

THE FUTURE OF NIakwa

by Jerry Dederich

As you probably know by now, Dick Drew and I purchased this fine company called Niakwa from its former parent company Bluebird Systems of Carlsbad, CA.

You may also know that I founded Niakwa and then sold it to Bluebird Systems five years ago. I took some time to myself to explore a variety of leisure pursuits, and a few months ago, I seized the opportunity to purchase the company back from Bluebird Systems. I'd like to thank all of you for the many gifts, phone calls, and faxes of congratulations and support. Dick and I are both very excited about the positive feedback we've received.

Now, I'm sure you're all wondering what our plans are for the future. I'm going to tell you the same thing I told the folks here at Niakwa, "I didn't buy myself a job; I purchased a company...I made an investment." It's important to protect our investments, as I'm sure you all realize. To that end, Dick and I have investigated several strategies that we thought might generate increased revenue and profit for the Niakwa Development Community.

First, let me say that NPL is the base upon which we have built this company, and we plan to continue supporting and developing NPL for years to come. Now that ownership of Niakwa is back on site, we are better able to shape the future of NPL development into a direction that will best suit the Niakwa Development Community as a whole.

In addition to developing NPL, we've selected a few new markets to target for added revenue opportunities. The document imaging market is the first of those markets we're planning to develop. This market has consistently been cited by industry researchers as one of the fastest growing segments in our industry. The benefits of imaging illustrate why - for VAR's, imaging makes your applications look and feel sexy, thereby, improving their salability. Imaging also adds tremendous functionality to your applications, and gives you a

competitive edge because most VAR's have not image-enabled their applications. For end-users, imaging often pays for itself within 12 months through reduced labor cost, improved customer service and improved efficiency.

Niakwa is actively looking for ways to bring imaging functionality to NPL. We have identified at least two technical approaches that will work and intend to select one in the relatively near future.

To ensure Niakwa's long term stability, we will develop additional revenue streams. A review of Niakwa's core competencies has revealed two of Niakwa's strengths are the depth of our technical talent and our ability to conceive, design, implement and deliver completed software projects. We have been doing this for years with NPL. As

our first additional revenue source, we will apply these assets to custom programming projects related to imaging. We have confirmed the success of this selection with the completion of our first two projects. Niakwa expects to enjoy long term success in this area.

Niakwa's contract programming work will benefit NPL users in several ways. The experience we gain

in the imaging market will help us enhance NPL with the imaging commands mentioned above and give us experience in many of the industry's up and coming technologies (i.e., object oriented programming, client server, imaging, work flow etc.). This knowledge can be applied to our NPL development projects. As the contract programming business grows, so will our technical staff, thus, providing even more resources that can be applied to NPL.

In conclusion, I can only say, "We are in it for the long haul." The new ownership has renewed Niakwa's commitment to NPL, the Niakwa Community, and our mutual success.



Jerry Dederich

Niakwa News Briefs

NSG SPEED 1 Release 2.6

Tukwila, WA NSG points to August 1, 1994 as the anticipated release date for the latest version of their SPEED 1 database management utility. This new version of SPEED 1 now supports NDM 1.2. For more information, contact NSG at (206) 244-6205.

TEP Develops 2 New Libraries

Roma, Italy TEP has added two new libraries to the Niakwa Library Program:

- Prisma Data Manager VMS Version - Allows developers to initialize, open, and manipulate native RMS files in the DEC VAX environment via a simple GOSUB' call.
- TEdit 1.0 - Stand-alone Windows utility which can be used to create and/or manipulate Btrieve data dictionary files.

For more information (including ordering policy), refer to Library Briefs No. 08 and 09.

VCR Lands Army Account

Indianapolis, FL VCR recently turned a 10-year business relationship with the US Army into a sizable venture comprised of AIMS 5 installations on a Wide Area Network (WAN). The installation includes AIMS 5 and a number of NPL 4.10/Novell NetWare RunTimes installed at Army WAN sites worldwide.



ASKANDY

Q:

use CompuServe quite a bit, and their mail service is much less expensive than phoning, faxing, or using your BBS. Does Niakwa have a mail box on CompuServe that I can send questions to?

A:

Yes. Direct all messages to 75330, 762.

NOTE: We (Niakwa) check our CompuServe mailbox approximately once a week.

Q:

I want to move my KFAM-based applications to a 32-user Novell NetWare based network and I'm having some problems. Can you help?

A:

First of all, the old KFAM-based programs were only capable of supporting up to 16 users. Secondly, there are several routines that make use of global partitions and these must be modified. The solution for these issues is a patch to the KFAM code that is available through Ergo Systems (301) 983-8245. They have done a nice job of extending KFAM code support to 32 users and making ISS program and setup files, Wang ISS Utilities, and the SORT4 Utilities available.

NIAKWA ANNOUNCES NPL REVISION 4.10

Niakwa has released NPL Revision 4.10 for all MS-DOS based supported operating environments (i.e., MS-DOS, NetBIOS, Novell NetWare, 386/DOS-Extender, and MS-Windows).

Enhancements

Revision 4.10, which began shipping on March 15, 1994, offers several new enhancements to the Release IV implementation of NPL. The enhancements include:

NETBIOS Support - As of Revision 4.10, NPL supports NetBIOS compatible networks. For further information on the new NetBIOS offering, refer to NiakwaNews Volume III, Issue 10 from January 1994.

Debug Pop-Up Window Support - The MS-Windows RunTime now supports a "Debug" pop-up window which allows input and output generated by debugging statements to be displayed without disturbing the application window.

Extended File Sharing - NPL's file sharing capabilities have been revised to provide better support for networked and multi-tasking environments.

Add-a-User Options - Revision 4.10 allows the ability to inexpensively add standard single-user RunTimes to existing network installations. As long as the single-user RunTime passes security locally, it will not be charged against the network user count.

Additional Features - In addition to the major features described above, Revision 4.10 also includes the following:

- File locking information with LIST DT.
- Improved 386/DOS-Extender MAT SORT performance.
- New MS-DOS error code support.
- \$OPTIONS byte 14 (implied \$BREAK after disk I/O) support.
- Support for ASCII tab characters within NPL HELP files.
- \$MACHINE byte 32 provides security passing information.
- \$MACHINE byte 33 provides user count and file sharing information.
- Support for the modification of the default background and foreground colors of boxes displayed by \$DEMO.
- Previous bug and documentation corrections.

Networking Options

As a result of the Revision 4.10 enhancements, NPL for MS-DOS-based platforms is now able to support the typically less expensive peer-to-peer NetBIOS compatible networks. The new product is appropriately priced lower than the traditional Novell NetWare networking products to accommodate the price sensitive nature of the NetBIOS network products.

The addition of NetBIOS support has created two Niakwa networking products:

- **NetBIOS:** Combined with the MS-DOS products, this provides NPL/MS-DOS users a low cost peer-to-peer solution (Personal NetWare, LANtastic, and MS-Windows Workgroups are officially tested and supported).
- **Niakwa Networks:** This product provides NPL users a choice of networking solutions; NetBIOS or Novell NetWare.

Update Options

NPL Revision 4.10 updates are available in two forms:

- A) physical files and documentation ordered from Niakwa (customer pays shipping), or
- B) electronically downloaded from the Niakwa BBS (free of charge).

The Revision 4.10 Update includes:

- Updated RunTime files for all supported environments; MS-DOS, MS-Windows, and 386/DOS-Extender.
- Updated Development Package files.
- New versions of linked 386/DOS-Extender RunTimes for NDM.
- NPL Revision 4.10 Addendum documentation.
- The new NetBIOS Addendum (not available on the BBS, but available free upon request).
- Revision 4.10 Release Notes.

Contact your Authorized Niakwa Distributor to receive an NPL Revision 4.10 update today.

SOMETHING YOU CAN COUNT ON

by Craig Freeman

There's a reason why I chose to write my application software using a language called "NPL". It wasn't the fact that 500+ international software development companies made the same decision. It wasn't the decades of experience that NPL's owners brought to the table. Neither was it the hundreds of thousands of 'high-end users' who put NPL to the test each and every day. The reason was, and is _ it works.

SSC, which I founded, was a "beta" test site for the first release of NPL in 1984. We converted our most important software products to NPL from an ancient language on a dying minicomputer. The stuff ran flawlessly. Since then, we have grown into versions 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, 3.2, 4.0 and 4.1. They all worked exactly as expected --- every time. You might say that I've gotten used to it.

I may never get used to popular application programs that "hang" my PC. Or, when Access inexplicably drops a few records in the middle of a report. Or, FoxPro reports when their exclusive "Rushmore" technology shuts itself down for an obscure reason -- on a Friday night -- at 6:00 pm, -- when I really need to go home.

It may be presumptuous that I think my time is too valuable to wait nearly a minute while WordPerfect for Windows retrieves a single page on "the world's fastest PC". Or, that I think it excessive that companies like this charge me \$200 or more per hour when I ask what I can do to overcome their product's defects. But, it certainly is not too much to ask

that I be spared the week of hell that befell me when my hard disk was scrambled after installing a "state-of-the-art" disk controller -- all because a failing memory chip repeatedly passed every available test.

I really don't want to know why Personal NetWare arbitrarily decides when it is time for the server to disconnect. Or, that various Ethernet network cards work wonderfully in some PCs but not at all in others. Nor is it appropriate to discuss why QuickBASIC 4.5 reports that 103 divided by 100 equals 1.029999! Not to mention the fact that Cyrix 486 upgrades won't work with 386SX PCs made before some time during 1991.

Neither is there time to ponder why Lotus 1-2-3 version 2.x won't handle a spreadsheet with more than 8,000 rows -- even after a memory upgrade. Or why Stacker causes otherwise fast hard disk drives to run at a snail's pace. I pray for the patience and wisdom that I might know why Novell v3.12 and my new 8GB DAT tape drive danced and danced but nary a backup was to be had (yes _ it did finally work _ but who can afford months without a backup?). But I am content that NPL continues to function without incident.

I have MODEMS from ZOOM, U.S. Robotics and BOCA but not one of them will reliably send FAXs out of WordPerfect SIX-O for DOS. Neither Carbon Copy nor PC Anywhere v3.x will work at all with my BOCA MODEM which, by the way, sporadically makes odd noises in what may well be an attempt to communicate with a higher life form. My Sharp FAX machine is much more reliable _ when the paper cutter isn't stuck.

My color monitor fades to black whenever it decides. My SONY super-premium TV is "on the fritz" and their warranty doesn't extend into one's home (as though we are all prepared to lift a 27" television set and carry it into a service-center in Punjab). My son's Nintendo system literally demands that everything be cleaned between uses or it refuses to work. The battery recently died before its time in my Minolta SLR camera -- at a moment just begging to be captured on film.

There's a reason I still write software using NPL. Could it be an arrogant backlash against the "language-of-the-week" experts who told me why I was a fool unless I was writing in FORTRAN _ COBOL _ PASCAL _ dBASE _ and then "C"? Is my brain irreparably damaged by too many low-frequency magnetic waves from my failing video display?

I prefer to think that I'm old-fashioned _ with an appreciation for things that just plain work as promised. For Maytag appliances, indoor toilets, and (if you're lucky) precious portions of one's anatomy. For things that work every time, all the time.

You might say I've kind'a gotten used to NPL. Unlike most everything else in this life, it works.

Craig Freeman owns and operates Software Systems Company and can be reached at 200 Corporate Pointe, Suite 490, Culver City, CA 90230. Phone (310) 776-4726. Fax (310) 642-7515.

Niakwa Announcements

Harry Cohn

Harry, Niakwa's Director of Research and Development, is embarking on a 3 to 6 month (or more) sabbatical to, as Harry says, "pursue personal interests such as traveling and competition level backgammon." Harry, who has been with Niakwa since it was founded in 1981, began his temporary leave of absence on August 1, 1994. According to Jerry Dederich, Harry is merely following in the foot steps of previous Niakwa Sabbaticalites. "First I took a sabbatical, then Pat Legg [Senior Niakwa Programmer] took a sabbatical, now I guess it's Harry's turn. If he returns, look out. I'm really going to put him to work," says Jerry.

Jay Routson

Jay joined Niakwa's Technical Department as a Product Analyst in June of this year. He received a BS of Computer Science from Northern Illinois University and has spent time teaching Cobol on mainframes at Harper Community College in Palatine, IL. For fun, Jay and his wife, Sharon, are currently raising two young Siberian Huskies. They hope to add three more pups to the family by the end of the year.

Niakwa BBS Listing

For your convenience, the following new information is available on the Niakwa BBS :

- Current Product Revisions
- Library Availability
- Marketing Bulletin (60 - 68)
- NPL Supported Platform Update
- Tech Notes (72 - 77)

NOTE: This information will no longer be presented in our new newsletter format.

To access the BBS, dial 1-708-634-6227. Set your communications parameters to 8 bit, no parity and 1 stop bit. The BBS adjusts automatically to baud rates up to 9600 baud. First time users - login as GUEST and leave a message to the SYSOP requesting a personal login and password. Your personal login and password will be provided to you during normal business hours.

Niakwa, Inc.
23600 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Mundelein, IL 60060

COMMUNITY NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Today's Niakwa News

EDITOR Amy Swab

STAFF WRITERS Harry Cohn, Jerry Dederich, Andy Warzecha

CONTRIBUTORS Craig Freeman, Charley Knox, Paolo Raggi

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1st Annual 10th Anniversary/Worldwide Conference and Training

Coming soon...Niakwa's 1st Annual 10th Anniversary/Worldwide Conference & Training. This unique, October 9 - 13 Chicago event is sure to provide something for everyone. For the business person: a 1993 business review, FY '95 forecast, sales technique presentations, technical sessions, marketing plans, Showcase of Products. To satisfy your adventurous side: a gangster style dinner with entertainment and, and time and weather permit-

ting, rides in Jerry's open cockpit biplane. For the technical connoisseur: two days of training, including NPL Release IV Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced Training as well as NPL Gateway to MS-Windows API Training.

Cash in on this excellent opportunity to meet the entire Niakwa staff and dozens of Niakwa Developers from all over the globe. Send in your registration today!



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