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`Accent' way to electronic administration for SMIs

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PETALING JAYA, Fri. - More small and medium-sized businesses may soon enjoy the benefits of electronic administration without the high costs usually associated with high-tech revamps.

Local Internet service consultant The Media Shoppe has developed a software package called Accent, or Applications for Corporate Communication Enhancement, to provide the service easily and cheaply to smaller businesses.

The company's new business development director Christopher Chan said it was now looking for partners to market the product, which has also drawn interest from distributors in Canada and Europe.

Chan said the conventional method to install electronic administration - developing customised solutions for each client - was time-consuming and expensive.

"Accent gets around the problem by fulfilling the needs in a generic fashion, so the package may cost a company about RM5,000 while a customised solution, including development, installation and training, could cost anywhere from RM20,000 to RM150,000," he said.

For clients appropriately equipped, Chan said, the software takes as little as 10 minutes to install and 45 minutes to learn.

"It integrates all corporate, departmental, group and individual communications in a way that provides up-to-date, instant information to everyone in the organisation, wherever and whenever they log on.

"You will not have to commute two hours for a meeting in which only 10 minutes will be specific to you and the rest can be communicated through e-mail," he said.

Accent's 13 ready modules include information management, scheduling, security and access privilege, e-mail and forum communication, and task/time management.

The software will be launched at the upcoming ITX '98 exhibition at Putra World Trade Centre, from April 21 to 24.

A demonstration is also available on The Media Shoppe's homepage at <http://oms.shoppe.com.my>.

Chan said ITX '98 will also see the company previewing a web-based teaching solution for learning institutions, called Smart Extended Education, or Seed.

Seed goes beyond distance learning to enable every step of the educational process, from signing up for courses to receiving lecture material, assignments and tests, to be conducted through multimedia technology via the Internet.

"Seed is designed to help institutions cater to the increasing demands they face and reach out to more students in view of hurdles such as space, distance and time," he said.

The development of local innovations, products and brands will be among the main thrusts of ITX '98, to be held in conjunction with the Infotech Malaysia conference, a national-level dialogue on IT-related issues and directions.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also chairman of the National IT Council, will launch the event and give the keynote address.

The event is organised by NITC and the Association of the Computer Industry Malaysia (Pikom), with the New Straits Times, Berita Harian, Computimes, Berita Komputer and Sin Chew Jit Poh as the official media.

Co-organisers are Mimos Bhd, the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (Mampu), Telekom Malaysia Bhd, the Multimedia Development Corporation and Uni-Technologies Sdn Bhd.

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