

PeopleSoft Watch

Supposedly the European Commission, which put its own review of the proposed Oracle-PeopleSoft merger on a peg while a US court pondered the matter, is going to docilely follow the court's decision and not try to block the takeover, according to the Financial Times.

The paper said competition commission Mario Monti, the guy who blocked the US-approved GE-Honeywell deal, raising the hackles of the American regulators, will announce the decision before he retires at the end of October.

And since the clock is about to run out for the Justice Department to decide if it's going to appeal its devastating loss in the court – and it hasn't been heard from – one gathers it's going to drop its objections, clearing the way for Oracle to go mano a mano with PeopleSoft and rip away its defenses.

Late Thursday Oracle extended its \$7.7 billion tender offer for the twelfth time till October 8. It was set to expire today, September 24. It said it had collected 23.8 million shares, up fivefold since mid-July.

It's also gotten the California court due to start hearing PeopleSoft's multibillion-dollar "they hurt our business" suit against Oracle on November 1 to push the thing into next year so it can do more discovery.

PeopleSoft appeared to play to Oracle's hand Thursday when it bragged that with a week still left in the quarter, it had exceeded Oracle's own, poor benighted, \$69 million in fiscal Q1 application license revenues, the very reason why it wants PeopleSoft so bad.

PeopleSoft, which has claimed its year has been impacted by Oracle's quest, has not provided guidance for the third quarter and had nothing more to say.

Mainsoft Narrows the .NET/J2EE Divide

Mainsoft is about due to come out with Visual MainWin for the J2EE Platform 1.5.

The practically heretical stuff now supports single code development across the .NET and J2EE platforms.

It also rehosts ASP.NET elements from the Infragestics NetAdvantage J2EE presentation layer toolset so it'll be easier for Microsoft developers to churn out J2EE enterprise apps using the thing's designer and style presets and includes a VS-integrated Project Conversion Tool to guide ports of .NET

code to J2EE platform.

MainWin, you'll remember, makes it possible to develop J2EE widgetry from inside the Visual Studio.NET Framework without ever touching the decidedly complex Java language.

Mainsoft basically made the monoglot Java understand C Sharp and VB.NET.

Woolsworths SA – yes, Virginia, there's still a Woolsworths – uses MainWin and claims it pared 85% off its development costs using its Microsoft skills to create a business-critical J2EE data monitoring and alerting system. ♦

Stratus Makes Over Entry-Level

Stratus is trying to push fault tolerance downstream with a new so-called "cluster buster" Xeon-based entry-level 5Nines server priced to start at \$10,000 in 100-unit volumes, a price point it says "blows away" Dell clusters.

The thing is called the W Series 2300 and runs Windows 2003 Standard Edition. Stratus describes the box as a "radically different design" that's 22% smaller and 63% lighter than the company's previous entry-level.

Two physically identical servers reside side-by-side on the same printed circuit board, run in lockstep and function as one logical server. It's the first Stratus design that would require planned downtime to fix if something inside the chassis fails. Figure 30-40 minutes. Of course, it would failover meantime. Its external SATA drives are hot-pluggable.

It's also the first Stratus box to use a remote access adaptor called a Virtual Technician Module that has its own power and network connections. It's the company's next-generation out-of-band system management processor that allows for remote troubleshooting and remediation.

Stratus is positioning it for remote locations because it offers lights-out management and as a replacement for low-end clusters because it offers a single point of failure and functions either as a standby server or high-end simplex server without their downtime. It says clusters don't lend themselves to distributed computing and are difficult to deploy, manage and maintain. ♦

Microsoft Board To Shrink

William Reed Jr., the former chairman of the Simpson Investment Company, is going to retire from Microsoft's board at the shareholders meeting in November. Microsoft said he wanted to limit his business commitments and spend more time on personal matters. He's been on the board since 1987 and will not be replaced. The Microsoft board will top out at nine people. Charles Noski, Northrop Grumman's CFO and the former vice-chairman of AT&T, will replace Reed as chairman of the audit committee. Ann McLaughlin Korologos, chairman emeritus of the Aspen Institute, will join the audit committee. ♦