SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL
RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

COMPUTING DIVISION

DISTRIBUTED INTERACTIVE COMPUTING NOTE 700

TRIP REPORT   issued by
CERN WORKSHOP   R W Witty
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                    Ext Links/CERN file
                    DIC Note file

1.   Introduction.

      Tony Williams and Rob Witty went to the last afternoon session of the HEP
      computing workshop and the evening reception given by ICL.

2.   Poduska and Apollo.

      Bill Poduska had come over to sell Apollos to CERN. Apollo had A4 black
      and white and 'A3' landscape black and white systems on display; no
      colour machine. They shared one small room with ICL's 3 PERQs. Real
      head-to-head.

      Poduska, Howes and Slater of UK plus Apollo European staff were busy.
      Poduska took senior CERN people to lunch.

      CERN are keen on Apollos because they run Fortran well. Its that simple!

      Poduska gave a talk at the workshop. He had been asked to make it non
      commercial but gave his standard sales presentation. He did not get a
      particularly friendly reception from the audience.

      He spoke of future developments are producing a family of processors!

      a.   high end: colour, high performance, array processor

      b.   low end: half current price ($30K down to $15K) with today's
            performance and desk top size.

      Rumour has it that the low cost machine is code named 'Swallow' and will
      appear at end of 1983. It will be half current price, have a landsacpe
      display, with 2 processor boxes to make it fit on desk.

RWW speculated that 'family of processors' probably (32 bit version).
Cost reduction will be possible because M680X0 series will have 'proper'
page faulting so will remove need for second M68000 in Apollo reducing
complexity and cost and probably improving performance.

APOLLO ARE ANNOUNCING UNIX NEXT MONTH. This is probably going to run as
sub-system under existing Aegis operating system.

3.   Willers.

Ian Willers of CERN gave a talk after Poduska which was going to be about
PERQ and Apollo but after the 'commercial' from Poduska he mainly stuck
to his ICL produced slides and gave an inaccurate in places talk about
PERQ. (It is always painful watching 'technology transfer' at work -
information is lost/garbled at each step).

RWW spoke to Ian Willers privately the next day and he seemed well
disposed to collaborate with RAL.

Ian says Rene Brun is used as 'evaluation' mechanism for SUS. He sits
down at machine and tries to get HTV graphics package working. What he
doesn't like is recorded as CERN's opinion! Because he got HTV running
well on Apollo in short elapsed time (and failed on PERQ) CERN say Apollo
better than PERQ. Willers knows this is simplistic.

I had dinner with Willer's boss, Les Robertson, who seemed a reasonable
bloke. I worked hard on him and gather that no big SUS purchases are
likely this year but some likely next, especially for electrical CAD.

4.   CERN

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                    Director General (Schopper)
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               |Director
            (Erwin Gabathula)
               |
               |
            DATA HANDLING
            Div Head
            (Paola Zanella)
               |
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       |               |               |               |                     |
    SOFTWARE        SYS SUPPORT     IBM SYS         USER SUPP             (Rinus
    Les Roberston   (Hans Grote)   (David Lord)    (Chris Jones)         (Verkerk)
       |            (Physicist support                                      |
       |             plus graphics)                                         |
       |               |                                            Mike Leatheram
    LANGUAGES, MICROS   |                                           (Electronics
    (Julian Blake)      |                                              CAD)
       |             (Rene Brun)
       |             (HTV graphics
    PERSONAL WORK-   package -
    STATIONS         40K lines: put
    (Ian Willers)    on Apollo as
                     guinea pig user)
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