

Interface development

DataViews' real-time interface

Computerized monitoring and real-world events have progressed from data feeds displayed as tables of numbers to active graphical representations, such as patterns of stock prices. Sometimes there's nothing like seeing things for yourself, as they happen.

V.I. Corp., (North Hampton, MA) maker of an X Window-based interface-development system specializing in graphical displays of user-defined operations in real time, has gone this extra step in its latest release of DataViews.

DataViews' animated interface uses elements such as buttons or dials, along with real-time data-output displays, such as graphs and gauges, that allow for accurate monitoring of an activity. To integrate the live-video-feed capability, V.I. Corp. worked closely with Parallax Graphics (Santa Clara, CA), which develops workstation video cards.

In addition, the company announced the release of its GUI-builder DVX-Designer 3.0, a product that integrates the X-Designer 3.0 Motif interface development system with DataViews.

DataViews is basically two tools. The first, DV-Draw, is a point-and-click drawing editor for creating user-interface screens. The second, DV-Tools, is a library for manipulating the displays created with DV-Draw. DV-Tools also lets users prototype images and connect behavior with objects. Both DataViews and DVX-Designer have been modified to use

a new tool from V.I. called MOD (Motif Object Dynamics) that lets developers encapsulate animated graphics in a Motif widget. MOD is what's new in DataViews 9.5.

Preventing traffic jams

DataViews 9.5 has been selected by the Texas Transportation Institute to build real-time graphical interfaces for a computerized traffic-management system for the Texas Department of Transportation in Houston, which will incorporate live video feeds from cameras installed throughout the city.

The Computerized Traffic Management System, scheduled for completion in 1996, is designed to reduce traffic congestion by allowing officials to respond to incidents and alert commuters of alternate routes more quickly.

DVX's capabilities

DVX-Designer's live graphical displays can play a part in other real-life applications, such as monitoring certain weather patterns. Entergy Operations Inc., (Jackson, MS) which manages all of Entergy Corp.'s nuclear facilities, is using DVX-Designer 2.0 to build Motif interfaces that display animated, real-time weather data at its Grand Gulf Nuclear Station in Port Gibson, MI. The Grand Gulf Nuclear Station is operated by Entergy Operations and is the largest boiling-water reactor in the U.S., employing

over 1,000 people.

Entergy Operations has developed X-compliant Motif interfaces that graphically monitor lightning storms as they approach the nuclear facility, potentially saving millions of dollars by preventing unnecessary plant shut-downs. "We are now evaluating DVX-Designer 3.0 to further reduce development time for building interfaces that monitor real-time plant processes in addition to weather data," said Chris Birch, a technical specialist at the Grand Gulf plant.

V.I. Corp. released its first version of DataViews in 1986. The current version runs on 20 operating systems, including Digital's Ultrix 4.2 and OSF/1, SunOS 4.1, Solaris 2.1, Silicon Graphics' IRIX 4.0.1, and HP-UX.

DataViews 9.5 is available now and is sold to value-added resellers (VARs), systems integrators, and users. V.I. Corp. sells the DVX-Designer 3.0 developers license for \$3,500. It requires DataViews 9.5, which sells for \$17,700.

V.I. Corp., 47 Pleasant St., Northampton, MA 01060, 413-586-4144.

— Aubrey McAuley

DEC focus

Digital's mission-critical agenda

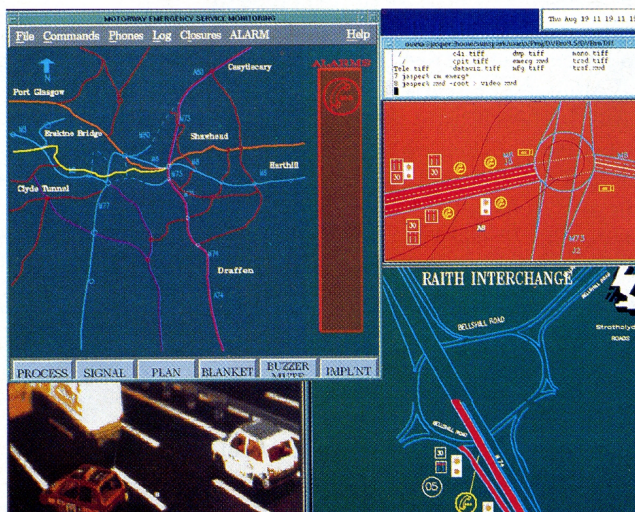
In a recent February announcement that included replacements in Digital's Alpha AXP workstation line, the Maynard, MA-based giant echoed its October 1993 extravaganza by rolling out a cartload of products and services to "integrate and manage ... computing environments," Digital said.

The October 1993 announcement included the addition of two new workstations: the Alpha AXP models 600 and 800, the latter of which was expected to eradicate the 500. Andy Feit, marketing manager of Alpha workstation and servers, said the 500 is actually alive and well, mainly because the 800 is too powerful to export by government standards. "In Vietnam and Korea, the 500 is our high end," he said.

Included in Digital's February 8 gala were two new workstations, the latest additions to its Alpha 3000 family: the model 300LX and the model 300X.

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DataViews 9.5 from V.I. Corp. is an interface-development system that incorporates live-video-feed capabilities. The Texas Department of Transportation will use it to monitor traffic.



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Entry-level 300LX AXP

Like the October rollouts, these February newcomers will replace their predecessors. The entry-level 125-MHz model 300LX replaces the 100-MHz 300L. The price for the LX with new graphics, two

slots for expansion, a 16-inch color monitor, and more disk space, dips to \$5,295 compared to \$6,495 for its predecessor. Feit said the 300LX, an entry-level graphics machine, goes after the \$5,000 workstation range, butting heads with Sun's SPARCstation LX and Hewlett-Packard's newly announced 712/60. These work-

stations fit in the same price category, but Feit pointed out that 125 MHz is a pretty high clock rate for an entry-level graphics machine and stressed the actual capabilities as well as the pace. "The high color resolution sets it apart from the competition," he said.

Model 300X

The new model 300X AXP will bump the 150-MHz model 300 from the product line. The old 300 cost \$12,295 for a 19-inch color monitor and a 1-gigabyte disk; the new 300X tops its predecessor with 175-MHz speeds and a lower price tag — \$10,495. Feit said it is targeted at Silicon Graphics' Indy customer base as well as Sun's SPARCstation 10/40 market. He said Digital was able to increase the disk space and drop the price on separate components such as color monitors: "Those decreases add up."

Software enhancements include Digital's RTR (Reliable Transaction Router) version 3.0 for OSF/1. RTR, which previously ran only on Digital's proprietary OpenVMS operating system, is a software tool for mission-critical apps in which data and transaction integration are top priority. Some examples Digital gave are stock exchange networks, telecommunications, and transportation applications, all areas to which "customers need continuous access," said William Lyons, product business manager. A specific customer is the Polish State Railways, which has 36 sites with an Oracle database, Lyons said.

When a network or application fails, RTR prevents corporate disasters such as a service interruption or a transaction loss by employing reroute, replay, or recover techniques. RTR starts at \$300 for clients and \$8,000 for servers.

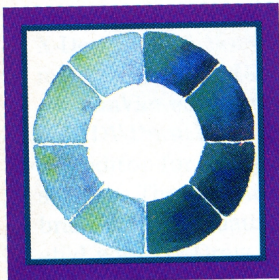
A 'new breed' of tool

For two years, Forte Software (Oakland, CA) has been working with Digital building a new product called Forte, a development and runtime system for creating mission-critical apps. Most first-generation client/server tools run the application on its native platform; apps developed with Forte are independent of the platform, OS, network, GUI, and database. Generated applications are partitioned into independent components so different parts of them can run on different hardware and software architec-

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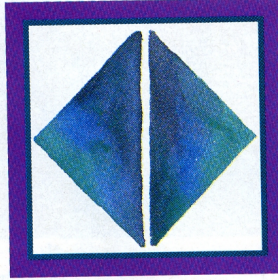
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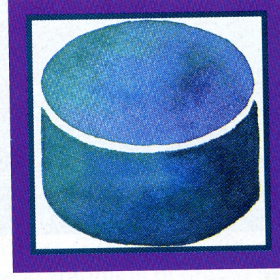
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tures without custom programming.

Forte Product Manager Lance Simon, who works out of Forte's Oakland office, characterized Forte as "a new breed of tool" because it is the first that builds a client interface as well as server-based applications, he said. Customers include

people building customer service, telecommunications, financial service, and health-care applications.

"What these things have in common is a need to adapt to an architecture to integrate existing applications," Simon said. In order to reach others' applications, there must be a middleman to do

the legwork, precisely the job of Digital's Object Broker, which is "tightly integrated" with Forte.

A Forte Starter System, which includes licenses for 5 concurrent development clients, 1 development server, 10 concurrent clients, 1 runtime server, plus documentation, costs \$75,000 and will be available in June of this year. Forte supports Motif on Digital's own OpenVMS and OSF/1, and on HP, IBM, and Sun systems. It also supports databases from Digital's in-house Rdb, to Oracle and Sybase.

Relational database, more

Digital Rdb (its relational database) has been ported to OSF/1 from OpenVMS 6.0. A high-capacity, SQL-based (structured query language) system, it is designed for "very large" business databases. Digital said it is keeping up with industry developments by adding to Rdb the capability of handling "very large" objects, such as imaging and full-motion video. Pricing starts at \$650 per concurrent user. Like Forte, shipments of Rdb begin in June 1994.

Other Digital news included an upgrade of COHESIONworX, software that manages complex development projects. Also new is version 3.0 of Multi-Level Security Plus (MLS+), a Unix operating system for Alpha with added security capabilities (\$2,995) scheduled to ship this spring. Through June, COHESIONworX costs \$1,548. It now ships on SunOS and will run on Hewlett-Packard machines this month. An extended version called COHESION Team/SEE costs \$5,500, runs on Digital and SunOS, and is shipping now.

— Shalini Chatterjee



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