Higher compression ratio for documents

MATRIXVIEW BETA LAUNCHES ITS COMPRESSION ENGINE

By Gregory Teo

COMPANIES seeking to digitise their paper records can now save it in a more compressed state.

According to compression startup, MatrixView Pte Ltd, this is up to 60 times – which is more than twice the existing capabilities of current compression techniques.

In a beta launch, senior vice president of strategic business development, Cheong Hian Soh put the technology through its paces by showing how a legal writ of summons is compressed and restored in its original form without any lost in data.

Specifically, its docuMAT image compression engine compresses raw TIFF images better than the current CCITTG4 algorithm standard. Targeted for chipset implementation in scanners, facsimiles, printers and e-faxes, the beta version, Cheong said, is available for testing by key industry partners.

Commercial availability

The commercial release of the compression software, to be available within three months, will support both colour and TIFF images.

Based on the company's Adaptive Binary Optimisation (ABO) technology, the algorithm can also be used for digital compression of images, videos and sound.

Traditional compression relies on the elimination of high frequency data. ABO however works on the correlation found in digital content signals.

For now, Cheong said the company will target only certain niche industries with ABO. This includes markets using current Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG), JPEG2000 and Moving Pictures Expert Group (MPEG) methods of compression.

He added that such technologies have issues in handling high compression at lossless qualities and real time applications. Lossless compression involves no data loss in the compression process whereas lossy compression does permit some data lost.

In JPEG and MPEG compression, some data lost is allowable as the human eye cannot detect the differences. However, in precision image files for medical diagnosis and seismic analysis or legal files, lossless compression is a must.

Other than document imaging that the beta is targeted at, other areas of possible adoption for ABO include medical imaging, defence application, security surveillance and geospatial information systems.

Ravi Krishnan, technical design consultant in healthcare informatics for AGFA Asia Pacific believes the technology is the next best thing if "productised" correctly.

His company installs and implements fibre channel networks in the medical field for the capturing and archiving of digital image scans. "This technology will make our platform look thin and friendly on the network," he said.

ASIC implementation

Already, labs in Sydney and Canada are integrating the technology into their platforms via a Application Specific Integrated Chip (ASIC) based algorithm stuck into a SAN.

Citing huge potential for the technology, he said over here companies don't grasp the magnitude of what it can do. In medical imaging however, people shy away from lossy compression.

MatrixView also plans to go into the consumer market next year with products in the dial-up video conferencing space, video on demand and mobile solutions segments. Further down the line, the company will offer voice over IP (VoIP) solutions. *e*

McAfee defends Windows systems

By Gregory Teo

TO avert an attack on Windows desktop and server systems, Anti-Virus (AV) vendor, Network Associates has launched online managed security services through its McAfee division.

Called McAfee ASaP, it comprises four services – VirusScan, Managed Virus Defense, Desktop Firewall and VirusScreen – to defend such machines.

Ashley Wearne, vice president for South East Asia, India, New Zealand and Australia, said the service is suited for companies with between two and 50 users and those that do not have in-house IT support.

Currently, there are about 135,000 such companies with IT systems that need affordable protection in South East Asia and India, according to him. The service will be rolled out in Singapore first before hitting the region.

VirusScan provides anti-virus protection for as little as S$4 per month per desktop. Deployment is via the Web with 3.7MB of space required for the initial download.

Once deployed, downloaded software automatically updates itself on the latest virus definition (DAT) files. This is done via Web or peer-to-peer updating that occurs in the background every time a desktop connects to a network. The service also uninstalls any previous desktop AV software.

Backed by AVERT – McAfee's anti-virus research facilities – VirusScan draws on 200 new virus each month to keep abreast of the latest threats. A library providing details of infection and removal of past viruses is also available.

For central monitoring, a user can be assigned the role of administrator to receive reports on updated systems within a network, viruses found and infected machines. Wearne said that some customers prefer to leave such management to resellers of the service.

Currently, 13 partners have been identified in Singapore to deliver the service. Globally, there are already two million users. *e*