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Small Computing Blades Make Big Impact; Participation Doubles at Annual Server Blade Summit

SAN JOSE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--March 14, 2003--Interest in the emerging blade computing market more than doubled since last year, according to attendee and exhibitor participation in Server Blade Summit 2003 (www.serverbladesummit.com), the only worldwide conference and exhibition dedicated to the rapidly emerging server blade technology segment.

Blades are computing devices packaged on small, ultra-dense cards that pack up to eight times more servers and require 80 percent less power than conventional 1U servers. Using an emerging generation of management software, flexible blade configurations consisting of multiple computing, storage and network elements can be consolidated, shared and expanded as needed.

The blade computing market is one of the few bright spots in today's information technology business. Industry analyst IDC remains bullish about the blade market, reaffirming its forecast for server blades to generate $3.7 billion in revenue by 2006.

Server Blade Summit 2003 attracted more than 700 attendees and 27 exhibitors, including HP, IBM, Sun, F5 Networks and ServerWorks. Representatives from more than 30 companies, including new members Network Appliance and Novadigm, attended the inaugural meeting of the Server Blade Trade Association (www.serverbladeta.org), which will focus on software interoperability and best practices for the blade industry and establish councils for end users and industry analysts.

More than 85 industry executives, including representatives from HP, QLogic, Broadcom, IBM, Cisco Systems, Intel, Adaptec, StorageTek, Unisys, Sun, AMD, and Network Appliance, spoke to packed conference rooms on topics including server blade management, standards, storage, backplane interconnects, security and networking.

"Server blades are a segment buster that will become a key part of the IT infrastructure," predicted keynote speaker Tom Bradicich, Chief Technology Officer for IBM's xSeries Intel server group. "Blades offer seven key benefits, including 10x increases in density; node amortization for reduced costs of scalability; savings in electrical power; simpler setup and configuration; infrastructure integration for convergence of physical, operational and administrative functions; better reliability, availability and serviceability; and flexibility for easy introduction of new and alternative technologies."

Management software for server blades is rampant with innovation. At Server Blade Summit companies including Amphus, BladeLogic, Corosoft, Marimba, Opsware, and Think Dynamics presented their software for virtualizing or pooling blade computing installations. John Abbott, Senior Analyst for the451, predicted that software vendors are likely candidates for acquisition, following the recent acquisition of Terraspring by Sun and Jareva Technologies by VERITAS.

Several vendors introduced blade-related offerings. HP, which has been the most successful blade server vendor to date with more than 19,000 units shipped according to IDC, unveiled several new members of the HP Blade Server Alliance Program for HP ProLiant blade servers, including Citrix Systems, Ensim, Jareva, Red Hat, SuSE and Think Dynamics. Voltaire introduced its line of InfiniBand switch routers and host channel adapters. CoroSoft released its data center automation solution for Sun Solaris. Tatung Science & Technology, Amphus, and MessageSoft demonstrated a blade server appliance for secure E-mail.

"Volume-driven economics brought about by low-cost, industry-standard servers and the rapid adoption of Linux and clustering technologies are key to the explosive adoption of blade servers," said Anil Vasudeva, President and CEO of IMEX Research, a San Jose-based technology markets research and consulting company. "The market for computing blades, although nascent at this stage, is poised to explode from less than one percent in 2002 to 23 percent in 2006 of all entry and small server shipments. The success of blades is being driven by the academic, laboratory and commercial visualization community in the high-performance technical and numerical-intensive segments of the market."

About Server Blades

Server blades are a new generation of highly advanced, ultra-dense server environments. A server blade is essentially an entire server that fits on a single card, or blade, and contains the CPU, memory, and networking components necessary to run applications. These blades are plugged into a single chassis that can accommodate upwards of 24 server blades in the space previously occupied by one traditional server. When comparing a standard 6' data center rack, administrators could deploy 336 server blades, versus 42 1U servers. In addition to delivering an ultra-dense server environment, server blades offer extremely low power consumption, breakthrough "economies of scale" and a new level of "economies of skill" through its plug-and-play design.

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