for getting all master file data into the new system's database, then review what you have and purge what you don't need. A better way is to clean up the data now and keep it clean, convert it to a new system someday, and then keep that clean just like you intend to do with MANMAN™.

(See Your Data, page 7)



EDiX and EDIWIN Work Together

by Tatiana and Eugene Nikolaevski

the Support Group, inc. looks forward to introducing our potential clients in the MANMAN/HP world to our newest service offering: asp4edi.com. Your first opportunity to discuss this with us face-to-face will be at the CAMUS Conference in San Diego in March. We expect to have a lot of interest at our booth, and we hope you can come to the Conference and see our staff. To explain asp4edi.com as briefly as possible: we want to outsource your entire EDI headache.

We are still in the midst of our first implementation and the outlook for successful deployment is excellent. tSGi is using seasoned software from Trinary Systems, Inc., of Farmington Hills, Michigan, on our own HP e3000, linked remotely to our customer's HP e3000 running our proprietary EDiX™ interface software. We are capable of sending and receiving files between our client's MANMAN™ system and their trading partners. Our ten years of experience in interfacing MANMAN™ to flat files for EDI has prepared us for this learning opportunity.

Although we will admit that it has been a struggle to understand “the other side of EDI”, tSGi's work on mastering Trinary's EDI Windows™ (EDIWIN) Translator and Mapper has been progressing and we have come to appreciate the power of processing all EDI transactions entirely on the HP e3000. Years of working with our customers as they struggled with EDI translation, mapping, and communication taught us that it is a formidable task to undertake. Now, after several intense months, EDIWIN and EDiX™ work together.

Some of our early clients didn't fully understand the trouble with translating the standard EDI layout (files with variable length fields and many record types) to our EDiX™ flat file layouts (files which match your IMAGE Databases containing MANMAN™ data with fixed length fields). Most of their problems were misunderstandings about the capabilities of their PC-based translator/mapper software. Although we have over ten years of experience with EDiX™ and its MANMAN™ interfaces for EDI, we had managed to avoid dealing with the differences between the many translator/mapper packages being used by our clients.

Now we are mastering the mapping and translation of X12 EDI files to our own EDiX™ layout for the inbound Purchase Order transaction (850) and outbound for the Purchase Order Acknowledgment transaction (855) and the Invoice transaction (810). EDiX™ programs and layouts had to be adapted to conform with EDI requirements more than we expected. Our first work has been with ANSI X12, but we are aware of the EDIFACT needs and the future impact of XML.

What is needed for Trinary's EDIWIN and tSGi's EDiX to work together?

Aside from the technical issues, getting started and keeping the project going are the difficult parts. Using our team centralizes all of your communications points. The people in your organization who interface with our team may or may not be in the IT department. The important element is that we are able to speak directly with your trading partner's EDI contacts and with your VAN's contacts. Your people may have to get involved sometimes, but only in unusual circumstances involving organizational or political issues, not with technical issues.

Some of the things we need from you:

1. Your Trading Partners' specifications, describing their use of the “standard” EDI segments and included elements to use in inbound and outbound transaction files; their contact person (with email address and phone number) for each transaction; their EDI ID codes/qualifiers;
2. Samples of inbound and outbound files, in the expected format; Inbound samples will be used for testing uploads to OMAR™; Outbound samples will be compared to our results for conformance to expectations; your EDI ID codes/qualifiers; your customer number and product number cross-reference values;
3. Communications contacts, logons, passwords, and methods (and options) for accessing trading partner data; this has traditionally been done through a VAN (Value Added Network) but will move to the



Internet as reliability and security become trusted and affordable; FTP and dialup options for connection between HP e3000s;

In our service contract we assume responsibility for all work connected with the development, performance, and support of your system. tSGi + EDI Windows™ + EDiX™ = Turnkey EDI. Our clients' IT people are not saddled with tedious development and operations tasks concerning EDI. Your trading partners send us their inbound transaction files for processing and your company's users receive from us all needed data put into their MANMAN™ databases. We seamlessly process all of the outbound transactions in batch, leaving notes for the users in their IMAGE data files accessible with standard MANMAN™ commands.

How does it work? An OMAR Example

Except for cross-reference values, which the users define and maintain, our clients are released from the troubles connected with inbound customer P.O. file processing and performing order entry transactions. We dial out using MPE job scripts and a Telamon Engine, connect and logon to your VAN, receive your trading partner's inbound P.O. transaction files, translate them on our HP e3000 in Austin, then move them to your machine and process the inbound transactions into OMAR™. All needed data from the inbound file and from MANMAN™ datasets (maintained with your standard OMAR™ commands) for defaults and validations are used for our transaction processing.

A further explanation of the ANSI X12 "850" inbound transaction: it creates a Sales Order, using data from the inbound file, from MANMAN™ datasets like CUSFIL (Ship-To Customer Data), BILMAS (Bill-To Data), and PROMAS (Product Data), and from MPE flat files, like MDCL (Manufacturing Calendar), and HP/MPE functionality like DATE-LINE; we provide full validation. EDiX™'s UT850 puts new records into OMAR™ datasets SOEFIL (S.O. Header), SODFIL (S.O. Lines), COMFIL (Commissions), and SIFIL (Text/Notes/Instructions). All inbound data with no OMAR™ equivalent field is put into SIFIL (S.O. Instructions and Notes File) and kept for future needs on outbound transactions.

For outbound transactions, EDiX™ takes data from MANMAN™ and writes it into a flat file with fixed length fields. It is a multi-record-type file; in other words, it has different record codes for headers, line items, trailers, and looping text notes. All data, whether needed for a particular customer (trading

partner) or not, is written there. Then EDIWIN selects the needed fields and translates the data (with slight trading partner variations, as necessary) into an EDI file in the required format, which we then send to your customer.

For example, the 810 outbound transaction takes all data needed for an Invoice from MANMAN™ OMAR™ (datasets ARFIL, BILMAS, SOEFIL, SODFIL, PYTMAS, INFIL, PROMAS, and AIFIL). Data for the trading partner/customer's specific needs, but which have no data storage area in OMAR™, have been taken from the inbound 850 file and kept in SIFIL and were passed on into AIFIL (A/R Instructions and Notes File) by OMTR300. These are written into the EDI 810 outbound flat file where they are available for us to use from EDIWIN.

In conclusion, our clients escape the manual and stale work of data processing and error handling connected with implementing and operating EDI. Development and implementation time is saved so the utilization cycle of operations begins sooner, which should decrease our client's costs and increase their profits. Another example of how tSGi is helping you use MANMAN™ more effectively. ►

Shaggy is home recovering from surgery. We hope to run her feature again next time. Get well, Shaggy. We love you!

Your Data

(Continued from page 5)

tSGi believes in converting most of the recent (active and useful) data from MANMAN™ forward to your next system. MANMAN™ has the capabilities to collect and organize a lot of basic information about your company. Even if you have been using MANMAN™ effectively for the last five years or more, you probably need to do some cleanup.

Give us a call to discuss a data quality audit. We have people with the word "information" in their title who can work with your people who don't. We also have people on our staff who don't have the word "information" in their title and who can work with your people who do. It takes a cooperative team effort, but it is the users who should be in control and who should insist on regularly scheduled and on-going data cleanup, archiving, and deletion.



The
new e3000's are
here!

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