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Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 1996 12:59 PM
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Subject: DAD 3 year plan

I thought this presentation was very well done. The format was great - forcing each product group to comment of the chosen areas worked very well. Despite the comment below I think this may be the best 3 year plan presentation I have been at.

It was more of a 2 year plan than a 3 year plan but that is true of most of our "3 year" plans.

Upcoming meetings

I am looking forward to the upcoming meetings:

Text: More functionality will be in the OS and this makes it tricky to make sure WORD gets to add the business value we need and that we are coordinated. TEXT and FORMS3 are likely to have a very tight relationship - at least that is why they want the text experts to be part of Bob's group. Part of the reason I care so much about text is that you can eliminate a lot of international work by sharing common text components.

MAC: I am thinking about this a lot. I would like to have a lot of data before the meeting. What countries is the Mac strong in? What has been the trend of our sales? Somehow I think we may need to develop a partnership with Apple. This may sound strange but we may want to go to Apple when our Mac stuff is demonstrable and try to pitch them on a Gateway type deal for their more powerful machines. The Mac situation is very tough with them working against us by not cooperating and bundling Clarisworks. There is a conflict for us in that they will want to promote Mac in a bunch of countries where we have basically abandoned the Mac. Its a paradox that even as the Mac has weakened our systems commitment to the Mac is higher than ever because we are trying to win their multimedia ISVs by having good Mac runtimes and we have decided the Internet explorer has to be strong on the MAC. I will assume that our work for 97 is so far along there is no doubt we will continue and ship the products. The real question is for 98 where doing nothing, doing what we do now and doing something special where we fork off and perhaps work closely with Apple are all serious possibilities. I know at some point we will want to meet with Spindler.

Content Management: I hope there is a document for me to get educated from before the meeting trying to describe what the different groups are doing.

NLP/NLG: We should get this scheduled. These investments are critical to the future of Word.

Overall reaction

I felt like architectural reform took too much of a back seat. The whole way we do the user interface/macro hooks for our current products is a real problem. When wil SDM die? Redoing 400 dialogs - how hard can it be if we have the right controls for the dialogs? In the Excel presentation they said they have to tackle printing because we don't have an architecture to share this. I didn't hear anything about parallel reform efforts. I am quite concerned we aren't doing enough to clean things up. Even reentrancy people didn't know what we plan to do.

I personally believe we need a DEEP DEEP DEEP unification of publisher, Word and Powerpoint. While we would still have the special user interfaces I feel the underlying code should be 90% the same. Front page publisher should also be a part of this. This kind of investment that leads to eventual simplification requires some guts to do bit I feel strongly we need to do it.

I think the relationship of the Operating system and the applications needs more work. I don't blame DAD for not having a clear plan here since the first step is for us to provide a clearer picture about the OS. At a high level the merger of the shell, explorer, help and mail front end into a single entity is going to happen for the 97 products. The 96 Internet step up kit will take a big step in that direction. The whole timing and features of NTOFS is unclear but in the next 45 days we will get this clarified. **Having applications take advantage of the OS can help sell applications.** One area DAD should champion is what it would mean for the OS to embrace DOCFILE. Lets say that the OS allowed file allocation/deallocation to be done in the middle of a file. This would move the storage management code in DOCFILE down into the OS in a good way. The smart people in DAD should help us set our OS priorities - this is one benefit of things being up in the air right now.

Speed: The only big speed thing that I saw was the Excel perfect recalculation effort. Ages ago we had more sophisticated precaching of display bitmaps for Word than we have today. I think speed got a lot of lipservice but very little actual design ideas for cool speed were presented. Using idle time is one big area. Better algorithms is another. We need to remind ourselves where speed can count. What about having too many DLLs and a bunch of wasted memory for entry point

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descriptions? Lets really dig thru all the crap and memory and question all

User interface: I am worried that we don't have a clear plan to reduce the number of commands in the default UI. Each product should look at unification, use of popups or any clever idea to reduce commands. This should be part of our reform. I insist we need a mechanism for modeless tight dialog boxes like Infobox. I admit there is a tough tradeoff here between upgrading pain and clean up which will be tricky to balance. There is an issue of whether command bars are used by the shell which would help the Office working set. We need a UI radical like Tandy has been. He still has lots of proposals that aren't really being given much attention so he isn't coming up with more and has moved his focus elsewhere. UI needs a troublemaker like this somewhere in the system or it just gets more and more overloaded. I didn't see anything about the use of sound - I am not sure what we are thinking about that. One thing I believe in is tracking what commands a user has used and then offering to help them out based on looking at the patterns - organizing menus etc.. I think we need to go back and get the data on which commands are used how often. I think we don't have this data in our heads and therefore our designs don't reflect an understanding of frequency of use.

Brain trust: Has DAD sat down with "unusual" thinkers like Yuval (internal), or Lampson (internal) or Seybold (external) or a few others to get their "wildest" ideas about where we should go in the next three years? I would like someone to do this. One good idea would make it very worthwhile.

Competition

I thought the structure here was good - classic competition and newworld competition.

It is so hard to predict the future course of these competitors.

I do think that our document formats and learning our tools will become a kind of "standard" if we can maintain our share - this should reflect itself overtime in training classes, temp help offering, document interchange, proficiency tests.. Marketing needs to think how we might both highlight and accelerate these trends.

LOTUS: For 97 we have to articulate why our unstructured multiuser thing is great. I am still pushing Oprah to do what they can with conferencing you - I don't see why they can't deliver on the demo we did at Internet day without applications hooks. In 98 we need to go overboard on team stuff so that Lotus can't keep saying they are better here. I still don't feel like I know where Lotus sells as well as I would like to. I want infobox equivalence. Lotus will try and set the standard for Internet scheduling which systems needs to help is avoid. I wonder what is happening to the resources they apply to Smartsuite development - are they a lot more efficient than we are? We should be trying to hire from them and Novell. I can't believe Wordpro is getting such a positive response despite the size. One paradox I want development to consider deeply for me: Since Lotus and Novell don't have LEGO why aren't their 32bit applications even fatter and slower than they are?

Novell: We need to overachieve in the LEGAL market both in technology and marketing. We need to turn around their standard position. If the person who buys Wordperfect is not someone who has a strong patent position then they will not be able to keep cloning us the way they have been. We can discuss this more in the STAR Division meeting that is scheduled with our legal department. Hotspots sound interesting. We will get to know all their headcount numbers as part of the transfer. May be a ripe time to send the message that our support is the best.

Clarisworks: Basically we need to find a way to go after the consumer market which Office doesn't do very well in today and we need to avoid Claris coming into the non-consumer market. We will want to find a way to bring our consumer productivity titles into closer marketing and technical cooperation to aid in this effort.

Annuity (competing with ourselves). I still think there will be more that the products need to do to help with this.

Just systems: Glad to see the focus we have on this.

Other competition: Star division. Internet controls. Netscape/Notes. Cheap Korean software.

Products

Word.

I think as part of merging Word and Publisher we should not only have publisher as a standalone SKU with far more compatibility for a word user but also that we should have an addon for high end publishing that hooks into word or ships as an integrated SKU. This may sound crazy but I think it would be worthwhile and the marginal cost would be fairly low. This is a radical idea that I can be talked out of but it might make sense.

I think Word is a place where radical speed things can be considered like precaching bit maps.

I was pleased to see the focus on trying out voice for 98 and the focus on Natural language.

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Excel

I really like Smartobjects a lot. Its a hard feature to do but very worthwhile. I was more excited about this plan than I expected to be.

Someone should send me another copy of Lewis's piece of database and spreadsheet. I have some thoughts in this area.

I look forward to a mapping proposal. The generic interface to relate data to "picture elements" is exactly the thing Aaron Getz and I tried to promote ages and ages ago. If done right it can be a major boon to 3rd parties more than I think we currently appreciate. I am more a fan of the power of this generic interface than I am specifically a map lover but I think with what consumer is doing maybe we should do more with maps. A lot of my scenarios relate to drawing packages which support structure for sitting layout, architectural plans, wire diagrams etc.. — this is a big big area which no one has done the right thing. Maybe we should do it with our draw package as well as working with 3rd parties. I hope I am being clear here because it is a key area!

Powerpoint

I sent mail to Tom Firman to make sure he thinks through how he related to Powerpoint.

REN

The post97 thing is less clear to me than I would like. Some tough issues about how things relate to each other.

Project & Team manager

The end of 96 release sounds great. Opening up the data storage sounds like a good plan.

I am enthused to have us ship team manager. I think scheduling over the Internet is a bigger issue for Ren (outlook) and these products than we currently appreciate.

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