Participants' Review

Ed. note: When we asked Dave Whitten for permission to publish his comments that appear below, he volunteered that "This was a great conference . . . I learned something valuable from every session I attended." This remark, and those following from Chuck Marshall and Max Rivers, represent the kinds of reactions we heard from many participants.

In response to a question on the Internet MUMPS list re MTA Conference sessions on Java and M, Dave Whitten (VA Medical Center, Houston) wrote:

I attended several of those sessions.

There were several different approaches as you say. Just to get the ball rolling, I'm going to throw out several of the ideas I remember hearing people talk about:

1) ESI has built some powerful re-engineering tools to recast the M[UMPS] database as an object database. This includes access through multiple languages such as Java or C++, and several object brokers, like CORBA. The data stays in the M[UMPS] system, but the external systems use their own access methods to get to it.

2) KB/SQL continues their fine work with ODBC and SQL access to the M system. I heard of one non-M vendor who was providing an ODBC to JDBC conversion engine that could open access to the M system transparently from a Java application (using the JDBC-Java Database Connection) (one vendor called this JBMS, by the way, so it looks like I may be a bit confused about what the Java Community calls their Database stuff)

3) InterSystems is actively developing multiple paths to M systems, their Cache product has both the ODBC/SQL link, as well as their Object data linkage.

It will be pretty exciting to see where this technology is going.

4) CyberTools is developing their design one system and deploy multiple implementations strategy by allowing folks to generate Java applets, character based applications, and X-Windows screens from a single design.

5) Eclipsys is using a modified form of the JavaBean system called the Databeans to transport data from centralized M[UMPS] systems out to browsers on individual workstations. This appears to be a modified form of the classic 3 tier database model, using HTML/Java as the Presentation Layer, An in-house system for the Business Rules Layer, and M[UMPS] for the Database Layer.

6) Micronetics showed their PDQ-Web product and hinted at other Java/Web solutions they have planned. I assume these will be evaluated by InterSystems and brought forward as there is a business case for them.

Chuck Marshall, in Applications Programming/Support at the University of Michigan-Medical Center Information Technology, wrote to us: Thanks for putting on an informative and entertaining conference. I think I've gained some good insights which may help me and my employer in the near future.

And from Max Rivers, CEO of Simple Windows, Inc., who showcased his product in the Solutions Center: I want to thank all of you for the great work you did on the MTA Conference. It provided our company with the perfect opportunity to show our product in exactly the right atmosphere, to exactly the right people. The Solutions Center was relaxed and yet professional, well attended and yet never crowded or hectic. **M**