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Happy Birthday America!

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Must Have Applications

After several hours of research, we have found three applications that we believe can be beneficial to your company's organization.

One of the major benefits is that all three applications are browser-based. *What does browser-based mean?* It means you access and run the applications from the same browser software that you currently use to access the Internet. *Why is this of benefit?* One, is there is no need to install additional software on everyone's PC. Two, the application is designed to be run over the Internet, therefore available to anyone anywhere as long as they have access to the Internet or your internal network.

Another benefit is that all three applications are Open Software, therefore available with no license fees. It also means source code is available to allow the applications to exactly fit your needs.

Are you excited yet? At least is your curiosity peaked?

Document Management

The first application is a document management tool. *What is document management?* In a nutshell, it provides the ability to organize all types of documents, no matter how they were created. The goal being to provide an easy means for everyone to locate documents as needed. It is a start towards a more "paperless" office.

Features

You can define as many categories as required. You can also define as many sublevels of categories as needed. Categories and sublevels can be added at any time. As an example categories may represent Customers, Projects, Employees, Policies, Specifications, etc.

When you "upload" or want to file a document, you have the ability to browse your file systems to locate an existing document, graphic, or spreadsheet. To help future retrieval you can add a brief summary of what the document contains. The summary can simply be a list of keywords, such as customer number, job number, subject matter, etc.

During the set-up process of



the application, users and groups are assigned. Security is controlled at the group level. A user can be a member of more than one group. As you store each document you assign which groups have view/edit access, view only access or no access.

When you want to retrieve a document, you can drill down through the categories or use the search feature. The search feature allows you to enter keywords and lists all documents that match your keywords. Very similar to using a search engine on the Internet.

If you have edit access, you can retrieve the document for editing. A log is automatically created saving who and the date the document was checked out. This assists someone who selects the same document and informs them that the document is in a state of being revised.

Once you have completed your revisions, you check the document back in. A revision log is updated so everyone can review a list of revisions and know who changed it and when.

A nice feature is that all document revisions are saved. This allows you to promote or make a previous revision the active version.

One last feature is the mes-

sage board. For each document an unlimited number of messages with responses can be retained. This allows people to make comments, ask questions and provide responses without having to affect the actual document.

Other document management applications that we have reviewed were found to be very expensive. Usually starting at a base price of \$30,000 plus a license fee for each user. *Are they better?* We don't think so. We like this application because it is very easy and simple to use, yet provides a good deal of flexibility and capabilities. The only costs associated with this product is the initial time required to install and configure.

If you would like to take a test drive, we have a sample set-up at doc.ahinc.com. Use the login name of demo and a password of password.

Groupware

The second application incorporates several features. An overview of this application is it provides the means to share information in several formats or venues. You pick the best method to share information, depending on the type of information you need to disseminate.

Groupware is divided into these selections: Contacts, Shared

Calendar, To Do list, Projects, News, Partner Programs, Email, Forum and Headline. Selected sections can be removed if you feel that you would never use them. They can always be added again in the future.

Multiple contacts can be related to a particular company. Multiple dates can be recorded for each time you make a contact with an associated action. Each company can be assigned to groups defined by you to assist in organizing. Example groups could be Customers, Vendors, Manufactures, Finance, etc.

The calendar allows for entries of public or private appointments. Just like the document management application, security is controlled by users belonging to one or more groups.

There are too many features to list in this article. The best way to review this product is to visit our demo site at group.ahinc.com. Use the login demo and the password of password.

Email

The third application is Email. No great revelations here. The major benefit is not having to install any special Email applications on everyone's PC. The Email package provides a contact list (phonebook), spell



NEC

SONY

Panasonic USA



checker, attachments, personal calendar, user-defined mail boxes, etc.

If you have staff that is always on the move, they would have the ability to check their Email from anyone's computer as long as the PC had access to the Internet. For example, your sales staff may not carrying notebooks with them when they visit customers. Without having to set-up anything or change anything on a customer's PC, they could access their Email.

If fact, any of the information contained in the three applications could be accessed. This is one of the major benefits of browser-based applications.

An Email demo is available at iii.ahinc.com. Again, the login is demo and password is password. **Try it out! Try all of them!**

Keep in mind that the applications can be modified to fit the way you want them to work. You may want Email, Document Management and only Projects from Groupware. We can change the tabs or navigation buttons so that only the selections you want appear on all pages. These three applications provide us with the tools and materials that allows us to build the house you desire.

User s Group

Several years ago an attempt was made to organize our customers into a user's group. A few of you responded, but not enough to really be beneficial. So, I am going to try again.

Why Have A User's Group

With computer's providing more and more capabilities, it is difficult for us to keep up with the latest technology and even harder to keep all of our customer's informed. To even complicate the situation further is the task of separating the good from the bad or not so good. Some of this information we try to provide through this newsletter and some by Email. The downside of the newsletter or Email is that feedback is received from users one at a time and this feedback is difficult to share with customers, other than on a one-to-one basis.

A user's group would assist in relating the latest or most useful information on technology and ideas. Sharing successes or problems with each other can only turn out to be a benefit to everyone.

Vendor's could be invited to present demonstrations and provide hands on experience.

Ideas and needs can be shared that could result in cost saving benefits.

Who is in Control

Our intent is to only be a catalyst in starting the user's group. *We do not want to be in control.* The user's group would be controlled by the user's, not us. We would provide any guidance or assistance as requested.

Meeting Frequency

Again, this would be determined by you, the members. I would think, at the minimum, one monthly evening meeting would suffice. Everyone has busy schedules, but those interested should be able to free up one evening a month.

Meeting Place

Previously, some companies volunteered their facilities for holding meetings.

How to Get Started

To get this group off the ground, either call Roger at 630-941-9332 or send Email to roger@ahinc.com. *Do this today! Please don't put it off.* If you have a facility where meetings could be held, please provide that information. Other useful information you could provide would be... Number of persons interested? What time of the month is best to meet? What day of the week is best to meet?

**So, call or send that Email!
Let's get organized!**



Bad News for Microsoft

Info World conducted a poll during the week of June 14, 2002 of current users of **Microsoft** servers. The results were that 42 percent of respondents said that they are planning to switch to non-Windows software on the server side because of discontent with the company's controversial licensing plan for desktop products. The prospect of businesses gravitating away from Microsoft's servers could open up new opportunities for competitors such as Linux.

Euro-English

This joke is not computer related, but I felt it was too good to not include. Enjoy!

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded

that English spelling had room for improvement and accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would become known as "Euro-English".

In the **first year**, "s" will replace the soft "c".

Certainly, this will make the civil servants jump with joy.

The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k".

This should clear up confusion, and keyboards can have one less letter.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the **second year** when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with the "f".

This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the **3rd year**, public acceptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible.

Governments will encourage the removal of double letters which have always been a deterrent to accurate spelling.

Also, all will agree that the horrors of the silent "e" in the language is disgraceful and! it should go away.

By the **4th year** people will be receptive to steps such as replacing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v".

During the **fifth year**, the unnecessary "o" can be dropped from words containing "ou" and after this fifth year, we will have a really sensible written style.

There will be no more trouble or difficulties and everyone will find it easy to understand each other.

The dream of a united Europe will finally come true.

I guess if it ain't broke, don't fix it!



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