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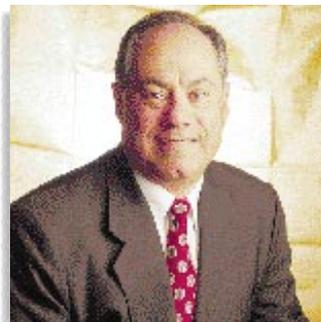
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From the Director

A Word from Our Executive Director

Open on Many Fronts



In various ways, UniForum '96 demonstrated that the concept of open systems is now an accepted part of the computing mainstream. More than that, it is a requirement that users insist upon as they try to ensure that their application solutions will last and run on platforms they can choose on the basis of the best price and performance.

Without getting too fine in the definition, let's say that *openness* includes portability of applications based on standards not controlled by only one vendor and interoperability among different types of hardware and software. These goals are so widely desired that today every vendor, it seems, promises to provide them. In reality, of course, it is not so simple.

The UniForum Association has championed the cause of open systems for 15 years. Originally our efforts centered around specifications for the Unix operating system (and we remain concerned with them today). This is no coincidence. The broader open systems movement grew out of the model of shared development that characterized the evolution of the Unix system and its related technologies such as TCP/IP and the Internet.

Even today, after the amazing expansion of information technology into all facets of business and personal life, Unix remains the linchpin of open computing strategies and implementations. Proprietary systems, from individual PCs and LANs to mainframes, play key roles in parts of the enterprise, but very often

you'll find that Unix systems make the whole architecture work together as one.

Issues and Opinions

Coming out of another exciting conference and trade show, where the hottest issues in today's and tomorrow's IT were debated vigorously, we thought it was time to look at some of the ways in which the idea of openness is affecting computing across the board. Three of our feature articles, as you'll see, run the gamut from data center to desktop, discussing how this concept is at work in every tier of the enterprise. Our fourth feature takes you behind the scenes of one of the premier open technologies—the World Wide Web—to learn how a range of user organizations are building teams to create a meaningful presence for them on the Web.

This month's columns also respond to events that will impact the further progress of the push toward openness. "Behind the News" reports on the creation of The Open Group and the work Hewlett-Packard and the Santa Cruz Operation are doing on the next generation of their Unix system. SunSoft also offers its own opinion of that work. The Open Group itself debuts in our pages, with a monthly column that will keep readers apprised of technology and standards development coming out of OSF and X/Open. From another perspective, in "Member Views" our readers weigh in on the value of CDE and the Single UNIX Specification as standards.

We strive to publish timely material that helps you, the professional manager, administrator, developer or end user of open systems, deal with the ever-changing challenges you face in your job. I urge you to read this issue carefully and, as always, to respond with comments.



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