

New JTA Version Announced

The Architecture Coordination Council (ACC) met May 28, 1998 and approved the Technical Architecture Steering Group Majority Position Document. The implementation memorandum dated Nov. 30, 1998 signed by the tri-chairs of the ACC makes Joint Technical Architecture (JTA), Version 2.0 effective for use immediately, superseding JTA, Version 1.0.

The JTA is a document that mandates the minimum set of standards and guidelines for the acquisition of all Department of Defense (DoD) systems that produce, use, or exchange information. The JTA shall be used by anyone involved in the management, development, or acquisition of new or improved systems within DoD.

The memorandum, JTA, Version 2.0, and related information is available on the Data and Analysis Center for Software Web site at <http://www.dacs.dtic.mil/databases/url/key.hts?keycode=2024>.

The JTA provides DoD with the basis for seamless interoperability of information technology systems. The JTA defines the service areas, interfaces, and standards (JTA elements) applicable to all DoD systems, and its adoption is mandated for the management, development, and acquisition of new or improved systems throughout DoD.

The JTA consists of two main parts: the JTA core and the JTA annexes. The JTA core contains the minimum set of JTA elements applicable to all DoD systems to support interoperability. The JTA annexes contain additional JTA elements applicable to specific functional domains (families of systems).

The JTA is a living document and will continue to evolve with the technologies, marketplace, and associated standards upon which it is based.

Within just a few months, Intersolv was acquired by Micro Focus.

- In December 1998, a relatively new entry to the market, Tower Concepts (Razor), was acquired by another privately owned company, Visible Systems Corporation.

Most acquisitions have been by companies with little experience in CM that aim to buy a stake in this market. The acquisition cycle is not yet complete.

While acquisitions of this nature can introduce additional funding for product development and synergy with related products, the end result is not always good news for the user.

- After the acquisition, there is usually a period of quiescence while the buying company tries to understand what it has bought and the bought company tries to understand its new environment.
- After the quiescent period, expenditure on marketing and related issues tend to get immediate priority over technical development issues—the new owners want a return on their investment quickly.
- Support is rationalized, i.e., reduced, by integration with established “help” desks, which lengthens lines of communication between the user

and the people who know what they are talking about.

- New development expenditure becomes directed at integrations with the conglomerate’s “Enterprise Support” products. They do this in the name of providing wider support for all users, but in reality, it benefits the conglomerate’s existing customers by giving them a CM capability. The CM user gets offered related “enterprise” products that they do not want.
- Overseas dealers are often disenfranchised in favor of the conglomerate’s local office, which gives established users even less support.
- Small users are no longer nurtured as the big corporate sell takes over—10 licenses no longer motivate the salesman who now needs 50 license deals to keep on target.

Of course, the new owners are still making money—the increase in sales outlets and sales resource makes this almost inevitable—but they do not have it all their way. One effect of these ownership changes and a sure sign of a growing market has been the emergence of a new group of small companies (Perforce, StarBase, and Tower Concepts—still small despite being acquired by Visible Systems Corporation, another privately

owned company) that targets just those project groups favored by the developers of this market with proven developer-oriented messages.

Conclusion

There are over 50 companies that offer products to meet CM needs. Most are expanding their business and profits, and there is no sign of this declining. The main competition for CM vendors is still the users’ lack of awareness of the success and capability of this technology. People do not wake up in the morning with “It’s time to buy a CM tool” at the top of their to-do list. Instead, they wait for a foreseeable and inevitable disaster to kick-start the process—and then they usually buy from the first company they call. Make sure you do not do this by being an educated consumer. ♦

About the Author



Clive Burrows is principal evaluator of configuration management products for Ovum in London, England. He is the author of four Ovum reports on this subject, the most recent being *Ovum Evaluates: Configuration Management* (June 1998).

E-mail: clive_burrows@compuserve.com.