

# PCWEEK

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COMING NEXT WEEK

PC Week's anniversary issue:  
Celebrating the past 15 years  
of computing and looking  
ahead to the next 15.

## NEWS SCAN

### Security efforts fall short

Security consortiums, plagued by consensus issues and other problems, produce mixed results in their quest for easier integration among products. **PAGE 3**

### HP to set stage for growth

Striving to rev PC business growth, HP will expand its direct sales efforts and add a new PC services group. **PAGE 8**

### Strife at software giant

At Microsoft, the friends and foes of "Cool" are clashing over the fate of the would-be Java killer. **PAGE 8**

### Chip wars: The next generation

Intel's next-generation CPU, the Pentium III, will vie for market share with AMD's latest processor, the K6-III. **PAGE 10**

### An electronic blessing for travelers

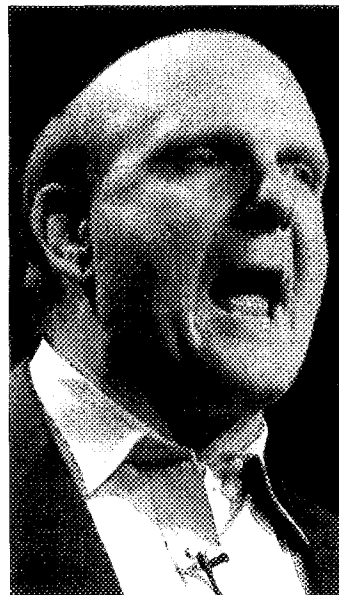
A new device should ease mobile users' treks with its cell phone/PDA combo. **PAGE 53**

### New standard for packet speed

In PC Week Labs' tests, Foundry Networks' Big Iron 8000 leaves competitors in the dust as the massive Gigabit Ethernet switch pumps data through 64 ports at full wire speed. **PAGE 101**

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## Ballmer sounds alarm



BY MARY JO FOLEY, SM@RTRESELLER

**I**F YOU THOUGHT MICROSOFT Corp.'s Steve Ballmer would be little more than a rubber-stamp president, think again.

Ballmer—not CEO Bill Gates—is sounding the alarm about what's wrong at Microsoft. And the list of troubles ailing Microsoft may be more serious than you thought.

Ballmer, flanked by Gates, led a Microsoft managers meeting the first week of December at which he outlined his five-point plan for getting the Redmond, Wash., company back on track, according to documentation of the meeting.

**Microsoft President Ballmer: "If we don't do the right thing, we won't be in a great place three to four years from now."**

Besides emphasizing the importance of Microsoft getting back in touch with its customers, Ballmer also discussed strategies for revitalizing Microsoft's planning, prioritizing, engineering and leadership policies.

"We're at a very important point for the company's long-term health

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## Nortel pulls Bay into the fold with integrated data/voice offerings

BY PAULA MUSICH  
AND JOHN RENDLEMAN

NORTEL NETWORKS IS WASTING NO time integrating its newly acquired Bay Networks subsidiary's various technologies as it plans a spring launch of new data and voice networking products.

The new offerings include an updated version of Optivity that

for the first time provides integrated management of Nortel Passport asynchronous transfer mode switches and a major new release of the Optivity Service Level Management suite. Also planned: a "unified branch office product" that integrates routing, switching, PBX functions, and Web-based voice and data management in a single device.

The products are intended to help corporations bring together their voice and data infrastructures, said officials of the Brampton, Ontario, company.

Nortel's message to customers is simple: Learn to leverage the convergence of data and voice technologies. Its message to com-

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## Portals offer new view into corporate data

BY MARK HAMMOND

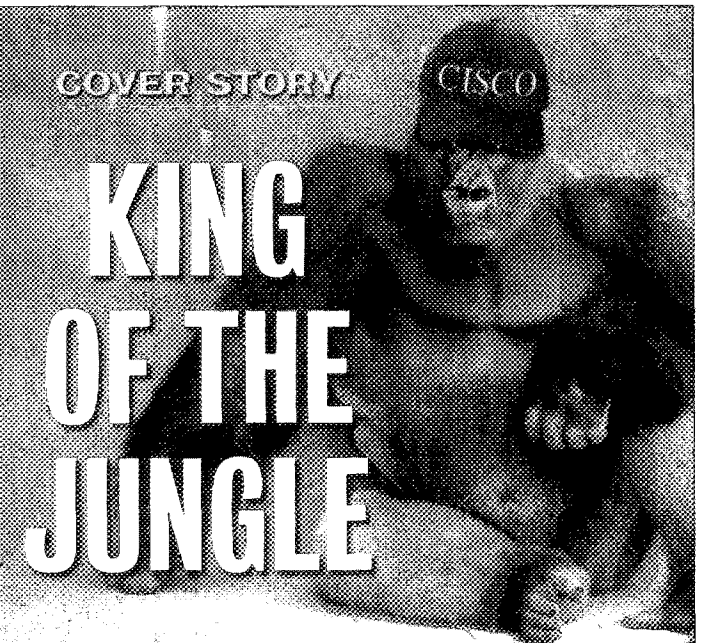
IT MANAGERS ARE PEERING INTO THE portal, and, so far, they like what they see.

The rush is on to create the enterprise information portal, the buzzword for software that provides access through a browser to a range of data stores—e-mail, databases, analytical software, the Internet, billing and sales records, and other sources.

Developers including Scribe Technologies Corp., Information Advantage Inc., Viador Inc., Plumtree Software Inc. and Actuate Software Corp. are shipping or readying enterprise portal products. The common goal: providing easier access to corporate data.

IT buyers are bullish on the idea of bringing the dynamics and customizability of Web portals such as

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COVER STORY

## KING OF THE JUNGLE

### Cisco's grip on the networking market keeps prices high, rivals out

BY LISA DICARLO

**I**N A 20TH-FLOOR HOTEL BOARDROOM overlooking San Jose, Calif., top executives at Alteon Networks Inc. are huddled in an all-day strategy session. A key discussion topic: staying out of Cisco Systems Inc.'s way.

The 3-year-old networking startup doesn't even compete head-on with Cisco. So why do its executives fear being steam-rolled?

"Because Cisco is the IBM of the current decade," said Dominic Orr, Alteon's CEO. "Even if Cisco has an inferior solution, customers perceive them as less risky, and [Cisco] is adamant about [maintaining] architectural control."

Such is the current state of affairs in the data networking business. Since installing its first routers in customer sites in the

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# Adobe adds editing options to Acrobat 4.0

BY CHRISTA DEGNAN

WITH XML NIPPING AT ITS HEELS, Adobe Systems Inc. is giving its Acrobat software a face lift with Web and structured content reuse features.

Version 4.0 of Adobe Acrobat, due by April, will get Web site conversion to PDF (Portable Document Format), PDF document comparison and annotation enhancements, security features such as digital signatures, and structured content reuse.

The software's reuse feature enables users to treat file elements as structured content that can be moved or edited—something Extensible Markup Language handles inherently well.

"[XML] can do most or all of what PDF can do," said Harley Manning, an analyst at Forrester Research Inc., in Cambridge, Mass.

Some of the structured content reuse capabilities come from BCL Computers, of San Jose, Calif., which licensed its technology to Adobe, also of San Jose. BCL plans to release two tools of its own, called Jade and Magellan, that are based on the "document understanding" technology for converting PDF files to rich text

format and HTML. BCL will release the tools at the Seybold conference in Boston next week.

While some beta testers see the new Acrobat as an opportunity to extend PDF for enterprise document sharing and workflow applications, others have concerns about the viability of the software for all publishing needs.

Warren Martin, technical consultant at Palo Verde Nuclear Power Generating Station, in Tonopah, Ariz., said the structured information transfer feature is one of the most helpful additions in Version 4.0. Martin hopes to roll over the facility's 300 seats of Acrobat 3.0 to the new version when it is available. "[Acrobat 4.0] makes [Microsoft] Word a useful tool," he said.

Susan Monnot, electronic document management specialist at DynMcDermott Corp., in New Orleans, said she has previewed Version 4.0 but turned to another tool, Myriad for M-Ware, from Applied Statistics Inc., of St. Paul, Minn., for editing PDF documents. "The markup capabilities in 4.0 came too late," she said.

Acrobat 4.0 is priced at \$249; upgrades from versions 2.0 or later cost \$99. ◀

# Selectica plays its Ace

Configuration suite gains key e-commerce features in V3.0

BY JIM KERSTETTER

PRODUCT CONFIGURATION SOFTWARE, long an ancillary technology to a good electronic commerce site, is being primed for center stage.

With its release this week of Ace 3.0 Product Suite, Selectica Inc. is making it clear that it wants to be more than just a nifty configuration engine provider.

Included in Version 3.0 are new price quotation and order management features that Selectica, of San Jose, Calif., believes will help the software become the centerpiece of any e-commerce site.

Ace 3.0 enables companies to build icon-driven configuration sites without a great deal of manual coding, said Dennis Tracz, CEO of Club Computer.com, in Cary, N.C. "We can do this at a high level without a lot of expense because it is a database-driven tool," Tracz said.

The software, which is written in Java and runs on Windows NT 4.0, Solaris 2.6 and HP-UX, includes Advisor, Pricer and Quoter modules, along with an improved GUI, a new development

environment, and a direct link from Ace 3.0 to databases and applications from Oracle Corp.

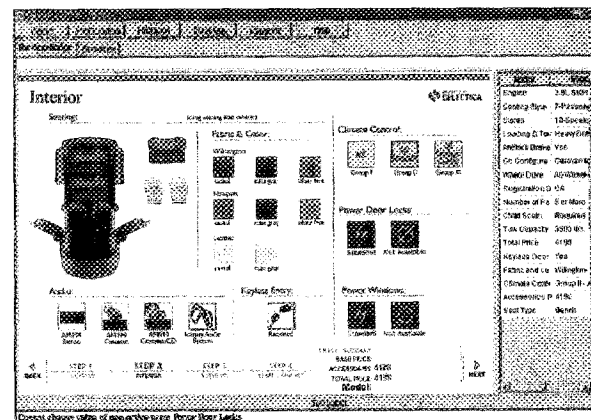
The Advisor module maps buyer preferences and, when integrated with the Ace Enter-

prise Server, ensures that buyers only receive purchase options that can be fulfilled.

Calico Technology Inc. and Trilogy Development Group Inc.

Calico released its eSales Suite earlier this month, and next week the San Jose company will announce development partnerships with ActiveTouch Inc., Acuity Corp., eFusion Inc. and WebLine Communications Corp.

Meanwhile, Trilogy, in Austin, Texas, next week will announce a partnership with pcOrder.com Inc. that will push the company even further into the online procurement market.



Ace 3.0 gives merchants control over their catalogs.

prise Server, ensures that buyers only receive purchase options that can be fulfilled.

Despite the advancements, Ace 3.0 still won't feature transaction processing. Rather, Selectica developers intend it to be integrated with a transaction processing engine through a series of APIs.

The move to bolster the product configuration functions is similar to strategies of companies such

pcOrder.com will resell Trilogy's Buying Chain suite to its more than 200 reseller customers. The software will allow the companies to automate the buying process for their customers.

The basic Ace 3.0 suite costs \$150,000 per server. Ace Studio, the development environment, is \$25,000 per seat. Ace Quoter is \$150,000 per server, and Ace Connector for Oracle is \$150,000. ◀

## Enterprise portals

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Yahoo and Excite to the corporate intranet—as well as to customers and suppliers over an extranet.

"The obvious benefit is we're going to be able to put information right in the hands of our users internally, and eventually externally, without a whole lot of IT involvement," said Ron Berger, director of IS for Emery Worldwide, the \$2.2 billion cargo shipper, in Redwood City, Calif.

The enterprise portal idea is deceptively simple and is similar to the executive information systems that were in vogue several years ago. In fact, industrious IT shops have been constructing portallike interfaces to data stores for years.

Many IT organizations are finding enterprise portals enticing as they put a fresh face on intranets grown cluttered and segmented. It's a concept that could balloon quickly: Investment company Mer-

rill Lynch & Co. forecasts that sales of enterprise portal software will reach nearly \$15 billion by 2002.

IT managers can customize enterprise portals to serve up real-time data, key performance indicators and newsfeeds and to offer search and query functionality.

Emery Worldwide plans to begin soon a phased rollout of an enterprise portal system based on Scribe's ReportMart Enterprise Information Portal software.

"Just about any kind of information we can draw off our transaction and financial systems, they'll have access to," Berger said. "There's no question that if you have good, solid data available for your managers, they'll be able to make better decisions faster."

Eventually, up to 3,000 Emery users worldwide will have access to the Web-based system, Berger said. The company also plans an extranet deployment for cus-

tomers, although it is still examining issues of content and security.

Scribe plans to ship in the second quarter an upgrade to ReportMart that boasts new alert capabilities for notifying users of business developments, a subscription service feature that regularly delivers data to desktops and the ability to run reporting jobs at predetermined times, said officials from the Menlo Park, Calif., company. The upgrade, now being beta tested, also will include support for LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol), enabling integration with other LDAP-compliant software.

Information Advantage, meanwhile, plans to announce this week the release of MyEureka. The software will integrate with the Eden Prairie, Minn., company's relational online analytical processing engine and its enterprise reporting server, as well as a range of other data sources.

MCC Behavioral Health, a managed behavioral health care provider in Minneapolis, is rolling out MyEureka to as many as 100 users.

"The customization of your own channel and keeping the information in a common portal [is appealing]," said Dirk Holman, director of data warehousing at MCC. "It's an added benefit for the user to be able to customize their documents or links they use frequently."

One improvement Holman is looking for is the ability to perform full-text searches of documents. That's an issue many enterprise portal vendors must still address, said Philip Russom, an analyst at Hurwitz Group Inc., in Framingham, Mass.

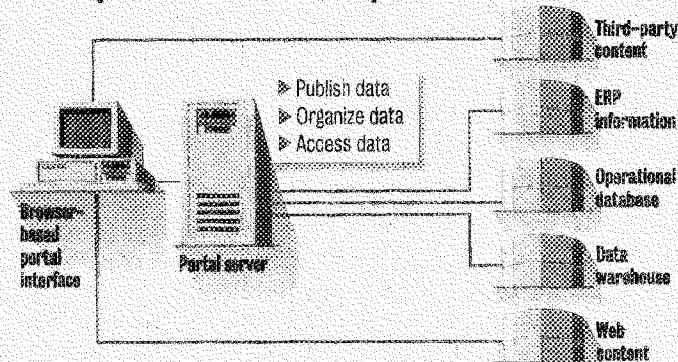
Other developers working on new enterprise portal products include the following:

- Viador, based in San Mateo, Calif., and formerly known as Infospace Inc., plans to ship its E-Portal Suite this quarter.

- Plumtree, of San Francisco, in April will roll out a beta of Version 3.0 of its Corporate Portal Server.

- Actuate, based in San Mateo, plans to deliver an enterprise portal product later this year. ◀

## Enterprise information portals



EIPs give users access to internal corporate data and external information.