DEC, National Semiconductor team up

National Semiconductor and Digital Equipment Corp. have signed an agreement to jointly develop National Semiconductor's factory automation software, Project Odyssey.

The software will be used to control automated semiconductor plants. Using the Semiconductor Equipment and Material Institute's equipment communication protocol, SECS, the software will allow factory equipment, PDP-11 minicomputers, and VAX mainframes to communicate with each other and run the factory floor. With SECS, the turnaround time in assembly can be reduced from two and a half weeks to 15 hours, National Semiconductor said.

The first development was UniSecs, a program that communicates SECS protocol from a PDP-11 to the semiconductor factory equipment. UniSecs can be used in fabrication applications, as well as in assembly operations.

Micro D, First Software to merge

A wholly owned subsidiary of the Santa Ana, California, hardware distributing firm Micro D will merge with First Software, a software marketer based in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The tax-free merger will be based on the issuance of about four million additional shares of Micro D stock to First Software's shareholders in return for all shares of First Software stock. Micro D now has about 6.7 million outstanding shares of common stock.

The new company's headquarters will probably be moved to the East Coast, since most of the executives live there, Micro D said. The merger should result in expanded product line and in more efficient service.

Micro D has distribution outlets in Dallas, Texas; Columbia, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; and San Francisco, California. There are no plans to change these locations.

Two firms to develop program automation

The international accounting and management firm Arthur Young & Co. has joined with Database Design to develop integrated software tools that will automate the automation process.

Arthur Young & Co., headquartered in New York, will provide the management consulting expertise for the project, while the Ann Arbor, Michigan-based Database Design will develop the software that is expected to automatically generate programming code from a system analyst's diagrams.

The first three planned tools will automate the creation and maintenance of data-flow, hierarchy, and entity-relationship diagrams. Systems analysts will use mouse-driven graphics on personal computers to command the software.

"These tools are the first step in eliminating the manual drudgery and errors that are inherent to current system design," said Richard Welsh, managing director of Arthur Young's Information Technology Group.

One user of this computer-aided design and programming technology will be Arthur Young & Co. itself. The company plans to use the resulting tools in systems design work for its clients.

College program

UNIRAS, a graphics software supplier, announced a new university discount program. The program is meant primarily to make UNIRAS applications libraries, interactive programs, and graphics utilities available to computer science departments at lower prices.

However, the company is also seeking proposals for the use of its software in graduate research. Selected applicants will receive a free copy of the pertinent programs. UNIRAS said this aspect of the program would primarily benefit those engaged in geological, geophysical, and geographic research.

For information, contact UNIRAS University Marketing Program, 50 Mall Rd., Ste. 212, Burlington, MA 01803; (617) 272-7260.

MDS, Information Resources combine

Information Resources, a marketing data collector, has merged with Management Decision Systems, a marketing analysis and modeling software developer.

The resulting company, still called Information Resources, hopes the combination of its data collection know-how with MDS's data analysis and product performance forecasting ability will attract marketers.

In the merger, all outstanding shares of MDS common stock were converted into about one million shares of Information Resources common stock valued at roughly $26 million. Information Resources also assumed obligations under existing MDS stock-option programs, which will cost the company $4.3 million when fully vested.

Career tracks

Higher Order Software, a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based firm that designs and markets automated software development systems, has named Edward J. Watson president and chief executive officer. Watson had been president and CEO of TSI International, a Wilton, Connecticut-based subsidiary of Dun & Bradstreet Corp. Watson succeeds Margaret H. Hamilton, a cofounder of Higher Order. She is now chairman of the board.

Lifetree Software, a Monterey, California, word-processor developer, has promoted Peter Pirner to president of the company. He had been executive vice president and chief operating officer at Lifetree. Camilo Wilson, the company's founder, retains his CEO position and will now spend more time on research and development.

Digital Sound Corp. appointed Leland W. Kirchhoff director of software development for the Santa Barbara, California-based designer and marketer of audio systems for office automation and telecommunications. He left a position at AT&T Bell Laboratories in Naperville, Illinois.