

## Some Common Questions:

Q. What is this 'migration' I keep hearing about?

A. The migration entails moving all of ISU's computer processing that runs on the HP1 computer to another computer platform.

Q. Why is the migration necessary?

A. In November of 2001, Hewlett-Packard announced the discontinuance of the HP3000 computer line. They stopped selling the HP3000 computer on October 31, 2003, and they will halt worldwide support of it on December 31, 2006, bringing an end to a model line that has been produced by HP since 1973. The HP3000 has been in use at ISU since the late 1970s.

Q. The *same* computer?

A. No. HP updated the hardware line several times since 1973, taking advantage of new CPU chips, memory advances, and new disk drives. ISU purchased upgraded hardware several times during that span, to keep pace with HP's upgrades as resources permitted. The current HP1 computer in use at ISU was installed in October of 2001, and represents one of the newest, most up-to-date models of the HP3000 that HP offered, prior to discontinuing it.

Q. OK, so HP is discontinuing the hardware. So what?

A. In addition to computer hardware, an Operating System is needed for it to run, for it to be able to do useful things. On your desktop PC, your Operating System is probably a variant of Windows, or Mac OS or Linux. On the HP3000, the Operating System is MPE/iX, a specialized transaction-processing operating system that functions *only* on the HP3000. So, when HP announced the end of the HP3000 hardware line, they also announced the end of the MPE/iX Operating System. This means that after the December 2006 deadline, ISU will no longer be able to get, from HP, replacement parts for the computer, and will no longer be able to get software support for the operating system.

Q. Could replacement parts be purchased elsewhere?

A. Yes, but those suppliers will be dependent on the availability of HP3000 parts already in existence, as HP will not manufacture new parts. ISU may need to rely, temporarily, on one or more of those third-party parts suppliers, but doing so places the university at significant risk should a part fail for which there can be found no replacement. Obviously, the longer ISU relies on third-party support, the greater the risk becomes.

Q. So, what does the migration entail?

A. It entails moving all the programs, written by ISU over the last 20 or so years, to another platform. Ideally, moving to a platform that will continue to serve the university for several years to come. Since HP is ceasing all support for the HP3000 on December 31, 2006, ISU must complete this migration as soon as possible.

Q. Can those programs be moved?

A. Yes. Many of the programs written by ISU were written in a language called PowerHouse. That language is available on a variety of platforms, including the HP3000 and several UNIX environments, including HP's UNIX environment. The planned target environment for the migration is HP's UNIX environment.

Q. So, will this migration add a lot of newer, better features to the current programs?

A. Unfortunately, no. The deadline imposed by HP does not give enough time to add new features, however much we would like to. In order to be off the hardware as quickly as possible, we must commit to

migrating our programs pretty much 'as is'. If we took the time to add features, we could miss the deadline and place the university at the risk of not being able to function.

Q. I've heard about an 'ERP'. What is that?

A. 'ERP' stands for 'Enterprise Resource Planning'. An ERP system is a purchased computerized system that allows integrated processing of all aspects of a given enterprise. You may have heard of Banner, in use at U of I, or PeopleSoft, in use at BSU. Both of those packages are considered to be ERPs.

Q. So, is the migration taking us to an ERP?

A. No. The purpose of the migration is to get off the HP3000 platform as quickly as we can in order to avoid the risk of an unrecoverable systems failure. If, sometime after December 31, 2006, a part fails in HP1, we would not be able to go to HP to obtain a new part, because HP will no longer support it after that date, including providing replacement parts. We are basically on our own after that date.

Q. So, why don't we migrate directly to an ERP?

A. The deadline, imposed on us by HP, does not allow enough time to do that. An ERP is a large, complex system, and installing one takes months, sometimes years, of planning. And, after planning is complete, then implementing that system can take a few years, too.

Q. So, when does this migration start?

A. It has already begun. In January 2002, a committee was formed in the Computer Center (now Information Technology Services) to begin planning. Significant work has already been done to identify potential solutions and to verify that the software available on HP's UNIX platform will allow the current programs on HP1 to be migrated. Additionally, some hardware has been purchased to allow ITS staff to become familiar with the new environment and to begin testing potential solutions. Still, much work is yet to be done.

Q. How long will the migration take?

A. It is difficult to assign exact dates to it, because of its size and the number of personnel involved. It is the goal of Enterprise Applications personnel to make every attempt to meet the December 31, 2006 deadline. To have any hope of meeting this deadline, it means that those personnel will have to devote a majority of their time to the migration project. Ideally, they should devote 100% of their time to the migration project, but the university's needs frequently cannot be put on hold; therefore, they must allocate some time to the maintenance of the current systems and the rest on the migration project.

Q. Can I help?

A. Yes. As Enterprise Applications personnel complete portions of the migration, they will need people who are familiar with those parts of the system to test it. They will need help testing the screens, the reports, and all of the other processing. The testing will need to verify that the migrated parts are complete, and that they still function correctly, producing accurate results.

Q. That sounds like it's still a ways off. Can I do anything to help in the meantime?

A. Yes. Even though system testing is several months away, you can still help now. If you use the HP1 system to perform any sort of data processing in your office, you can help now by making notes of what you do. Document what tasks you perform, and when and why, and what aspects of HP1 you use to complete those tasks. This documentation will assist Enterprise Applications personnel to understand how you use the system, and will help assure that the testing of the migrated programs is complete. Also, when the time comes for you to test the migrated applications appropriate to your area, your notes will help you perform those tests. Enterprise Applications personnel need you. They need your input, your expertise, and your familiarity with your processes to assure the success of this project. Please be willing to get involved.