

**Distinguished
Members**

Platinum

InfoScience Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts
(617) 421-0610

Gold

Microfilm Design Corporation
Rockville, Maryland
(301) 291-2685

Scoutair Systems, Inc.
Kensington, Maryland
(301) 944-9123

Silver

Aurion Corporation
Plym, Texas
(800) 747-2706

Brighton & Women's Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts
(617) 732-7889

MTA Electronic Division
Secaucus, New York
(201) 746-2677

Omega Healthcare Information Management
Bethesda, Maryland
(301) 987-4700

Bronze

Collaborative Medical Systems (CoMed)
Waltham, Massachusetts
(617) 642-6200

The Computerized Company
Reston, Virginia
(703) 300-2300

Cap Data Services, Inc.
Hingham, Massachusetts
(617) 749-2675

Data Innovations, Inc.
South Burlington, VT
(703) 679-2520

ESE Technology Corporation
Nashua, Massachusetts
(703) 673-3300

Gencom Technology Corporation
Woburn, Massachusetts
(617) 937-9800

Home Effect & Company
Wellesley, Massachusetts
(617) 236-4240

Interactive Systems & Management Corp.
Little Falls, New Jersey
(201) 296-7677

KB Systems, Inc.
Fresno, Virginia
(703) 263-0007

Kennedy Memorial Hospital
Cherry Hill, New Jersey
(609) 426-4700

MDP Laboratories
Eubank, Ontario, Canada
(416) 675-8520

MUNIPY Audio FAX, Inc.
Waco, Texas
(817) 263-7211

Omiga Legal Systems, Inc.
Phoenix, Arizona
(602) 967-5248

Gateway to M or Gateway to M Markets

by Pamela G. McIntyre

Oracle's transparent gateway to M is no doubt one of many competitive challenges facing the M community (see related article on page 9). The question is "What is the M community going to do about it?" Or, should they do anything? The VA's DHCP system has been a cornerstone of the M market for decades, and there's no telling how many others use M simply because they need to interact with and be compatible with the VA's systems. If at some point the VA chooses to change its computing platform, a large piece of the M market will disappear. If the new platform works well, we may then see other M domains fall.

Technology can be a double-edged sword. While we welcome the "new" connectivity, we must be wary of its implications. The transparent gateway may one day become the avenue through which new technology replaces M completely (the first leak in the dam so to speak). So, the M community needs to be either looking for ways to remain competitive in its existing markets or looking for new markets, just as Oracle (and everyone else) has.

No one knows M's strengths and weaknesses better than M people yet we continue to be outdone by our competitors. One has only to look around to see many software success stories as well as brilliant marketing strategies. Netscape comes to mind immediately, not to mention giants like Microsoft. I suspect the level of success has much less to do with actual capabilities than it does with good marketing and perhaps public relations.

As the managing editor of *M Computing*, I feel a certain obligation to print not only technically-oriented articles but articles on successful marketing techniques, business planning, and strategic planning. While it is wonderful that there are so many dedicated and faithful technical people involved with M, that by itself will not guarantee survival. Identifying and responding to market demands will.

If the M community had recognized the potential problems with the DHCP system, perhaps the VA would not be calling on Oracle to fix the problem, which begs another question. Why can't these problems be fixed via M? I have read about how open M is, how portable it is, how easy it is to program in. Well?

Or, perhaps the problem can be fixed through M but this is not the most cost-effective or time-sensitive solution. And if that is the case, then red flags should be going up. Why isn't M the best solution to this problem? If the M community is not taking a very serious look at what the rest of the technological world is doing and why, then we might as well throw in the towel now. We're about to enter the twilight zone.

Welcome to Viewpoint. The opinions expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of MTA. The purpose of Viewpoint is to express just that—a point of view. Guest writers and responses to columns are welcome and will be printed at the discretion of the MTA. Email: MTA1994@aol.com

Pamela G. McIntyre received a B.S. degree in biology from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree in business and information systems from the University of Maryland. She has spent over 13 years in the field of information management and is currently a freelance writer, editor, graphic artist, and the managing editor of M Computing. Email: 71321.2635@compuserve.com