

Carly's Gone. What's Next For the 3000?

HP's a big company. As much as we'd like to think that the 3000 is a vital component of HP's business, the truth is that it was less than a blip on Carly's radar screen when her thoughts turned toward corporate growth and the eventual merger with Compaq. Now that Carly is gone, will the new leadership suddenly decide, as IBM did, that there is value in maintaining its proprietary system? It's doubtful at best. HP's position on the 3000 isn't likely to change.

Dave Wilde of vCSY emphasizes that HP continues to encourage their customers to talk to HP and HP's migration partners about issues they face with their transition. He says that HP is, "following through on our roadmap commitments outlined in November, 2001." Loosely translated, it means business as usual.

For many companies with home grown mission critical applications running on one or more 3000 systems, HP's stance is still a sore spot. Wilde says that the entire process of investigating, planning, implementing, testing and deploying a migrated homegrown set of applications often takes 18-24 months, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. "There are too many variables to generalize this," Wilde adds, "and the range is much wider in both directions."

Wilde's words may not be too comforting for users who know they'll still be on their 3000 systems beyond HP's 2006 end-of-support date. HP is clear that the termination of the 3000 was a business decision. With HP unlikely to change their plans, 3000 customers must now make their own two very important business decisions. First, when to transition off the 3000. This decision should be governed more by business needs and priorities than by what HP does or doesn't do. Each company has to weigh their options according to how the outcome of their decision impacts their overall business.

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Which Version of MPE is Right For You?

Most 3000 systems are MPE/iX versions 5.5+PP7, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0 or 7.5. Should you stay or upgrade? Here are several factors to consider:

1. **Availability** - You can't install what you don't have. Have HP send you all MPE versions higher than your current version. Verify that the SUBSYS tapes from HP have all the products you're paying for/need.
2. **Hardware compatibility** - Later MPE releases don't support older hardware which will require purchasing newer 3000 servers. Several other issues are listed below.
3. **Functionality** - Newer releases often include useful new features (see below). Complete details are available in the Communicator articles available at the docs.hp.com web site.

Patches for the above MPE versions are still available for download from the HP ITRC web site, although HP is currently producing new patches only for the later releases.

5.5 - MPE/iX 5.5 PowerPatch 7 was the first completely Y2K ready release of MPE. It's generally the oldest version encountered, and is unsupported by HP.

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Second, each 3000 customer must at some point face a decision about how to support their system if business needs require remaining on the system for the foreseeable future. Wilde says HP, together with HP partners, is working hard to assist 3000 customers, both short and long term. He points out that HP is "continuing to provide the same levels of world class support throughout the committed support window." With regards to the future, Wilde notes that in addition to many HP and partner offerings in the transition space, HP has already announced numerous pre-2006 changes on behalf of customers including extensions of availability of software add-on products and license upgrades, and HP has announced specific plans for availability of certain information such as customer documentation and Jazz content after the end of HP support.

Will HP's plans and offers be sufficient to meet your needs? Wilde does say that they've been continuing discussions with Interex and OpenMPE, and that as they approach the end of MPE support, they will "continue to consider how we work with partners who have appropriate business models." Wilde's statements are naturally cautious. HP has already said they are ending their commitment to the 3000, which puts Wilde and our friends at vCSY, many of whom have spent their careers with the

3000, in the challenging position of gracefully winding down the business while simultaneously helping their loyal partners and customers transition smoothly.

For example, a firm commitment one way or the other about MPE source code support after the end date might turn the tables for some customers. It's in HP's best interest to create a sense of urgency toward migration from the 3000. Yet, they and we know that it's not that simple for many 3000 customers. That's why we'll be working closely with HP in the development of our business model so that HP can leave the 3000 world behind gracefully without any interruptions to support and service for those who remain on the 3000.

Will we have all the tools we need? While no one has been nominated by HP to have the source code to MPE, we do know that by working together, the entire 3000 community can, and will, take care of itself for as long as 3000 systems are alive and kicking. The folks at vCSY are good people who are doing everything they can for 3000 customers. But there are limits to what they will be able to accomplish, and you will need to decide what additional steps you will need to take to meet your business needs.

Configuring Remote Console Operation on 9x7 Servers

**Controlling your server with a remote modem on 9x7 servers requires special considerations and an understanding of the underlying principles of the access port. This article has been highly condensed and the full article covers detailed troubleshooting along with indepth explanations.*

The Access Port (on the Multifunction I/O card - MFIO) gives the console operator control over the system and provides the ability to connect a remote console through a modem. Series 9X7 (Nova's) have two unique serial hardware ports found on the (MFIO): The Local Console (LDEV 20) and the Session Port (LDEV 21). This article discusses configuration of LDEV 21.

ACCESS PORTS MODES

LDEV 21 or Access Port 1 (Remote Modem) has two separate hardware modes requiring configuration. The normal default is as a Session Port capable of systems sessions (LDEV 21) and configuration is done through a special NMMGR field labeled "Go To User Port". Changes do not take effect until you restart the system.

Setting Up Your Remote Console

Step One

- a. Configure the device with NMMGR:

:NMMGR <enter>

Open Configuration <F1>; DTS <F1> User Port <F4> - Configure, then SAVE DATA:

Logical Device: 21

Line Speed: 9600 (recommended)

Modem Type: 1

Parity: None (allows binary transfers)

Then, VALIDATE the configuration.

- b. **START NORECOVERY.**

Step Two

Configure the "ACCESS PORT" to match your LDEV 21 (Session Port) configuration. To configure the ACCESS PORT you need to be on the system console where you can execute a CONTROL-B to get the CM> prompt. (The dialogue below has been highly condensed)

**Notes: Do not use 'LR' (Lock remote) or 'UR' (Unlock remote) unless you have an Ideal or HP modem or your modem will lock up!*

CM>CA <enter>

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Configuring 9x7 Systems to Use a Remote Console

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Current bit rate is 2400 bits/sec. Select the new bit rate: 4

<enter> (9600)

Current Protocol is Bell. Select the new protocol: 1

<enter> (North America uses BELL)

New system identification: HP957SX <enter> (Your system model number)

CM> ER <enter>

Remote CS command: Disabled, Select the new setting (E=enabled, D=disabled): E <enter>

Current mode: Multiple, Select the new setting (S=single, M=multiple): M <enter>

New password: TEST <enter> (Always enable a password to avoid any annoying beeping)

CM> UR <enter>

Remote Console answer mode is now unlocked. This function enables DTR to the modem so the modem will autoanswer.

That's it! To disable the remote console to allow session mode, use the 'DR' command. To lockout the modem but keep it in remote console mode use 'LR' lock remote command. To return to the system prompt, type: CM> CO <enter>

It is strongly recommended you use the same Baud Rate for both Remote Console and Session modes.

Which Version of MPE is Right?

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6.0 – Includes Y2K and additional functionality (such as 9GB disk support) that had been available as patches for 5.5. It's the last release that supports the older models of the PA-RISC family. HP support for 6.0 has ended.

6.5 - Does not support the older PA-RISC 3000s, the HP-IB interface, or HP FiberLink disk interface. 6.5 (and later) releases will be "supported" by HP through the end of 2006. 6.5 Introduced support for "large" files (>4GB), User-Defined Job Queues, and increased many maximum configuration limits. Users with limited CPU and Memory may see a small performance decrease between 6.0 and 6.5 and later releases. 6.5 is the last release that will run on the 9x7 series 3000s.

7.0 – MPE/iX 7.0 was initially the "N-Class" release. Major functionality was missing before the Express 1 update. 7.0 does not support the 9x7 server family.

7.5 – MPE/iX 7.5 is the current (and last) major MPE/iX release. Much of the functionality included in 7.5 is for the high-end N-Class (and A-Class) systems. Support for the PA-8700 3000's and Native Fiber Channel disk interfaces is included. Most systems that run 7.5 do so because of hardware requirements.

Will there be another release? It's highly unlikely. Any new functionality is likely to be released via patches to the remaining supported MPE versions.

Performing an MPE/iX operating system upgrade is generally painless, whether done with or without help. Also be sure to check with all your third party software providers about compatibility before considering an upgrade.

Resource 3000 offers operating System support for all of the above versions of MPE/iX, regardless of their support status by HP. Contact us for more information.

The Problem With Big Disk

MPE/iX was designed to be a finely-tuned transaction processing machine. But, as good as it is, MPE isn't perfect. With the availability of bigger, cheaper disks, most people don't think much about disk fragmentation or contiguous disk space until it's too late. The system may mysteriously fail, or, users start complaining about response time, or you can't update the OS. Time to look at disk fragmentation.

There are four types of fragmentation found on HP 3000 MPE/iX systems: file fragmentation, disk fragmentation, system fragmentation and database internal fragmentation. This article focuses on disk fragmentation, which occurs when the free space on a disk drive is spread throughout the disk in many small pieces. This can have performance as well as management implications.

OS updates and the MPE Transaction Manager (XM) require quite a bit of contiguous space on LDEV 1. Although you may have plenty of disk space available, it may not be contiguous.

What can you do about fragmentation?

Fragmentation normally isn't harmful, but as mentioned, it can slow your system and actually cause serious problems if contiguous free space

on LDEV 1 gets dangerously low. First, purge all your old log files. They accumulate like dust in the corner. Then, reduce the fragmentation. The easiest way to do this is with a utility, such as De-Frag/X, designed specifically to reduce disk and file fragmentation. In case you don't have one of these utilities (and why not?), you can use the CONTIGVOL command or VOLUTIL, first introduced with MPE/iX 5.0.

CONTIGVOL is designed to resolve the problem of disk fragmentation, and does nothing for file fragmentation, system fragmentation, or database fragmentation. You use the command to create contiguous space on LDEV 1. However, you may run into a problem:

If you run CONTIGVOL and receive an error message "Warning: Contigvol - Inverse Extent Tbl Full, Internal resource limit," it simply means that you've run into a minor inconvenience. CONTIGVOL only handles 40,000 extents at a time. You can run it as often as necessary to get your contiguous space. The message is simply a warning that an internal table is full.

The bottom line: MPE is great, but not perfect. You still have to manage your disks, regardless of their apparent infinite capacity.

Last Issue's "You're The EXPERT!" Question and Answer

The Question: What procedure would you use to install and fully enable a new network printer without having to reboot your 3000?

The Answer: The most concise non-reboot solution...

A. While logged in as MANAGER.SYS run IOCONFIG and issue these commands:

ioconfig: adev ldev=nnn;id=HPTCPJD;path=NONE

ioconfig: exit

B. Add a record to NPCONFIG.PUB.SYS. The minimum requirement is to specify simply the LDEV number and the IP address: **nnn (network_address = www.xxx.yyy.zzz)**

C. Start the spooling process for the new device: **:startspool nnn**

We recognize that this is a common practice. However, our "official" recommended method is to use the traditional SYSGEN/reboot method. This technique is described in detail in our online paper available at: <http://www.resource3000.com/papers/>

The Most Unusual System Manager Tool... Did you realize that if you provide a problem to a diverse group of technical and non-technical people, the average answer will be more accurate than that of any single expert or specialist? It's true, and this fact has been used to find lost submarines and create winning marketing formulas. It's all explained in detail in *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations*, by James Surowiecki. Check it out for yourself.

GET A FREE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

Here's your chance to get a free technical consultation with one of our specialists on the subject of your choice. Had something you've wanted to ask HP, but didn't want to spend the money? Just go to the link below to complete our one-page questionnaire, and we'll set you up for your free consultation.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=90349948788>

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The winner from Issue #1 was: Jim Watson. The prize for the correct answer is the pocket-sized iPod Shuffle. Congratulations, Jim! (See Answer above)

The question this month is:

How do I tell how much memory I have installed in my 3000?

Note: there are many different ways to do this; the winner will be the person who submits the greatest number of correct responses (and no incorrect ones!!). The winner will receive a free copy of *The Wisdom of Crowds* by James Surowiecki. It's a great book. Don't miss out.

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