Such a Deal

Mark Hunter

Usually, all the big deals go down right *after* we close the monthly issue of *Centura Pro*. Here's one that came in just before. As you all know, Centura plans to acquire Raima Corp. for 5.8 million shares of stock. Raima is a privately-held company with a long history of producing small, high-performance databases, with an emphasis on databases that could be invisibly embedded in a third-party application. Its databases have never achieved wide acceptance in the larger world of enterprises, where executives want their databases to be visible, not invisible, and developers want much more control, at the expense of additional administration. But Raima's database engines are undeniably small and fast.

I won't burn valuable newsletter space explaining the more obvious parts of the deal. Go to Centura's Web site for details. But I did talk to Joe Falcone, Centura's Chief Technical Officer, to get a quick background on the implications of the deal.

Centura Pro: Raima's products are heavily oriented to 3GL programmers who make API calls. What are Centura's ideas about exposing Velocis to SQLWindows/32 developers with a native router? I know Velocis has an ODBC router, but it's just level 1, and not too solid at that.

Joe Falcone: We're looking at ways of interfacing CTD to Velocis, including OLE DB.

Let me explain that. Velocis is interesting to us because it can be positioned effectively against competitors like Pervasive.SQL for customers interested in a hybrid architecture instead of pure relational. We ran some benchmark tests between SQLBase, Velocis, and Pervasive.SQL, and the Centura and Raima products delivered the goods.

And we're thrilled to have database products to address both the Linux and RTOS markets. Finally, there are a lot of exciting developments in the next release of Velocis 3.0, so stay tuned.

[*Velocis is ANSI SQL-89 compliant, but it also retains its origins as a network database rather than a relational database. Thus the "hybrid" capabilities.*—*Ed.*]

Best Director Mark Hunter, **Best Actor** Dian Schaffhauser, **Lifetime Achievement Award** Shelley Doyle, **Best Special Effects** Paul Gould, **Best Animated Short** Mocha

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With the increasing emphasis on the small end of the device market, what will happen to CTD? The current work on CTD, making it thread-safe, is supposed to yield executables with smaller footprints. But will the executables be small enough to fit onto Windows CE devices and such? Is that a long-term target?

In the device and appliance markets, we are focused on data connectivity and storage, not on business logic. If you think about it, these small devices are going to rely even more on middle tier business logic than traditional PCs or network computers. I have some examples of devices that do no more than securely give an identification code to a reader—all the business logic is in the middle tier and the back end. Our goal is to provide the connectivity to allow an arbitrarily simple device to communicate with front and back office systems. In addition, our acquisition of Raima Corp. now provides us with solutions for the Windows CE and RTOS spaces for appliances and embedded systems. I believe that Centura will make a difference in the market by enabling a class of "information-rich" appliances and applications that provide substantially better functionality and service to consumers.

Any plans to move the SafeGarde security features (in the latest version of SQLBase) to Raima databases?

Yes, but because of the intellectual property dimensions of our SafeGarde technology, we will begin exploring this after the acquisition closes in June. There are several aspects of the SafeGarde technology which are the subject of patent applications. We intend to take advantage of our lead in the marketplace for end-to-end security solutions. It makes sense to extend this advantage to Raima products.

Beyond cloning

Reader David Nelson, of BCC Advertising Systems in Sydney, Australia, pointed out that the techniques I used in "Go Clone Yourself" last February can be easily extended. Nelson uses a technique in which the instance of the UDV passes itself into its own function, thus:

```
Call ScheduleWait.Display( ScheduleWait )
```

With this technique, the functional class that tracks a business object can also be responsible for displaying a form or dialog that manipulates the values within that object. As Nelson notes, "one functional class can be used to control the creating/messaging/closing of the dialog and the data that the dialog displays. This is particularly useful where you want to create one wait dialog, but have many functions (or UDVs) control the refreshing of what it displays during complex processing. This is done by passing the cScheduleWait class as a parameter to a function—`cScheduleWait: p_ScheduleWait`—and then calling the functions as above." A spud gun goes out to Mr. Nelson! **CP**