

UniNews

UniForum. The International Association of Open Systems Professionals

July 24, 1996
The Newsletter For UniForum Members Volume X, Number 9

UniForum Members Elect New Board of Directors

UniForum members were faced with difficult choices as they marked their board of directors election ballots this past month. The slate of candidates was as strong as has ever been seen, with both incumbents and new nominees providing a mix of experience and a range of options as to where they would help lead the association.

Perhaps it was this outstanding field that accounted for the heavier-than-usual number of ballots returned, with more than 20 percent of the membership voting. The response is a good indicator of member vitality in UniForum, and the new board will be taking note of this activity.

Eight candidates ran for the four available two-year terms. Of the four winners, two were incumbents and two are new to the board. They are:

Jeanne Baccash, reelected
Michael Prince, reelected
Rob Gingell, elected
Fred Luiz, elected

These four join the other board members—Alan Fedder, Wayne Fowler, Ron Lachman, Michael Tilson, Donna Van Fleet and ex officio member, Tsvi Gal—as the new board officially seated at the UniForum board of directors meeting held July 12 in Toronto, Canada.

Jeanne Baccash, assistant vice president at AT&T GIS in Lincroft, NJ, has been a member of UniForum almost from its inception. She is perhaps best known for her work in developing what became known as the Single UNIX Specification—the unification project for Unix that has meant so much to our industry. Jeanne also chairs the UniForum

Technical Steering Committee, which reviews new technical publishing opportunities for the association. Jeanne can be reached at jeanne.baccash@lincroftnj.ncr.com.

Michael Prince, director of IS at Burlington Coat Factory in Etna, NH, is one of the most respected and pioneering users of advanced information technology. His embrace of Unix systems for his company and the demands he puts on his vendors for solutions make him the prototypical UniForum member. Mike can be reached at mike.prince@coat.com.

Rob Gingell, Sun Microsystems vice president and Sun Fellow (Mountain View, CA) is responsible for the overall technical direction, engineering tools, practices and procedures at his company. He is also a board member of both X/Open and the Open Software Found-

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Alok Mohan Outlines SCO Forum96

Programs offered for business, systems administration and engineering

SCO Forum96, the Santa Cruz Operation's tenth annual international symposium for developers, resellers and IS managers takes place Aug. 18-23 at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The event is expected to attract more than 2,000 open systems professionals.

SCO Forum96 will feature a range of in-depth courses on some of the key business and engineering topics affecting the global computer industry. The event's conference program will be segmented into three major tracks: business, systems administration and engineering. The business track will cover topics such as selling Internet security solutions and market analyses of Latin America and the Pacific Rim. The systems administration track will include topics on maintaining Web sites and Internet security. The engineering track will address topics such as database connectivity and migrating host applications to client/server environments. In addition, international business and technology leaders will deliver keynote speeches. For more information, go to www.sco.com or call (800) SCO-FORUM.

Alok Mohan, SCO president and CEO, recently spoke to *UniNews* about SCO Forum96.

Q: Please describe SCO Forum for us.

SCO Forum is a unique event that has always been a favorite of SCO customers, channel partners and employees. It's the one time each year when the global SCO community can get together in one place and look at and discuss the new technologies, products and market opportunities available for the next year and beyond. You'll find MIS managers, systems admin-

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UTG Disbanded by SCO

UnixWare organization replaced by internal group

The board of directors of the UnixWare Technology Group (UTG) recently voted to disband UTG after the Santa Cruz Operation withdrew its support. Since acquiring UnixWare from Novell, SCO had been the organization's chief source of funding. UTG will be replaced by an internal SCO group, the Enterprise Computing Forum (ECF), which will continue UTG's mission of developing and promoting UnixWare technology in conjunction with SCO's OEMs and ISVs.

UTG was the successor to the Unix International operation, a consortium that promoted Unix System V Release 4 (SVR4),

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Battle Looms Over Internet Telephony

Coalition fights long-distance carriers

A major telecommunications battle is gathering intensity this summer over whether the Internet can be used for realtime voice transmissions. On one side is the America's Carriers Telecommunications Association (ACTA), a group of 130 long-distance resellers who want only those carriers who are regulated and tariffed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide voice transmissions. On the other side are the "Voice on the Net" (VON) Coalition and other parties who advocate the free use of the Internet for all voice, video and multimedia transmissions. Both sides have presented arguments to the FCC, with the first round apparently won by the VON Coalition and its supporters.

The dispute is based on the growing availability and low cost of computer telephony hardware and software. This technology enables two persons to talk to each other over the Internet anywhere in the world. The sound quality may be poor and connections are sometimes a problem, but these technical problems are being resolved. In the meantime, Internet telephony means that users can enjoy what amounts to a long-distance phone call at a fraction of the cost charged by long-distance carriers.

Naturally, long-distance carriers are concerned. On Mar. 5, 1996, ACTA petitioned the FCC to stop companies from selling telephony software and hardware products, citing unfair competition. ACTA argued that the average Internet service provider (ISP) charges \$10 for five hours of access, plus \$3 for each additional hour. That equals 3.3 cents per minute, compared to an average charge of 22 cents a minute by a telephone carrier. ACTA also expressed concern that the growing number of telephony calls with their high bandwidth requirements would swamp a telecommunications infrastructure that is already overburdened with Internet traffic.

In reply, the VON Coalition (with a number of joint parties) filed a petition on June 11, asking the FCC not to ban Internet telephony. The joint parties filing with the VON Coalition include computer and telecom heavyweights Sprint, Netscape Communications

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UTG Disbanded by SCO

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AT&T's version of Unix that was later sold to Novell and became the basis of UnixWare.

UTG is on the record as agreeing with SCO's actions. Michael Dortch, vice president and chief evangelist for UTG, says, "When Novell owned UnixWare, having a separate organization to support OEMs and UnixWare made perfect sense. Now that SCO owns UnixWare, it makes sense to move the organization inside SCO." He asserts that the reorganization should shorten the communications links and provide better access to the people building UnixWare technologies at SCO. "We think this is a strong move, and obviously our board of directors agrees," says Dortch. "It could be one of the best things that has happened to UTG."

SCO is equally positive about the reorganization. Biff Traber, director of OEM relations says, "This change will help us better serve our OEM and ISV customers. They thought they didn't need to have a separate organization, and we were pleased to support them by forming an internal organization."

Traber added that the ECF agenda will include work with projects like Gemini, SCO's new operating system, which will be based on UnixWare and SCO OpenServer. ECF will also be involved with 64-bit and clustering technologies, as well as with improvements in SCO source code technology offerings. ECF membership will be made up of SCO employees providing support to essentially the same OEMs and ISVs who were members of UTG.

The disbanding of UTG continues a recent trend in which open systems organizations have been merged with other groups or disbanded. The Open Group recently assumed custodianship of the X Window System technology, previously owned and managed by the X Consortium. The X Consortium will cease engineering operations by the end of the year. The Open Group itself was formed last February through the union of the Open Software Foundation and X/Open Co. ♦

UniForum Members Elect New Board of Directors

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dation, and he serves on the UniForum '97 Conference Planning Committee. Rob can be reached at gingell@sun.com.

Fred Luiz, general manager of the Open Systems Software Division at Hewlett-Packard in Cupertino, CA, has managed several key projects at HP including HP labs, information architecture and networked systems architecture, where he focused on advanced technologies for the Computer Systems Organization. Fred can be reached at fred_luiz@hp.com.

The new UniForum board will have a number of important items to deal with right off the bat, including the UniForum '97 Conference and Trade Show, new programs to expand the Conferences and Seminars department and new directions for growth in membership and corporate sponsorship. Future issues of *UniNews* and the "Association News" department in *UniForum's IT Solutions* will cover

progress made on these and other organizational challenges throughout the year.

At the Toronto meeting, the new board unanimously reelected Michael Tilson as president of the Association for another year. The board also unanimously elected Jeanne Baccash to the post of executive vice president. Tilson then appointed Michael Prince as the board's new chief financial officer, and reappointed Allan Fedder as vice president of marketing and Richard Jaross as board secretary.

A final note: the Toronto meeting was also the occasion of Jim Bell's retirement from the Board. Jim's service to UniForum since 1988 has been widely reported as has his continuing service to the industry as CEO of The Open Group. Members of UniForum owe Jim a deep measure of gratitude and *UniNews* suggests that members e-mail Jim at jb@cup.hp.com with their expressions of thanks. ♦

Call for Proposals UF '97

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The UniForum '97 Conference and Tutorial program is the place to learn about the latest advances in Unix™ and Open Systems and how they will integrate with your current environment. This program will address the concerns of IT professionals—executives, managers, technical staff, and developers who need to choose, implement and maintain the hottest and most flexible products, services, and technologies in support of today's fast moving business opportunities. Attendees will immerse in key subject areas and come away with new insights, valuable information and practical examples that can be put to use immediately.



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- ▶ Network Distributed Systems Management
- ▶ Mission-Critical
- ▶ Deploying Corporate Applications on Intranets
- ▶ Successful Case Studies from an Open Systems Environment

Profile of the UniForum Conference Attendee:

The Conference attendee will have a computer systems background, but not necessarily Unix systems experience. The attendee will be looking for substantive, practical information that can be applied on the job or used for strategic planning and/or procurement.

Your Proposal Should Include:

Proposals for UniForum '97 Conference sessions should target this audience. Proposals that are case study oriented and which call for participative feedback are preferred.

Your Proposal should identify the type of session you are interested in giving: multi-day or single-day Workshop, Tutorial or Seminar; Track Session or BOF.

Your Proposal should include a paragraph description about the technology to be discussed, its open technology connection, and a problem/solution case statement that speaks to how the technology works in the enterprise. A target audience should be named with prerequisites, if any. A brief presenter's background should give pertinent information on expertise and conference experience.

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NCR's Dennis Roberson: A Manager for All Seasons

CTO makes good use of hybrid background

by Richard Cole

In many productive lives, nothing is wasted, and this fact is especially true for Dennis Roberson's career in technology. In a recent interview, he provided an example by recalling his days as a young electrical engineering student at Washington State University. At the time, he was working extensively with lasers (dubbing himself the department's "Head Laserologist"). Although his interests soon moved from physics to other areas, his laser background now informs his understanding of NCR's bar-code scanners, a critical product area which he helps to develop as the company's CTO.

With a background that includes both computers and telecommunications, hardware and software, design, manufacturing, research and productization, Roberson finds that he can leverage experience in one area to better understand and manage projects in another. This ability is critical in his current role. He and his office serve as a review body for all research and development at NCR. They also act as spokespersons on matters of technology directions and industry trends. Roberson works comfortably with many different divisions that might not speak the same dialect or even the same language, making sure that their activities are aligned with NCR's corporate directions and strategies.

Telephone Displays

The variety in Roberson's career began in school, with degrees in both electrical engineering and physics, along with undergraduate minors in math and computer science. Building on this varied background, his work in the lab enjoyed an impressive start. As a summer intern at AT&T's Bell Labs in 1970, he designed the first digital display for a telephone. Although the light-emitting diode (LED) technology was already developed, he was the first to marry it to the phone so callers could see numbers displayed as they were dialed or received from another phone. He also wrote a paper in which he accurately predicted all the future uses of this display technology—not bad for a summer job.

Roberson planned to stay at AT&T after graduation, but cutbacks in the NASA space programs in the early 1970s meant that Bell Labs stopped hiring. Instead, he joined IBM in 1971 as a logic design engineer for their Advanced Systems Development Division.



"Working in so many areas—that's been the beauty of my experience in the industry."

The division was involved in systems concepts and applications, exactly what Roberson wanted to study. The division was also located in the San Francisco Bay Area, which allowed him to pursue postgraduate studies at Stanford University.

Roberson remembers his first years at Big Blue as a "really wild, free-flowing era." Bright engineers were given the run of the labs to create first and worry about production or market practicalities later. On one project, he and his colleagues decided to design one of the first multimedia systems from scratch, building or adapting all the components themselves. The display technology was built out of fixed-head disks refreshing the displays. Scanners were built out of modified office copiers. "It was a wonderful way to work," Roberson says. "Nothing was dismissed as impossible, so people tried an amazing variety of things. They sometimes succeeded, sometimes failed, but it was always very stimulating." Roberson adds that, given a willingness to work hard and to physically move around the country, a young engineer like him could rise rapidly through the organization.

"You idiot!"

Roberson's willingness to move was soon tested. In the Bay Area, he had become part of a team working on IBM's first desktop system, the 5100. IBM asked all seven members of the team to move to Rochester, MN, to oversee the productization and further development of desktop computers. The request was made in January, and everyone on the team promptly declined except for Roberson. With a laugh, he recalled that as he drove out of California, he noticed a time and temperature sign reading 75 degrees. In Minnesota, he noticed another sign reading *minus* 25, "a perfect 100-degree shift." For the first week in Rochester, he kept a mantra that he repeated while going to work: "You idiot! You absolute idiot!"

Eventually the temperature rose above zero, and Roberson continued work which he still describes as one of the highlights of his career. His group developed a number of desktop computers: the 5110, the 5120, the System 23 (which was the first Intel processor-driven machine) and finally the 5150, which became known as the IBM Personal Computer or PC.

Interestingly, Roberson says that his first vision of a PC was as a laptop. Even the first 5100 desktop unit was meant to be portable, although the machine weighed in at 55 pounds and required a sturdy case with a steel handle to transport. Roberson claims that he carried prototypes of the 5100 home on a regular basis, although he concedes that it was a feat that only the "physically strong" should attempt.

Roberson became a successful evangelist for the IBM PC, promoting it in speeches around the country as the "portable personal computer for the professional problem solver." He says with a smile, "If I could get past that first tongue-twister, I could get through the rest of the presentation with any audience." His stay in Rochester also incurred another major benefit: he met his wife, Debra Lin at a local church. Their marriage has resulted in four sons and a daughter, who play "every sport you can imagine."

Surprising the Japanese

Having served with distinction through several Minnesota winters, Roberson was transferred to Boca Raton, FL, to work on the Series/1 minicomputers. Then he was trans-

ferred again to Endicott, NY, to manage software development for midrange systems.

In 1985, he became director of logic programs at IBM's microprocessor facility at Burlington, VT. He was put in charge of chip design, semiconductor process development, test engineering, packaging and the memory subsystem for IBM's 3090 mainframe. Once again, his varied background came in handy, especially his academic work in solid-state physics. "Chip manufacturing is essentially a heavy physics area," he explains. "It's a well-understood and well-controlled environment, and if you can handle the physical aspects in a very disciplined way, you can make steady progress."

Progress was exactly what the group made, introducing in early 1986 a 1Mbit memory chip years before any such development was expected. With a chuckle, Roberson says, "The Japanese thought they owned the DRAM business. It was great fun proving them wrong." When the chip came out, his group followed the reaction in Japan through the newspapers. "We read about leaders of the Japanese semiconductor industry being called home from vacation and everything. They were taken completely by surprise." His group also produced the first CMOS chip by IBM as well as IBM's first RISC processors.

Telecom

Although his career at IBM had lasted 17 years and spanned some of the most exciting developments in the industry, Roberson felt that by the late 1980s, IBM was not the company it once was. "IBM had become extraordinarily bureaucratic," he says, adding, "It was unfortunate, because you had great difficulty in getting new and exciting things approved, much less proceeding with them."

Roberson joined Digital Equipment Corp. in 1988 as a vice president working with software development groups. In 1994, he joined NCR,

About Dennis Roberson

Current Positions: Senior vice president and CTO for NCR. Also cochair of The Open Group board of directors

Age: 47

Years in the Industry: 26

Proudest Professional Achievement: Helping to develop the IBM 5100, the precursor to the IBM PC

Car He Drives: 1973 Chevy Impala

Boat He Runs: 21-foot Sea Ray

Light Reading: *Keeping The U.S. Computer and Telecommunications Industry Competitive* by the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board of the National Academy of Science

Number of Children: Five

Favorite Nonwork Activity: "Being a sports fan for my children."

Business Advantage: "You might say that being a father has helped me in business. I can sometimes see a great deal of similarity between negotiating with my five and seven year-olds and negotiating with business divisions."

then a part of AT&T's Global Information Solutions company. The move to a telecommunications environment was another big shift.

Roberson points out major cultural differences between the computer and telecommunications industries. In telecom, he says, the technology is based on a high degree of connectedness. Standards are very important and consist of more than "just checking off boxes." Because standards are stressed in a rigorous and formal manner with required cer-

tification by bodies like the International Standards Organization, technical progress can be slower than in other industries such as computing.

As an example of the deliberate pace—at least in the past—of the telecom industry, Roberson points out that his digital display telephone took seven years to appear on the market. "On the other hand," he says, "you get a high degree of reliability. In fact, 99.999 percent reliability is common for telecom." In contrast, the computer industry has often had to trade off degrees of reliability with new technical development, although, as he remarks, the differences between the two industries are growing smaller.

Open Horizons

Roberson currently works out of NCR's West Columbia, SC, office, a convenient distance away from beautiful Lake Murray where he enjoys waterskiing with his family. An important part of his duties now involves open systems standardization as the current cochair of The Open Group. NCR has long been involved in open systems; its Unix SVR4 MP-RAS operating system was granted X/Open branding in 1991. Their Top End transaction monitor is fully compliant with X/Open's distributed transaction processing specification. NCR's products also include the OSF/Motif graphical user interface and the Open Software Foundation (OSF) Distributed Computing Environment (DCE).

Roberson is excited about the recent merger of OSF and X/Open into The Open Group. He says that the merger will help accelerate the process of delivering open system standards to customers and better focus the efforts of the industry to bring new products to market.

For the future, Roberson looks forward to working with open systems and NCR in the company's retail, financial and telecommunications markets—that, and getting in a bit more waterskiing at Lake Murray. ♦

Additions to the UniForum Family

Two new staffers bring expertise to the association

Recently, we've had the good fortune to welcome some new faces to the UniForum fold. Barbara Myers has joined us in the new position of membership/sponsorship manager. Barbara brings almost 20 years of experience in membership and seminar marketing, having been research and marketing director for the California Society of Certified Public Accountants and database/marketing manager with the American Electronics Association (AEA). Barbara is enthusiastic about her new role and the challenges facing her. She says that she would like to increase the awareness of UniForum and its programs to the outside world, while at the same time learning more about our members' needs to improve member benefits.

Our publishing group is happy to have Deborah Martell as its new art director. Deborah has been in the graphic arts her entire professional

career. She has worked in academia, government and business, having been art director for the United States International University and having worked as a contributor with NATO and Hewlett-Packard, as well as a variety of other endeavors in publishing. Deborah has been running her own graphic design business for some time, which is how she came to the attention of UniForum, working with us as a freelance artist. Deborah has stepped into the full-time duties of art director for the summer, while Cheri DeBusk is on maternity leave (talk about additions to the UniForum family!). When Cheri returns in September, she and Deborah will share the job of art director, allowing us to benefit from their collective talent and creativity.

Welcome aboard, Barbara and Deborah! ♦

Alok Mohan Outlines SCO Forum96

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istrators, hardware and software developers, resellers, distributors, dealers, industry analysts, journalists and representatives from the world's leading computer hardware and software vendors all gathered together.

Q: How does SCO Forum96 reflect the larger picture at SCO?

SCO Forum provides everyone with a comprehensive overview of our corporate strategy, technology roadmap and products. Again, this year's Forum will be very special because SCO is rapidly changing into a different kind of company: we're addressing many more markets and introducing a much broader range of products than ever before. And we're focusing on new markets for SCO, such as the enterprise, cross-platform and embedded technology markets.

But the Forum is not just about SCO. It's a unique educational event that covers a broad range of industry topics. It's like going back to the university for a week. SCO Forum features course tracks that focus on the key business, engineering and system administration topics affecting all of us in the international information systems industry.

Q: How is the continuing close relationship between SCO and UniForum reflected in benefits to attendees of SCO Forum that accrue from both SCO and UniForum?

SCO has always had very close ties with UniForum. Doug Michels, a cofounder of the company and our executive vice president and CTO, was one of the founding members of UniForum and served as UniForum's president from 1989 to 1990. Mike Tilson, our CIO, is the current president of UniForum. So it's no surprise that attendees of SCO Forum96 will benefit from the SCO-UniForum relationship. UniForum and SCO have a long shared history. This year, all registrants of SCO Forum qualify as trial members of the association and so will receive a year's worth of issues of *UniForum's IT Solutions* magazine and *UniNews* online, as well as

Web access to the *UniForum Open Systems Products Directory*—all at no charge.

Q: What do you see as the most outstanding attractions at this year's event?

Our keynote speakers are always a major attraction. Among this year's speakers are Sun Microsystems' Scott McNealy and Unisys' Dave McCann. Another really outstanding attraction this year is the Gemini Fast Track, a special two-day program for developers. Gemini is the code name we have given to the forthcoming SCO product that will unify the "best of breed" technologies of our SCO OpenServer and SCO UnixWare systems into a single environment. A lot of people are excited about Gemini because it's the first major step toward the next-generation, 64-bit UNIX System technology base that we're developing with HP.

Another key attraction is our new format for exhibitions. In the spirit of the university experience, we've replaced the big-booth, expo-type format with a more straightforward, roundtable format that invites attendees to sit down and participate in lunchtime "chalk talks" with the engineers who actually build the products. We think this new format will enrich the exhibition experience; in the past, many leading vendors have used the SCO Forum spotlight to announce new products. So at these chalk talks, you can look forward to getting an inside look at emerging technologies.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to say about SCO Forum96?

Well, I could go on and on talking about the benefits and excitement of attending SCO Forum. But to really understand SCO Forum, you need to be there. It's a memorable and productive way to spend one of the last weeks of summer. It's also a great way to kick off the next business year. I look forward to seeing all of your readers there! ♦

Battle Looms Over Internet Telephony

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and Microsoft Corp. They also comprise a number of individuals and smaller vendors and organizations such as the Commercial Internet eXchange Assoc. (CIX); FreeTel Communications, Inc.; Third Planet Publishing, Inc.; Millin Publishing Group, Inc.; New Media Coalition for Marketplace Solutions; Quarterdeck Corp.; VocalTec Ltd.; and Software Publishers.

Defending the free use of the Internet, Jeff Pulver, chairman of the VON Coalition, said, "ACTA's demands are designed to protect the economic self-interest of a small group of companies at the cost of a variety of beneficial new services."

A full vote on the ACTA petition by all FCC commissioners is still pending. However, Blair Levin, FCC chief of staff, has hinted at the probable outcome of the vote. In a speech delivered recently at the INET '96 Conference in Montreal, he stated on behalf of Reed Hundt, FCC chairman, that "the right answer at this time is not to place restrictions on [Internet telephony] software providers."

Other recent filings in opposition of the ACTA proposal have made by more than 430 other individuals, corporations and educational organizations, as well as the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the National Science Foundation. ♦

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U n i F o r u m P r e s s

Call For Book Proposals

UniForum Press is the new book publishing alliance between UniForum and Prentice Hall PTR. Under the guidance of editor-in-chief Tony Wasserman, UniForum Press will publish high-quality books about new and emerging open technologies for professionals who need information that will help them make better strategic and tactical decisions.

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More information on UniForum Press is available online at <http://www.uniforum.org>.
Proposals may be submitted to Tony Wasserman at the address below.

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