

newslog

Preview:

JAN 29–FEB 1. Comnet '96 will focus on "Enterprise Network Without Boundaries: How To Compete When the Enterprise Goes Global." The meeting, to be held in Washington, D.C., will feature 400 exhibitors. For information, call 800-545-EXPO or 617-551-9800; fax, 617-440-0359.

DEC 8. Microsoft Corp., Redmond, Wash., announced a series of alliances with key rivals—including Sun Microsystems and Oracle—in a push to take a central role in developing the Internet. The companies will cross-license technologies to advance their software products for the Internet, with Microsoft incorporating Internet access features into all its PC products.

DEC 7. NASA said the Galileo spacecraft had entered a wide-ranging orbit around Jupiter to photograph and measure details of the solar system's largest planet for at least two years. A space probe released by Galileo plunged into Jupiter's hydrogenous atmosphere to measure its temperatures, density, and chemistry. Galileo, which has traveled 3.7 billion kilometers since 1989, is expected to make 11 circuits of Jupiter.

DEC 6. Silicon Graphics, Sun Microsystems, and Netscape Communications said they had formed a software development alliance. Combining Silicon Graphics' virtual reality software with Sun's Java programming language and JavaScript from Sun and Netscape, the companies said they wanted to speed up the development of interactive multimedia content for use on the Internet and corporate networks.

DEC 5. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Washington, D.C., said it had begun the largest auction

of airwave licenses to date, offering sections of the 900-MHz radio band for specialized mobile services. In the first round, the agency took in US \$7.8 billion, with a total of 1763 bids placed for 1020 licenses.

DEC 1. Stet, Italy's telecommunications group, said it had won a 25 percent stake in Russia's second largest state phone company, Svyazinvest, for \$639 million. Stet will also pay \$764 million to upgrade Svyazinvest's phone system—which operates 85 local phone companies—over the next two years.

NOV 29. The Chinese Aerospace Corp., Beijing, said an AsiaSat-2 satellite had been launched aboard a Long March rocket from Sichuan province in western China, and now covers the region from Moscow to New Zealand. The launch was the first in China since January, when a China-backed Apstar satellite blew up aboard a Long March rocket shortly after take-off. The company said it had already signed contracts for three other launches.

NOV 28. The United States Space Command, Colorado Springs, Colo., said a derelict Chinese spy satellite the size of a small car is getting ready to re-enter earth's atmosphere in early April. The satellite was launched in 1993 from a space complex in the Gobi Desert but malfunctioned 10 days later. Now about 160 km high, it could hit anywhere between 56.5 degrees north latitude and 56.5 degrees south—a swath that includes the continental United States.

NOV 21. The Hindu-nationalist Maharashtra state government in India tentatively agreed to let Enron Corp., Houston, Texas, go ahead with a multibillion-dollar power plant project that Hindu leaders had scrapped in August.

State officials said Enron and a government-appointed panel had agreed to reduce the costs of the project and of the electricity produced.

NOV 20. NEC Corp., Tokyo, said it had signed a deal with China's State Information Center to supply computers, software, and management know-how for China's \$1 billion project to set up a nationwide PC network. NEC and the center have been running experimental PC-network services in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou since February.

NOV 15. AT&T Corp. said it was offering 77 800 managers—half its supervisory force—financial incentives to leave the company by Jan. 13. While it is unclear how many employees will accept, insiders estimated the company will probably start cutting at least 20 000 jobs in mid-January as it separates its communications services, telecommunications equipment, and computer units.

NOV 15. NASA said astronauts aboard the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis and the Russian space station Mir had begun hauling supplies between the vessels after a flawless linkup in space, the second between the craft in four months. The Atlantis crew attached a port to Mir to make docking with shuttles easier and left behind two new solar-power arrays to extend the life of the 10-year-old Mir station.

NOV 15. U.S. and Japanese officials said talks to extend the 1991 bilateral semiconductor trade agreement had begun at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Osaka. The Electronic Industries Association of Japan is opposed to extending the agreement, saying that the Japanese market has already been opened up to foreign chip makers.

The U.S. government is expected to ask Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry to extend the pact to guarantee continued openness. Agreement on the issue is not expected until this summer.

NOV 15. Sony Corp., Tokyo, said it would enter the home PC market through an alliance with Intel Corp., Santa Clara, Calif. The companies have agreed to a long-term tie-up to develop hardware and software for PCs and other consumer electronics products. Sony said it would launch its first PCs in the United States this year, and in Japan and Europe next year.

NOV 15. Sprint Corp., Kansas City, Mo., and American Personal Communications Inc., Washington, D.C., said they had started the third wireless phone network in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area—the first U.S. market where customers can now choose among three companies offering personal communications services. The partnership grew out of the FCC's award of new local wireless licenses in previously two-company markets.

NOV 14. Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co., St. Paul, said it would spin off its data storage and imaging businesses into a separate company, sell its audio- and videotape business, and cut 5000 jobs—2400 in Minnesota—from its worldwide workforce of 85 000 this year.

NOV 13. Kokusai Denshin Denwa Co., Tokyo, said it would join with Korean Telecom, Singapore Telecom, and the International Telecommunications Administration of Taiwan to build an Asian communications network exclusively for the Internet. Traffic on the new network will initially run at 128 kb/s, rising later to 2 Mb/s.

SALLY CAHUR, *Editor*