

Network Automation Formed



A bold venture based on Australian made and developed computer communication systems has resulted in the formation of a new Australian company – Network Automation.

When announcing the joint venture at a gathering of more than 60 people at CSIRONET headquarters in Canberra in February, the Hon. Neville Wran QC, the newly appointed Chairman of CSIRO, said that the venture showed again that CSIRO was committed to working closely with Australian industry.

"This joint venture is another example of how CSIRONET is becoming commercially oriented."

"It combines the research excellence of CSIRONET and the research and development work carried out by another Techway company, Network Research, with the marketing and commercial expertise of Techway Limited. We feel sure that this is a winning combination."

"Too often in the past, Australian individuals and organisations have developed exciting products that are world leaders but they have been forced to look to overseas companies willing to take up the challenge and exploit the product's commercial potential."

Network Automation's assault on international markets will be lead by its foundation product, the Ultranode. Chairman and founder of Techway Limited, Dr Peter Jones in describing the Ultranode at the joint venture launch called it the "winged-keel of computer communications". Dr Jones said that Network Automation has the capability to capture a significant share of the world market for computer communications, a market which will exceed \$1 billion annually by the end of the decade.

The first international distribution agreement, covering Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China, has already been established. Key markets identified for the venture also include North America, Europe, the Pacific basin countries, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Ultranode, known within CSIRONET as the Micronode, is a tried and proven product with more than 200 nodes installed and operating within CSIRONET's own computer network. The first node was installed in June 1983. The hardware, developed jointly by CSIRONET and Network Research (formerly Office Automation, a company acquired by Techway in April 1986), is manufactured in Canberra. The software was developed by CSIRONET.

Chief General Manager of CSIRONET, Mr David Glavonjic, explained that the product had already proved that it was competitive on the world market.

"In September last year, CSIRONET won a \$2 million contract for the data communications component of the



(Left to Right) Mr John Paine, Director of Software Research and Development – Network Automation; Dr Keith Boardman, Acting Chief Executive – CSIRO; the Hon. Neville Wran, QC, Chairman – CSIRO and Dr Peter Jones, Managing Director – Techway Limited at the February launch of the CSIRONET/Techway Limited joint venture.

\$20 million South Australian Justice Information System. The Ultranode forms the heart of this network. This tender was won against the best that the world had to offer in data communications."

Dr Keith Boardman, Acting Chief Executive, CSIRO in commenting on these contracts said that "they were won in the face of stiff competition from the private sector and clearly demonstrate that CSIRONET has the capability to compete successfully in the information technology marketplace".

The agreement between Techway Limited and CSIRONET will further the major strategic objectives of both shareholders: progressing the commercial orientation of CSIRONET and the increased penetration of worldwide networking markets for Techway Limited.

Australia is in a commanding position in terms of packet switching technology and the joint venture will bring together the best specialists in the country. The objective for 1990 is to capture a 10% share of this billion dollar international market.

The joint venture is a ground breaking exercise for CSIRONET, proving the capacity of the organisation to respond to the business community and private sector on a competitive, commercial basis. The fact that this product has been designed, developed and tested in Australia is significant. Mr Glavonjic, in commenting on the staffing arrangements for Network Automation, added that it was immensely satisfying for CSIRONET research and development staff that a product developed for use in the CSIRONET network, Australia's largest value added computer network, was now being exploited commercially. Some of these staff will be moving to the new company.

John Paine, Network Automation's Director of Software Research and Development and a CSIRONET employee for 22 years, was most recently manager of CSIRONET's network development team and before that, manager of the Packet Network Section.

Mr Paine joined CSIRO's Computing Research Division in 1963 when it was being formed. He began as a computer operator. By the late 1960's Mr Paine was a co-instigator of CSIRO's networking project to interconnect their Australia-wide computers and the formation of CSIRONET. ■

ULTRANODE — Just another black box?



Mr John Paine, "the great advantage of the Ultrinode is that it gives control of computer systems back to business managers".

"What can the Ultrinode do for me?"

Mr David Glavonjic, Chief General Manager of CSIRONET has a formidable response.

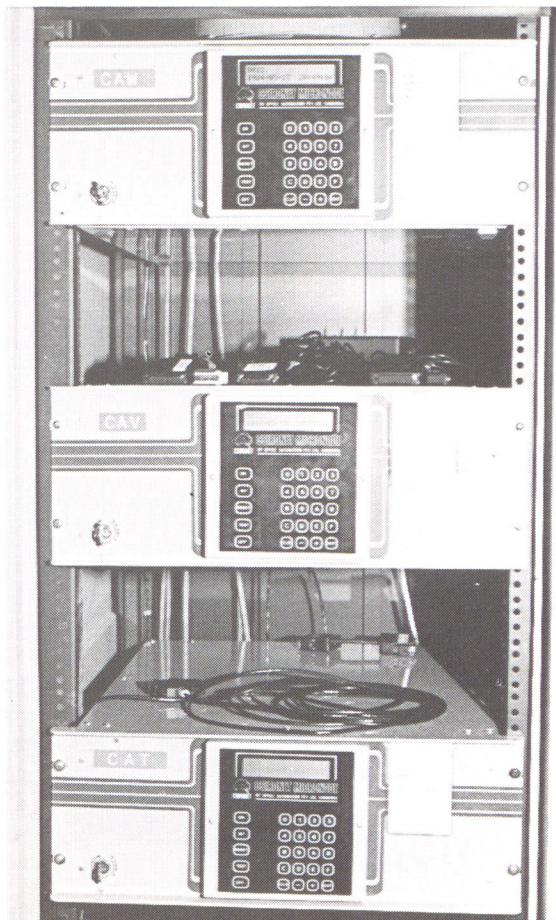
"Unlike communications systems developed solely for linking personal computers together, the Ultrinode can also link together mainframes and mini computers across areas as vast as Australia or even internationally. There are few products with its power and versatility on the world market today."

The Ultrinode is based on the Motorola 68000 CPU family with software written in Pascal to increase its portability and maintainability. As far as possible, Ultrinode software is modular which allows compatibility across a range of machines and ensures the same version is used on different machines.

An analogue-to-digital monitoring system monitors power supply voltages and operating temperatures and makes this information available remotely.

This feature helps to eliminate the need for on-site preventative maintenance. When parameters move outside redetermined thresholds, a scheduled replacement is made, usually before clients notice any impact on the service.

Each of the Ultrinode's 31 serial RS232C ports can be configured through software in a variety of ways and allows connections to asynchronous and 3270 binary synchronous terminals, cardreaders, plotters and lineprinters etc.



The Ultrinode, formerly known in CSIRONET as the Micronode, can be configured through software in a variety of ways allowing the interconnection of a wide range of terminals, printers and plotters.

Mr John Paine, Network Automation's Director of Software Research and Development, explains that the great advantage of the Ultrinode is that it gives control of computer systems back to business managers.

"With the explosion in the use of computers in business and government and the demand for the transfer of information between different parts of large organisations, managers are now being faced with the crippling problem of having incompatible systems."

"This incompatibility is limiting their ability to respond quickly to the changing demands of the market place and their organisations."

Solutions in the past have included the prospect of making all new purchases compatible with existing hardware and software investments, (even where more state-of-the-art or cheaper alternatives exist), maintaining independent systems that cannot be linked easily if at all or throwing the whole lot out and starting again.

Mr Paine emphasised, that with the Ultrinode, managers can link together their present systems even though formerly, they were considered incompatible. This means that purchasing decisions can be made on the most cost efficient basis and managers can regain control of their computer systems and use them to their best advantage. ■



Mr John Paine, Director of Software Research and Development explaining key features of the Ultranode to the Hon. Neville Wran Q.C. newly appointed Chairman of CSIRO.



**The Hon Neville Wran, QC
Chairman of CSIRO
Network Automation Press Conference
4 February 1987
Announcing the Formation of
Network Automation**

"I want to congratulate the joint venturers, CSIRONET and Techway, and in doing so wish to emphasise that today's announcement is symbolic of the shape of things to come: the shape of things for CSIRONET, CSIRO and, hopefully, Australian Industry."

TECHWAY Limited — A Profile

Techway Limited is a multi-million dollar Australian-owned supplier of information technology products and services.

It operates from headquarters in Milsons Point, NSW and is an unlisted public company with more than 75 shareholders.

Formed in 1979 Techway distributes and adds value to products made by other manufacturers (primarily US based), builds innovative Australian technology which incorporates such products and provides customer support for all the products it supplies.

The technology introduced by Techway may have been developed inhouse or by enterprises sponsored or acquired by Techway.

Major mining corporations, financial institutions, government departments and educational institutions form a large proportion of the customer base.

Prominent users of Techway products include CSIRO, Australian Iron & Steel, CRA, The Australian Taxation Office, Woodside Petroleum, Department of Defence, Telecom and Esso.

Techway has built a strong sales and marketing organisation to support this marketing effort with offices across Australia.

The company is committed to developing its own proprietary products which build on the most advanced technology available both through acquisition and the formation of new ventures.

The products stemming from these initiatives are necessary ingredients in achieving the high sales and profit growth planned by Techway.

The Techway Group of Companies recorded a consolidated profit before tax of \$339,960 on revenues of \$8.8million for the financial year ended June 30, 1986. ■

CSIRONET undertakes Market Research

As part of its drive to become more commercially oriented, CSIRONET has engaged a Sydney based firm *Brand Management* to undertake an advertising and market research campaign. The first advertisement was published in the bumper Christmas issue of *The Bulletin with Newsweek* and the first three editions of that magazine in January. Further advertisements are planned for the rest of the year.

The aim of the campaign is to let potential customers know that CSIRONET, a professional organisation concerned with providing the best possible service to its customers, is available to everyone.

Preliminary research has indicated that even amongst data processing professionals, there is a low level of understanding of the scope and range of services offered by CSIRONET. Amongst senior managers, this level of knowledge and understanding is even less.

In many ways the power and range of services offered by CSIRONET are a well kept secret. CSIRONET is trying to address the problem with this advertising campaign.

As well as taking the message to potential customers, CSIRONET is trying to inform present clients of the changes that are occurring in the organisation.

CSIRONET is a world leader in many aspects of the application of advanced information technology. We are working constantly to improve our services and make them accessible and easy to use. We want to get this message across to as many people as possible, in both the public and private sectors.

Some customers who have been using CSIRONET for many years may not be aware of the service upgrades that are continually occurring. We invite you to contact CSIRONET staff if you have any queries about how we may assist you.

CSIRONET is building on the pioneering work undertaken by its staff since its establishment as the CSIRO Computing Research Division in 1963. It continues to work towards becoming a focus for the Australian information technology industry. ■

NSW State Rail Chooses Ultranode

State Rail has awarded a \$3.4 million contract to Network Automation Pty Ltd for the supply of a wide-area network consisting of 84 Ultranode packet switching network nodes for installation throughout New South Wales.

The order – secured in competition with 15 other organisations – is the first to be awarded to Network Automation Pty Ltd.

State Rail Acting Chief Executive, Mr Pat Johnson, said the Ultranodes would be used to develop a totally integrated communications network providing high speed data links between the three different computer systems serving the Authority and for the many data management systems in use throughout the Authority.

The network will dramatically extend the range of information services provided by State Rail to its own branches, the travel industry and the public.

State Rail Acting Chief Executive, Mr Pat Johnson said Ultranodes will be phased into 40 sites throughout the state under the control of a network management centre operated by the State Rail's Signals and Communications Branch.

Implementation will start in April and take about eight months. From its first day of full operation the integrated network will have the capability to support up to 1200 terminals and allow the introduction of new services such as videotex, office automation and passenger information services. Reservation services may also be extended to independent travel agents. ■

CYBERNET Customers transferred to CSIRONET

CSIRONET is now providing services to most of Control Data Australia (CDA), CYBERNET customers in eastern Australia.

CDA has undergone significant changes as part of the company's recent restructuring program. One result has been their withdrawal from the computer bureau market. CSIRONET is well qualified to take over this task due to its long standing relationship with CDA and its extensive experience in providing such services.

Mr David Glavonjic, Chief General Manager of CSIRONET said that the transition to CSIRONET in most cases would be achieved with little disruption.

"Because of our experience, only minimal conversion work will be required for most customers."

Mr Glavonjic added that taking over this client base was just another example of how CSIRONET was becoming increasingly commercially oriented.

CYBERNET customers, currently numbering over 200, have been primarily using business, scientific and technical computing services. CSIRONET is well placed to support all of these computer applications.

Control Data Australia were vitally concerned that CYBERNET customers were properly looked after following their withdrawal from the computer bureau business.

CSIRONET staff started visiting CYBERNET customers in December last year to establish exactly what needed to be done to help them transfer.

CYBERNET customers who are new to CSIRONET will also have the opportunity to access the full range of CSIRONET services, fully backed by professional, technical support. ■