



Mission Statement: Meeting the array of needs for the established IT professional while seeking to develop the IT profession and provide a service to our community and society.

A Publication of the Minnesota Information Professional Society (www.mnips.org) – Vol. 8, No. 3, March 2007

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Published nine times per year (September – June) by the Minnesota Information Professional Society. We welcome materials for publication (articles, news or letters). Submit materials on disk or via email to:

Bob Groethe
3301 Girard Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55408
Tel. (612) 716-5605
E-mail: newsletter@mnips.org

NOTE MEETING INFORMATION

MEETING PLACE:
Holiday Inn – Bloomington
35W at 94th St.
Phone (952) 884-8211

Meeting Times:

5:00 PM Social Hour
6:00 PM Buffet Dinner
6:45 PM Meeting & Program
8:00 PM Adjourn

For a Dinner and Program Reservation, send email to: reservations@mnips.org

no later than 5 pm on
Thursday, Mar. 15

\$28 Members
\$33 Non-members

Meeting NOTICE

Tuesday, March. 20, 2007

Minnesota Information Professional Society

Note: The MnIPS Networking Event has been indefinitely suspended.

Dinner Topic:
“Open Source for Grown-ups in Enterprises”
Speaker:
David Bahn

SPEAKER TOPIC

From LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP) all the way to ERP, Open Source software options for organizations have been expanding very rapidly in recent years. But is open source ready for deployment into the business enterprise? Professor David Bahn will explore the issues (risks, support options, integration, upgrades, training, etc.) associated with enterprise OS within “grown-up” IT infrastructures that are composed of a complex mix of proprietary and open source software components. He will also describe the TAOSE project, an exciting new initiative to prepare Minnesota organiza-

tions for opportunistic adoption of open source.

SPEAKER PROFILE

Dr. David Bahn is an Associate Professor of Management Information Systems at Metropolitan State University's College of Management. A former systems analyst, he received his Ph.D. in Information and Decision Sciences from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and his MBA from the New York University.

The author of several articles on information technology, Dr. Bahn's current R&D work focuses on open source software issues in business organizations. Dr. Bahn is one of the founding faculty members of the Center for Strategic Information Systems & Security (www.StrategicIT.org), a new center of excellence in the Minnesota State Colleges & University (MNSCU) system. Dr. Bahn directs the undergraduate program in Management Information Systems at Metropolitan State University and has developed new courses on supply chain information systems and electronic commerce.

Dr. Bahn is also a consultant on IT planning and implementation for business and government or-

ganizations. He lives with his wife and son in suburban Minneapolis, where he enjoys bicycling down many of the Twin Cities' commuter trails.

President's Letter

Greetings! Welcome to March. It seems a good time to provide an update on activities within MnIPS.

We are pleased to now have 52 members for the remainder of the 2007 program year through August 2007. Thank you to everyone who has signed up during our membership drive. I hope that this coming year will bring you the rewards of knowledge and fellowship and fun. The free membership goes to Lonny Gulden – Congratulations, Lonny and thank you for joining! A re-drawing was required, as the initial winner had not actually paid dues for this year; my apologies for the confusion.

Since we are moving closer to officer elections in May, please see Ken Kaiser's article in this newsletter listing positions that are or will be open within MnIPS. Volunteering is a way to share your knowledge and experience and make the group stronger. It is also a way to have a voice in how the organization functions. Without dividing these efforts by many volunteers, less can be accomplished well.

Santhi, our Marketing chairperson, has been in contact with Da-

kota County Community College to spread the word of MnIPS among students there. She is checking into getting a booth at a career fair to reach more students who will soon be entering the wonderful world of IT. Santhi is also looking into having a session at the college where we could have a presenter and informal networking.

Plans for the Education Seminar on Infrastructure Revitalization are coming along well, filling up the slate of presenters with a great selection of topics (see elsewhere in the newsletter for more details). Now is a good time to learn about making these updates at your company! Please contact me if you are interested in presenting, sponsoring or volunteering for this event. You will be receiving an e-mail version of the flyer in the near future, to sign up as an attendee.

The Board did not receive any response to the request for proposal for a Golf Outing that met the requirements to satisfactorily limit exposure of financial loss, while building MnIPS' profile and membership. Therefore, it appears that there will be no Golf Outing this year. This does not rule out such an activity in the future; please contact me or another Board member at any time with a proposal.

We are again planning to have a summer boat trip, probably in July, and will let you know more about that in the future. With the recent snowfall it is hard to think

of being out in a boat – but summer will come!

And of course we have the next dinner meeting on March 20, with presentation from long-time friend MnIPS David Bahn, on Open Source. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

– Chris Retkwa,
MnIPS President
president@mnips.org

Earl Joseph



Longtime Technology Enthusiast

It was very sad to hear that Earl Joseph has passed away. A lot of us in Twin Cities technology circles had Earl as a friend. He mentored us, challenged us, led us, and educated us. I think, for a lot of us, he sort of became our "Technology Dad".

Earl was a strong supporter and participant in professional associations. In addition to three presentations at MnIPS, and creating cartoons for the MnIPS newsletter for five years, Earl was a founder and served as a director of the Minnesota Futurists; the founding Chairman of the Minnesota Computer Industry Coalition (MCIC); member of

the IEEE, ACM, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Robotics Section of Society of Manufacturing Engineers, the Society for General Systems Research and the founding president of its Minnesota's chapter. He was President of the Twin Cities chapter of the ACM for 1976/77 and 1986/87; Co-Program Chairman of the 1981 Society for General Systems Research International Conference; General Chairman for the national ACM 75 conference, and the World Futures Society's 1991 conference "Creating the 21st Century." Earl was chosen to be the World Futures Society's 2001 Annual Conference chair.

He was the founder and Editor of the journal *Futurics*; Advising Editor for the journals *Futures*, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Cultural and Educational Futures*; Editor of the newsletter *Future Trends*; Former Editor of the *Systems Trends* newsletter and *MCIC Newsletter*; was featured worldwide on 100's of TV and radio programs and in science fiction books. On a lighter note, Earl was the Science Guest of Honor at the 25th anniversary meeting of MINICON 25 (a Twin Cities Sci Fi Convention). In 1996, during the 50th year of computers, Earl was honored with his picture on a poster for the event.

Many of us who have met Earl in the last 20 years might not know of his early career. He was a pioneering scientist and management consultant. He held three

computer patents; was the systems architect of five major computer systems; authored chapters in 50 books and had published over 500 technical, managerial, educational, and scientific papers. Earl made over 100 presentations per year (over 4000 in his career). He has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Business Week*, *U. S. News & World Report*, *Science News*, and many other national publications.

The *Wall Street Journal* claims Earl was the first in Corporate America to have the title of "Futurist," *Business Week* claims he was one the first to use the phrase "smart machine" and forecast that the central processing unit (CPU) of computers would become a "bulge in the cable." He was a member of an early 1970's team that initially studied and outlined the design of The Internet. He convinced the Defense Department at a Naval Academy workshop to fund the development of Very High Speed Large Scale Integration (VLSI/VHSI) circuit chip technology that lead to today's chip advances.

Until 1983, Earl was with Sperry Univac for 32 years as a computer scientist including 20 years as a staff scientist/futurist. Earl directed and managed large complex computer and communications projects, departments and divisions and performed the system design, logic design, programming and manufacture of a number of computers. The ERA 1101 computer started the com-

puter industry in Minnesota and Earl was its first programmer. Earl's picture at the 1101 computer console was on a poster at the 1999 Minnesota state fair. In 1960 Earl had in operation the first embedded computer, now known as a "smart machine," it was for the Nike Zeus Multi-function Array Radar and missile detection system for a Anti-Ballistic Missile system.

Earl was also an educator. He served as an adjunct professor and a visiting lecturer at the University of Minnesota designing and teaching graduate level courses on alternative futures. He was a Walden University Professor (Management Department), St. Thomas University Professor, and on Metropolitan State University Faculty. He was the futurist in residence at the Science Museum of Minnesota; a distinguished visiting lecturer for the IEEE Computer Society; and a lecturer for DPMA, WFS, ACM and ASM. Earl designed and taught hundreds of university level courses in the areas of computers, business, management, marketing, advertising, entrepreneuring, futures, and other topics. Earl taught at all education levels; K-12, college and graduate. Earl received the 2001 Community Connections Award from Normandy College.

I think Earl would be happy to be described as an "enthusiast". Technologists confer respect with "professional", "expert", "guru", "wizard", etc., all of which describe knowledge, not emotion. All of those applied to

Earl, but I don't think they capture his essence. All new technology seemed to be an exciting opportunity to Earl. Every time I talked to him, he was jazzed about something. That was part of what made him fun (and challenging) to listen to as a futurist. But his optimism was also an invitation because he had faith in our collective ability and determination to solve the social, physical, and conceptual problems that get in the way of technology making the world better.

Who will replace Earl as our anti-cynic?

– Bill McTeer,
MnIPS Audit & Bylaws
bylaws@mnips.org

StarTribune Obituary 27Feb07:
<http://www.startribune.com/466/story/1030068.html>

Minnesota Futurists website:
<http://www.mnfuturists.org/>

Call for Volunteers

In a few months the terms of our MnIPs officers will be coming to a close and some have expressed a willingness to pass the torch on to other in our organization. Therefore, a great opportunity has presented itself for you to become more involved in our wonderful organization and have more control in its direction. Please consider whether your talents, abilities, and desires would be a benefit to our organization and whether serving on

the Board would enhance your personal sense of accomplishment.

We are looking for volunteers to fill the following Board member openings: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Newsletter editor. The current editor has stated that he is willing to stay in the position for about another year, but would like to find someone to mentor and slowly grow into the position.

The responsibilities for these positions are outlined below and can be found in more detail on our website at www.mnips.org/doc/MnIPS-Roles_Responsibilities.pdf.

Please contact a current Board member if you would like more personal slant on the positions. If you are interested in one of these opportunities please email me at volunteer@mnips.org.

President –

- Mentors elected officers by setting expectations and offering guidance with issues that come up over the year.
- Should meet 2 –3 times a year with elected officers to strategize regarding the organizations direction.
- Provides a monthly article to the newsletter to promote the organization and offer guidance to its members on appropriate subjects based on current IT events.
- Promotes the organization at monthly meetings and special events by explaining and selling the organization to all members and non-members encouraging involvement in

the organization through serving on the board and volunteer work.

Vice President –

- Stays involved in all aspects of the organization, from an overview standpoint in order to understand what needs to happen to continue leadership within the organization. Vice President is expected to become a candidate for President the following year.
- Mentors non-elected board members as necessary in order to help them move forward with their efforts in the organization.

Secretary –

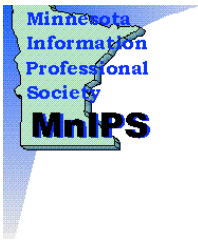
- Mentors non-elected board members as necessary in order to help them move forward with their efforts in the organization. Committees are assigned to Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer by second month of the beginning of the MnIPS year.

Newsletter Editor/Committee chair –

- Serves as a member of the Board and oversees the work of the Newsletter committee. The Newsletter committee shall be responsible for preparing a newsletter for the Organization. The committee will accept input from other members of the organization to add to the newsletter. It is published nine times a year.

Thank you,

– Ken Kaiser,
MnIPS Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@mnips.org



Clean Up Your Act: Moving Infrastructure into the 21st Century

12th Annual Educational Seminar - Data Fact Sheet

When: Wednesday, April 25th, 2007, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Where: University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul
Contacts: Chris Retkwa – president@mnips.org
Additional information at www.mnips.org

Cost: \$148 per registration, with early-bird, student and group registration discounts available

What: The primary goal for this session is to present attendees with a comprehensive look at solutions and best practices surrounding revitalizing out-of-date systems to benefit from the latest infrastructure enhancements available to an Information Technology organization.



The format of the presentation is as follows:

- 1) Registration, Introduction and Welcome
- 2) Presentations from experts, users and vendors on:
 - Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)
 - Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)
 - Project Management of transition projects
 - Best Practices for administration of servers
 - Release Management
 - Single Sign-On
 - Website Tune-up
- 3) Lunch and Table Top Displays
- 4) Corporate Lessons Learned – multiple “20 minute” presentations from hands-on resources
- 5) Q & A Panel – speakers from throughout the day answer attendee questions in a panel format

Sponsorship Opportunities available for lunch and breaks

The **target audience** for this seminar is IT Managers and Senior Developers in Fortune 1000 companies who are involved in infrastructure planning and need a broad understanding of the various aspects of this topic. Based on past Education Seminars, and the topic selected, we anticipate 40 – 60 IT decision makers in attendance.

Potential Speakers are requested to submit a Topic Title, with a 2-3 sentence description of your presentation suggestion. Complete presentations are due a month in advance of the seminar.

If your company is interested in **Sponsorship** the following opportunities are available: Registration, Lunch/Breaks and Seminar Marketing. In addition, if you would like a **tabletop display**, please contact Chris Retkwa for details.

MnIPS is a volunteer-run organization for IT professionals in the Twin Cities area. MnIPS seeks to meet an array of needs for the established IT professional while seeking to develop the IT profession and provide a service to our community and society.



Outsourcing

(Summary of the Feb. 2007 dinner topic presented and written by Mani Subramani, Associate Professor at the Information and Decision Sciences (IDSc) Dept., Carlson School of Management, U of M.)

Outsourcing - the decision to take advantage of market efficiencies in a make vs. buy choice - is quite familiar to most managers. Through such an arrangement, firms rely on external vendors to manufacture items or provide specialized service so that the client firm can focus on activities that it enjoys a natural advantage on. In general, sourcing arrangements are seamless, and end-customers are often transparent to the specific details of firms performing the outsourced work. Offshoring is a specific form of outsourcing in which a firm works with a vendor that is geographically remote from the client firm, often being located overseas.

In dynamic markets in many industries where product and service innovations by firms are critical to competitive advantage, the ability of firms to leverage the expertise available in the broader business network is increasingly becoming important for firm performance. These demands are increasingly forcing firms to re-examine their management and business processes

and identify those that differentiate the firm and those that merely provide parity. The latter set of processes thus provides opportunities for firms to advantageously leverage the expertise of external vendors and allows firms to not only lower their cost bases but also to become more agile and adaptable.

While outsourcing has been reasonably well understood in the production context, what differentiates the current situation from those of earlier times is the increasing trend towards digitization of businesses processes in firms. Along with high bandwidth communications and collaboration infrastructures that have become more broadly available in the US and in many parts of the world, it is increasingly very feasible for firms to disaggregate complex business processes such as customer service and new product design and have integrate tasks performed by specialized vendors.

For example, the entire customer-relations-management process can be divided into modules, such as sales transactions that can then be outsourced. This allows companies to focus on the efficient and competent execution in some parts of the core process, while benefiting from flexibility and innovation in other parts of the process. For example, a sales team may write up a sales presentation (the

unique value) and have it converted into PowerPoint slides by a vendor in India overnight (efficiency). A similar approach can be used for tasks like market research where the front-end component involving the process of developing questions and interacting with customers can be carried out in-house (unique value) while the structured analysis of the data and the reporting of the results can be performed by an external party specializing in these tasks (efficiency).

Beyond the obvious labor-cost savings however, such outsourcing of firm processes holds tantalizing prospects for strategic benefits that promise leading-edge firms greater competitive advantage. This is an issue not well understood and an issue a variety of researchers are examining.

Some companies have found that many IT projects would not become cost effective without OITO. Further, the quality and nature of work is of a kind that is often unavailable domestically. Agile Software, a maker of product-life-cycle management software, indicated that offshore outsourcing to India not only reduced costs by 15%, but the company got round-the-clock coverage it did not have before. Another start-up company, Airgain Inc., uses developers from Russia to create algorithms for superior broadband antennas and developed their first project with

venture capital funding of \$5 Million, something quite impossible without a lower cost base of high quality human capital available offshore. There is also evidence of strategic and performance benefits to companies from managing strategic offshore partnerships. Firms like GE and IBM have been able to expand into adjacent markets, learn to optimize internal processes to become a more competitive, dynamic, and strategically better-positioned company.

Researchers like Mani Subramani and Prof. Aks Zaheer are currently examining issues related to outsourcing of IT

services and IT enabled processes. Some of the questions they are focusing on are:

- What are the key challenges in managing IT-vendor relationships?
 - What are the key factors influencing performance of outsourced relationships?
 - What are the factors influencing the delivery of value in outsourced relationships?
 - short term outcomes – reduced costs
 - long term outcomes- innovation, strategic positioning
- How can firms enhance learning and innovation through IT outsourcing?
 - How does outsourcing influence the deployment of firm resources in IT related activities?
 - Can cutting back on internal processes with respect to managing/assessing IT potentially create risks of being held-up by vendor?
 - What are the risks of outsourcing? How can firms manage these risks?
 - What are the key processes involved in gaining strategic benefits from offshore outsourcing?

MnIPS Officers 2006-2007

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To view the full list of Officers, visit:
<http://www.mnips.org/doc/memserv.htm>