

Debra Vogt

From: Bill Gates
To: Mike Maples
Cc: Paul Maritz
Subject: RE: Ren in Office
Date: Thursday, September 16, 1993 6:32PM

The debate here seems out of touch with the plans we had when I left.

The plan was to combine the best of REN and the extensible shell into a q1 95 product for Chicago.

What happened to that plan?????

From: Mike Maples
To: Bill Gates
Subject: FW: Ren in Office
Date: Sunday, September 12, 1993 7:35PM

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From: Christopher Graham
To: Mike Maples
Cc: Pete Higgins
Subject: Ren in Office
Date: Friday, September 10, 1993 4:41PM

We understand that Systems may have proposed that Ren should be phased out. Pete asked me to look into this, and recommend what Office would like to see happen.

I'm already reasonably familiar with Ren and Cairo/CDE plans, and I met with Darren Remington and Brian MacDonald to be sure I was up to date. The following is a brief summary of my recommendations.

My conclusion is that Ren should be part of the Q1/95 version of Office. It may also make sense for the Ren group to join Desktop for better synergy with work on Office. We already work with the Cairo group to keep in sync, so the Ren group would benefit from this also.

Reasons:

- We would like to have a PIM in Office for the Q1/95 release. We also would like a mail solution that is optimized for Office. Ren could provide both of these.
- Microsoft wants Office to be more integrated with the system using the shell's extensibility mechanisms. The Explorer is the most important part of the shell that we want to extend for Office. However, Chicago extensibility mechanisms aren't suitable because they aren't OLE based, and are too limited. Cairo won't be done in time for this Office release, and Chicago 2 will be even later than that, so we can't base our shell integration on them.
- The Ren group is developing an OLE extensible replacement for the Chicago Explorer. Ren itself is then defined as some custom views that plug into this Explorer. A given view appears when the user explores down into a storage container containing the appropriate type of data.
- The Ren group is planning to converge their Explorer's extensibility interfaces with those of the Cairo explorer. This means that Ren views should also be able to plug into the Cairo Explorer or possibly into Cairo InfoBooks.
- The Ren group is planning to access storage through the standard DAO/Jet interfaces being developed by DDT. Assuming that this interface were adopted by OFS, which is the plan, then Ren should also work against OFS.
- It would make sense for Elmer (the Office Document Library) to be written as views based on Ren explorer extensibility, and using the same storage interfaces. This would make it more powerful and upward compatible to Cairo.

Issues:

- Would we eventually put the new Ren Explorer in the Chicago box, or make it available to all Chicago

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users some other way? I'd say that we should. Possibly when Office/95 ships we could make the new Explorer available to ISVs to bundle with their applications that use it. This

- If Cairo could make their explorer run on Chicago and deliver it early enough, maybe this could be used as the framework for Ren. This would eliminate the need for Ren's explorer which is based on modified Chicago code. Issues would be the size of the Cairo explorer.
- It would be best to provide no extensibility in the original Chicago Explorer. This would minimize the possibility of problems with upward compatibility, and would slow the ability of competitors in extending the Explorer.

That's the summary. Please let me know if you'd like to meet to discuss this further.

-- Chris