NEWS / NETWORKING

PIPELINE

SHIPPING

Cabletron ships FDDI cards for PCs, Macs

Cabletron Systems Inc. is shipping a line of high-performance FDDI network interface cards for PC and Macintosh computers. The FDDI DNI cards offer users a standards-based 100Mb-per-second solution and are available for EISA, S-Bus, and Nu-Bus. Pricing ranges from $1,495 to $1,995. (603) 332-9400.

The AG Group is now shipping IP and OSI protocol decoder software upgrades for its Macintosh-based packet analysis software. The free upgrades to EtherPeek, TokenPeek, and LocalPeek analysis software include support for the new Macintosh Quadra AV's built-in interface, as well as the new 7-inch DCA MacIRMAtrac Token Ring adapters. The Peek line is priced from $495 to $995 depending on network topology. (510) 937-7900.

Notis Systems Inc. will ship next month a Windows-based Internet connectivity package. WinGopher Complete, priced at $129, includes sound and video viewer software to render multimedia files; communications software; third-party toll-free access numbers; and search software. (800) 556-6847.

PRICE CUTS

Artisoft cuts Ethernet adapter card prices

Artisoft Inc. has reduced the prices of many of its Ethernet adapters, including its Eagle Technology and NodeRunner/SI network adapter cards. The NE1000 is now available for $114 or $499 for a five-pack. The NodeRunner/SI 2000/C is now priced at $124 or $574 for a five-pack. (800) 233-5564.

IN DEVELOPMENT

Sniffer tool to support both Fast Ethernets

Network General Corp.'s Sniffer network analysis tool will be developed for both implementations of Fast Ethernet. Working jointly with Grand Junction Networks, Sniffer will be available late this year for Grand Junction's Fast Ethernet implementation and at a later date for the competing 100BaseVG Fast Ethernet. Running on a PC, Sniffer monitors networks and traffic to point out potential and actual problems to network administrators. The first version is expected to cost between $15,000 and $18,000. (800) 846-6601.

HP AdvanceStack hubs cut cost of building workgroups

BY BOB WALLACE

Hewlett-Packard Co. this month begins shipping a line of intelligent stackable hubs that simplify network design and management while lessening the need for low-end bridges and routers.

The AdvanceStack line includes three 10Base-T hubs: a 12-port unit that costs $1,079, a 24-port unit that costs $1,699, and a 48-port unit for $2,899. Prices include a Microsoft Windows-based network management application.

AdvanceStack hubs can be linked over a distance of 600 feet — with unshielded twisted-pair wire or coaxial cable. It will be equipped to support as-yet unspecified routing capabilities.

"Hewlett-Packard's hubs can be located on different floors and in different buildings, which means that users don't need bridges or routers to create several physical subnets," said Paul Zagaeski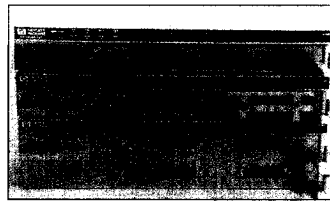, an analyst with Info-Corp., a Westboro, Mass., consultancy. "This is a pretty impressive advancement in stackable hubs."

The 10Base-T hubs will initially support a 10Mb-per-second (Mbps) shared bandwidth backplane. It will be enhanced to support 10Mbps and 100Mbps LAN switching, said Brice Clark, network planning manager for HP's Roseville Networks Division.

The hubs are manageable via a proprietary Windows-based application from HP that enables managers to configure, monitor, and troubleshoot a stack; and add-in SNMP modules for linking the hubs to SMNP-based management systems such as HP OpenView.

The AdvanceStack hubs use Intel Corp.'s i960 RISC processors and come with 1MB of RAM and 256KB of Flash EPROM, which enables managers to distribute software upgrades across networks. The hubs have an expansion slot that can house management, bridg-

HP's AdvanceStack stackable hubs start at about $1,000.

ing, or routing modules.

The AdvanceStack line will replace HP's 24- and 48-port EtherTwist hubs and will drop prices on the 12-port EtherTwist hub to roughly $1,295.

HP, in Roseville, Calif., is at (800) 533-1333.

Telebit hubs offer support for PCs, LANs

Telebit Corp. in April will ship remote office devices that let users support up to four LANs and eight stand-alone users.

The PN hubs support LANs and PCs via twisted pair, eliminating the need for low-end hubs at branch sites to hook all users into a WAN, said Paul DePond, Telebit's vice president of marketing.

A PN1 Hub with one WAN port and an internal modem costs $3,399; a PN2 Hub with two WAN ports, but no modem, costs $2,999. The PN4 Hub with four WAN ports costs $3,699.

They all handle Internet Protocol (IP), Novell Inc.'s IPX, and AppleTalk Phase 2 protocols. The products can use asynchronous dial-up, switched 56Kb per second (Kbps) and 64Kbps, ISDN, frame relay, and leased links.

For security, the hubs support passwords and identification codes that change every minute on special cards held by end-users. The hubs are also manageable via SNMP.

Telebit, in Chelmsford, Mass., is at (508) 441-2181.

— Bob Wallace

RadioMail users to get fax, third-party services

PDAs to send radio 'postcards'

BY SHAWN WILLETT

RadioMail Corp.'s two-way wireless messaging service will be getting wider airplay as the company this week begins to add more services and bundles it with more portable machines.

Starting now, RadioMail users can send messages as faxes.

"This is for people who need to communicate with non-RadioMail or non-Internet users," said Ed Forman, vice president of marketing for the San Mateo, Calif.-based firm. Faxes cost $.99 per page.

For users who want to keep in touch with current events, RadioMail has contracted with a third-party company to make the latest news headlines available as messages. Another service in the works downloads street directions, and another lets users dial up through a regular phone to retrieve their RadioMail messages. All services will be rolled out in the next few months, according to Forman.

The company wasn't sure if there would be a supplemental charge for the services on top of the $89 monthly charge for unlimited messaging.

RadioMail also will soon expand beyond the DOS and HP 100LX platforms.

Interfaces to accept and send RadioMail messages on Macintosh, Windows, MagicCap, and Newton operating systems will be available by the end of March. The company has also released the RadioMail API, so third parties can build their own software interfaces.

In addition, Motorola's new Envoy personal digital assistants (PDAs), which run the MagicCap operating system, will include software to send messages via RadioMail in the form of a "RadioMail stamp" that is affixed to "postcards."

Dell Computer Corp. is also including RadioMail messaging software on its recently announced Latitude machines. However, users must buy a wireless modem separately. RadioMail works over Ardis and RAM Mobile Data wireless networks.

RadioMail is at (415) 286-7800.

MHS to get MS Mail front end

BY SHAWN WILLETT

Novell Inc. and Microsoft Corp. have begun shipping a driver that lets Microsoft Mail users become clients on a NetWare Message Handling Service (MHS) back-end server.

Depending on how you look at it, the driver either gives Microsoft Mail users a robust, enterprise-level messaging back end, or gives networks with the MHS engine a popular, easy-to-use front end. It is free for download from NetWire on CompuServe.

Unlike gateways, which pass messages between different E-mail systems through the server, the driver sits on the client, effectively transforming MS Mail into a native MHS mail product. "We do all the format and protocol conversion on the client," said Manoj Goel, product marketing manager for MHS at Novell.

The driver, which is the first shipped for a non-MHS package, was jointly developed by Novell and Microsoft.

The product is crucial for companies that have MS Mail and large numbers of MHS Mail front ends, such as Beyond Mail or Da Vinci eMail, because it gives seamless connectivity between the systems.

Users also say the product lets them leverage the wide-area messaging capabilities of MHS.

"Microsoft Mail uses NetBIOS broadcasts to go over a wide area, which can flood a system," said Mark Myers, network analyst at Dreyers Grand Ice Cream, in Oakland, Calif. "MHS is more efficient at messaging between two NetWare servers."

Myers said his company is using MS Mail as a front end because the MIS department prefers the interface and because licenses are included in Microsoft Office, which the company uses.

For its part, Microsoft will upgrade the capabilities of its back-end messaging engine when it ships its enterprise messaging server later this year.

However, the driver is part of Microsoft's strategy of making MS Mail a strong client, no matter what the back end is, according to Bill Sornsin, product manager for MS Mail. "To put this in perspective, we now have 11 drivers for different back ends," Sornsin said. "This driver is important for corporate users who want to standardize on the MS Mail front end."