



Big Blue plays host to Unix

By MICHAEL COONEY, Somers, N.Y.

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IBM this week will announce enhancements to its OpenEdition for MVS platform designed to ensure a role for the Big Iron in Unix-based client/server networks.

According to analysts briefed last week and documents obtained by *Network World*, OpenEdition for MVS will support new Unix-based client/server applications, IBM LAN Server and Novell, Inc. NetWare LANs. It will also support IBM's object-based System Object Model (SOM) and C++ application development language.

OpenEdition is Distributed Computing Environment-based software that lets users run native Unix applications on the main-

frame.

Version 5.2.2 of the platform will be able to run the R3 suite of client/server applications from SAP AG, based in Germany. The R3 applications have become increasingly popular because of their ease of use and ability to run on a variety of multivendor platforms.

R3 includes an assortment of financial, human resource and other back-office applications that can run on mainframes and workstations, or a combination of the two.

Analysts said the new application support is an all-out effort by IBM to get developers to bring Unix applications to the mainframe.

"SAP's R3 was a big threat to IBM because a lot of users were running the applications

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everywhere but the mainframe," said Anura Guruge, an independent analyst based in New Ipswich, N.H. "By embracing SAP, IBM could have a real winner on its hands."

To open up these mainframe-based Unix applications to as many users as possible, sources said OpenEdition for MVS will include hooks into IBM's LAN Server network operating system as well as its LAN Resource Extension and Services (LANRES) product.

LANRES lets the mainframe act as a NetWare server, meaning NetWare users will also have access to Unix applications on the OpenEdition mainframe.

"IBM wants to expand the connectivity options users have and open up the mainframe to as many client/server platforms as it can," said Frank Dzubeck, president of the Communications Network Architects, Inc. consultancy in Washington, D.C.

Support for SOM, IBM's technology for developing object class libraries and programs, will enable IBM to port upwards of 900 existing class libraries to the mainframe to help users more easily and quickly develop object-based Unix applications.

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Additionally, the new version of OpenEdition for MVS will be compliant with X/Open, Inc.'s XPG 4.0 specification, which implements 1,100 of the attributes X/Open defines as being Unix-compliant. In the future, OpenEdition will be compliant with XPG 4.2, also known as Spec 1170, which defines 1,170 such attributes. In essence, support for these specs will enable users to run increasingly more functional Unix applications on the MVS mainframe.

"In expanding the accessibility of Unix applications on the mainframe, IBM has lessened the vulnerability of the mainframe to replacement by Unix-based systems," Guruge said. "In return, Unix users gain the reliability and power of an MVS mainframe."

Users said the enhancements to OpenEdition were useful, but more work needs to be done.

"What we really need are the DCE-based cell directories and improved security, and until IBM implements those things, it's not a complete open solution," said Mike Guidry, a manager with Phillips Petroleum Co. in Bartlesville, Okla.

IBM acknowledged that the announcement would take place this week but gave no other details.

OpenEdition for MVS 5.2.2 will be available Sept. 29. Pricing could not be obtained by press time. **Z**

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