TRENDS

Analyst Predicts $1.4B iPhone Windfall

In “Will the iPhone Stop Global Warming” (http://www.strategyanalytics.net/default.aspx?mod=ReportAbstractViewer&a0=3472), Strategy Analytics reports on its examination of the impact of the first 3 million iPhones projected for sales during the next three quarters by AT&T Mobility. The analysis indicates new revenues of US$1.4 billion will develop as a result of the exclusive iPhone deal at AT&T.

“Cutting through all the hype surrounding the iPhone introduction, Strategy Analytics has explored the likely economics of iPhone use to assess the real impact of iPhone on AT&T revenues,” said Harvey Cohen, Strategy Analytics president, in a press release. “While it was clear that iPhone was not going to stop global warming, with all the hype, you might have expected an impact at least as great.”

Strategy Analytics examined revenues by the device manufacturer. With all the uncertainties regarding the iPhone, the report evaluated the potential multibillion dollar impact on AT&T revenues where the iPhone is expected to ramp upward from its first 3 million unit sales in early 2008.

OPEN SOURCE

Sun to Donate Cluster Code to Open Source Community

Sun Microsystems Inc. began donating in June its Solaris clustering code to the open-source community. Since June 2005, when Sun released OpenSolaris, the vendor has made other pieces of its software freely available, including its core Java platform starting in November. Sun hopes opening up its software will enable its products to enter new markets and lead to more customers for its servers, storage, and paid support services.

Sun will release its Solaris Cluster source code—known as Open High Availability Cluster—during the next 18 months through the High Availability Clusters community on the OpenSolaris Web site. Developers can use the code to help build clustered and high-availability applications and services.

Sun will make the clustering source code available under its own open-source license, “CDDL” (Common Development and Distribution License), said Paul Steeves, director of Solaris marketing at Sun. There are no plans to also provide the code under the general public license as Sun did with Java.

Asia Taking Lead in Mobile TV

Asia is set to overtake Europe’s early lead in adopting mobile television broadcasting as Europe struggles to find available airwaves for broadcasts, industry executives at the BroadcastAsia fair in Singapore said in June.

“Out of the regions of the world this represents the most interesting at the moment,” Peter MacAvock, executive director of industry body DVB Project, told Reuters in an interview at the trade fair.

Mobile operators believe that mobile television could encourage users to spend an extra US$7 to $13 per month. This trend is expected to make up for smaller revenues from voice calls.

But executives said business models’ unanimity, a factor that, along with the variety of different technologies, holds back take-up of mobile TV.
INNOVATIONS

Intel Itanium Family Headed for 65 nm

According to Intel, Montvale, the update of the current dual-core Itanium 2 (Montecito), is on track for a launch this year. Intel says the chip will bring higher clock speeds, larger caches, and a faster front-side bus. Tukwila, scheduled for a late 2008 introduction, will take the Itanium family to 65 nm.

Features of Tukwila will include four cores, support for hyperthreading and larger cache size, which will result in about twice the performance capability of Montvale, according to Intel. The CPU will also come with a new function called Double Device Data Correction, which can fix both single and double device memory hard-errors, according to Intel. Additionally, Tukwila will introduce the Common System Interface as a replacement for the front-side bus as well as an integrated memory controller.

Poulson, expected to debut in the 2010 timeframe, will be built on a 32 nm structure and will be based on what Intel calls a “new ultra parallel micro-architecture.”

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

IBM Launches Workbench

IBM unveiled a new metadata management module for its information server platform that provides business and technical users with a control station for accessing and exploring metadata information.

IBM said its new Metadata Workbench module helps to visually depict the inter-relationships between data sources and users, providing data lineage back to source systems including information such as the type of processing performed on the data along the way and impact analysis of any changes on the data to reports, databases, or services.

The Metadata Workbench can collate metadata across third-party data modeling and business intelligence tools and applications. It also includes built-in extensive reporting capabilities.

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IBM announced it has created a variant of the PHP open source programming language—a scripting language—that runs on its mainframe systems equipped with several of the most recent releases of its z/OS operating system. As is the case with its System i proprietary midrange platform, which runs the OS/400 and i5/OS operating system, IBM is using the Unix runtime environment—embedded in its mainframes—to provide the PHP functionality. On the System i machines, Zend Core for i5/OS runs within an AIX runtime environment called the Portable Application Solution Environment.

On the mainframe, PHP is a free feature of the Ported Tools for z/OS, and it is being delivered in a similar manner as on the System i platform. In this case, the PHP engine is running in the z/OS Unix System Services environment within z/OS, which is analogous to PASE.

Ported Tools for z/OS includes the Perl scripting language, as well as the OpenSSH secure shell. The xvfb X server, which emulates window-style environments on Unix and Linux machines, is also part of the toolset and is necessary since there is no native graphical windowing environment for mainframes.

New AMD Chip Will be Available in August

Advanced Micro Devices was to begin selling a new version of the Opteron computer-server chip in August. The chip will run as fast as 2 GHz, said Randy Allen, a vice president in AMD’s server and workstation unit.

Versions of the chip, which Sunnyvale-based AMD calls Barcelona, will appear in computer systems in September, Allen said.

The quad-core product line, code-named Barcelona, gets some of its performance improvements because AMD is using a 65-nm manufacturing process to build the new chips compared with 90 nm for its dual-core chips. In addition, the quad-core devices are being manufactured on a single die of silicon, which allows for faster and easier memory sharing, AMD said.
**Nvidia Unveils Tesla for Supercomputing**

Nvidia announced in June the release of Tesla, a third product line next to the GeForce and Quadro graphics products. The company aims to use Tesla cards and graphics processors in supercomputing.

The core of each Tesla device is a GeForce 8-series GPU as well as the general component layout of the high-end Quadro FX 5600 workstation graphics card with 1.5 Gbytes of memory (in Tesla, it has 1.35 Gbytes).

Nvidia said that one processor (used in the C870 add-in card) is good for a performance of 518 Gflops, two processors will bring 1 Tflops; Nvidia says the Tesla GPU server with four processors will hit 2 Tflops.

Nvidia claims that one GeForce GPU can match the combined performance of 40x86 processors. The C870 is rated at a maximum power consumption of 170 watts and the GPU server at 800 watts.

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**HARDWARE**

**Toshiba HD-DVD Laptops on the Way**

Toshiba expects to release several new laptops with HD-DVD and writable HD-DVD drives this fall. The Satellite P205 and X205 will have HD-DVD drives, and the Qosmio F45 and G45 will have an option for a writable HD-DVD that can record as much as 30 Gbytes of data onto a single HD-DVD recordable disc. All the notebooks, except for the F45, will have 17-inch screens.

The Qosmio F45 will be slightly smaller with a 15.4-inch screen.

All notebooks will have an HDMI output port that will display 1080-pixel resolutions. The Qosmio G45 will also have 1080-pixel output.

Toshiba estimates the Satellite and Qosmio notebooks will sell for between US$1450 and $3200.

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**Ultra-Definition Technology Debuts**

At June’s InfoComm audio/video trade show in Anaheim, Calif., a new company called Mersive debuted a new technology that it’s calling “ultra definition”.

Mersive, which has a background mostly rooted in military simulation applications, has created technology that the company claims can synchronize more than a dozen projection screens together and display images and video with as much as 14 times the amount of pixels of regular HD screens, or 27 million pixels.

At the company’s booth, it showed off a screen 26 feet wide with an image resolution that observers said was cleaner than that of a movie theater.

Mersive’s product is actually a server, titled the Mersive Sol server, that uses a proprietary software application to enable the display functionality. The server costs US$7,500 and a $5,000 license fee is tacked on to each projector used in the project. So the total cost of the display projector at the trade show, which uses 15 projectors, would cost around $82,000. The company said that type of application is just in prototype form now.
SECURITY

Ajax Applications in Web 2.0 Vulnerable

Security researchers have found what they say is an entirely new kind of Web-based attack, and it only targets the Ajax applications that are popular in Web 2.0.

Fortify Software, which said it discovered the new class of vulnerability and has named it “JavaScript hijacking,” said that almost all the major Ajax toolkits have been found vulnerable.

“JavaScript hijacking allows an unauthorized attacker to read sensitive data from a vulnerable application using a technique similar to the one commonly used to create mash-ups,” Chess wrote in a white paper published in June.

Ajax is a way of designing Web applications where data is transferred to and from the Web site in the background of the page, without the need for a full page refresh when the user interacts with it. It gives Web applications the feel of desktop applications, and is used in applications such as Gmail.

By exploiting JavaScript hijacking vulnerabilities, attackers would be able to, for example, retrieve email from a victim’s Gmail inbox, or gain access to any data that could be sent them via an Ajax application.

While Ajax stands for Asynchronous JavaScript and XML, it’s entirely possible to use the method without using XML as the transport. You could use HTML, plaintext or, indeed, JavaScript.

Eclipse Releases Developers Tools

The Eclipse Foundation began in June the annual coordinated release of new versions of its 21 open-source projects. The updates include new runtime technology for creating server applications and tools for improving collaboration, according to the foundation.

The release, which Eclipse calls Europa, includes 17 million lines of code and contributions from more than 310 open-source developers in 19 countries.

The code became available on 29 June.
Vendor Says Quicken Has Backdoor

A Moscow-based password-recovery vendor in June accused Intuit Inc. of hiding a backdoor in its popular Quicken personal finance program that gives it access to users’ data files.

Intuit said that although there is a way to unlock Quicken’s encrypted data, it’s only used by the company’s support team to help customers who have forgotten their passwords.

In a statement released in June, Elcomsoft Co. Ltd., a Russian maker of password-recovery tools, said Quicken versions since 2003 have used strong encryption designed to foil hackers. But those editions also have a backdoor that unlocks the encryption with the 512-bit RSA key that Intuit controls.

“It is very unlikely that a casual hacker could have broken into Quicken’s password protection regimen,” Vladimir Katalov, Elcomsoft’s CEO, said in the statement. “(We) needed to use advanced decryption technology to uncover Intuit’s undocumented and well-hidden backdoor, and to successfully perform a factorization of their 512-bit RSA key.”

Elcomsoft then theorized that Intuit added the backdoor so law enforcement and other authorities, from the US Internal Revenue Service to the FBI, could open password-protected Quicken files. “Unfortunately, the existence of such a backdoor and key creates a vulnerability that might leave millions of Quicken users with compromised bank account data, credit card numbers, and income information,” Elcomsoft charged.

Harry Pforzheimer, who heads Intuit’s communications, dismissed the idea. “We certainly do not design any of our products with any access for any agency,” Pforzheimer said in a statement. “If any government agency wanted to get into a Quicken file, they have lots of other ways of doing it.”

Pforzheimer acknowledged that there is a way to access encrypted Quicken files without a password, but that the ability is hardly secret. “It’s for Quicken users who have forgotten their passwords—and only done when they call customer service or support.”

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