News

ASHTON·TATE

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ASHTON-TATE AND DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION SIGN dBASE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING AGREEMENT

Pact Calls for VAX Systems & Workstation dBASE Products Under VAX/VMS, ULTRIX; PC dBASE Connectivity Product; All Integrated With Digital's Network Application Support Computing Services

BOSTON, Mass. -- October 24, 1988 -- Digital Equipment Corporation (NYSE: DEC) and Ashton-Tate Corporation (NASDAQ: TATE) today announced an agreement where Ashton-Tate will develop, and Digital will market and support, versions of Ashton-Tate's dBASE database management and applications development software for Digital's computing environment.

The move marks the first time that dBASE, the world's best selling database management system, will be offered for use on multi-user computers and graphics-oriented 32-bit workstations. The marketing of dBASE is part of Digital's strategy to offer industry-leading applications across its desktop platforms and its entire VAX family of systems integrated with VAX Rdb/VMS, Digital's strategic relational database management product.

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The agreement calls for development of character-based dBASE products for VAX users with VT terminals, and graphics-based dBASE products for DECwindows/XUI workstations. DECwindows/XUI is Digital's User Interface Development Environment implementation of the x-window industry standard. Plans call for modules to run under both Digital's VAX/VMS and ULTRIX operating systems, and to provide local and remote transparent data access and sharing with Digital VAX Rdb/VMS, or native dBASE, databases. A PC-to-VAX database connectivity link is included in the agreement to allow PC dBASE applications, running on networked PC's or PC's connected to Digital's new PCLAN/Server 2000, to transparently access data in remote Digital VAX Rdb/VMS databases. Transparent, read-only access to mainframe databases from dBASE is part of the plan, including connections to IBM's DB2 and Cullinet's IDMS/R systems. This is achieved through Digital's VIDA and DECnet/OSI SNA Gateways to IBM networks.

"This key agreement will provide a leadership solution that meets the needs of our users," said Kenneth H. Olsen, President of Digital Equipment Corporation. "dBASE on VT terminals will meet the simple day-to-day needs of office users. dBASE on DECwindows/XUI workstations will meet the sophisticated needs of users and application developers. Our customers' MIS managers will also be able to integrate dBASE applications, on ten to ten-thousand stand-alone PC systems, into effective workgroup or enterprise-wide information network solutions."

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"Together dBASE and Digital's single-system architecture provide an ideal client/server computing environment," said Edward M. Esber, Jr., chairman and CEO of Ashton-Tate. "Ashton-Tate recognizes Digital's leadership in distributed office services, open systems, and industry standards, and we are pleased to announce our support for their workstation, relational database and DECwindows/XUI products."

"All applications written using dBASE III PLUS or dBASE IV will be compatible with dBASE products running under either VAX/VMS or ULTRIX," Esber added. "The dBASE/SQL language and Digital's Network Applications Support computing services will provide the interconnecting platform from which developers can design applications for any desktop device, which can transparently access data anywhere on the network: on VAX systems, VAX database servers or IBM systems -- anywhere."

No timetable for the products nor financial details of the agreement was announced by either company.

Digital said that product development will use its single-system hardware, software, networking and applications integration architecture. The products will take advantage of Digital's VAX SQL Services, announced as part of Network Applications Support Data Access Services, which is based on the ANSI and ISO SQL standards. This architecture allows users to easily integrate their dBASE applications into a single, enterprise-wide information solution using industry standards.

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"By splitting the processing between the desktop device and high-performance database servers, Data Access Services extends the power of Digital's SQL-based relational database server architecture to desktop applications," said Henry Ancona, Vice President of Digital's Business and Office Information Systems group. "Client/server technology will enable user interactions to be handled locally on the PC or workstation while the data intensive activities are handled by the VAX Rdb/VMS database servers."

With the implementation, dBASE applications can use VAX Rdb/VMS data, native dBASE data (".dbf"), or Digital's Document Interchange Format (DDIF) to perform data sharing with non-dBASE applications, without requiring users to reformat or manipulate the data. DDIF is a component of Digital's Compound Document Architecture (CDA) which allows text, graphics and applications to be merged into revisable documents that can be moved anywhere across the network.

"This agreement is a key endorsement of Digital's Network Applications Support computing services which provide extensive database and network services for users of various types of desktop devices across DECnet/OSI enterprise networks" said Eric Kim, Ashton-Tate's Database Business Unit Manager.

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"We will provide a consistent dBASE environment across all desktop devices networked to Digital's computing environment; transparent access to corporate information; integration of PC-DOS dBASE users and the PCLAN/Server 2000 with Digital's SQL-based VAX Rdb/VMS database servers; and dBASE application portability and compatibility across Digital's systems. This protects customer investments, reduces the cost of applications development and maintenance, and increases user productivity."

Digital Equipment Corporation, headquartered in Maynard, Massachusetts, is the world's largest manufacturer of networked computer systems and associated peripheral equipment and the leader in systems integration with its networks, communications, software and services.

Ashton-Tate Corporation, based in Torrance, California, is one of the largest developers and marketers of business applications software. Its products cover six applications areas including database management systems, word processing, business graphics, integrated decision support systems, spreadsheets and desktop publishing.

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