

Let the Good Times Role

Perspective from the Top



I'm happy to report good news for our business. I recently read the results of a report conducted by Robert Half Technology, an internationally-based IT staffing services company, on the growth of the national IT industry. According to the report, 14 percent of chief information officers (CIOs) nationally expect to hire IT employees in the fourth quarter of 2007. Of that, the Detroit market ranks as the third-highest metro area, behind Washington D.C. and Miami, with 17 percent of CIOs expecting to add IT jobs in the fourth quarter.

Clearly, this is great news for Epitec. As IT becomes a greater part of the foundation of each and every business, our strong team of



professionals will be called upon to help pave the way for our clients. The report is but one example of the IT industry's strength around the nation and in Detroit. From wireless networking to the implementation of complex software systems, our clients need us to provide the technological expertise they need to run efficient, secure and profitable businesses.

Not only does this report showcase the overall strength of our industry, it provides details regarding its most sought-after jobs.

73 percent of CIOs across the country cited Windows administration as the most needed skill set in the IT industry. Network administration and database management followed, with 70 percent and 60 percent, respectively.

45 percent of the CIOs also said their main reason for hiring additional IT personnel is corporate growth. This makes me smile – as it indicates businesses in our region are beginning to emerge from the recession that has affected many of our lives. Talented IT professionals are needed by companies in Southeastern Michigan and across the nation to help them compete in our global economy. I'm proud Epitec can contribute to the continued success of our clients in this way.

And the future remains bright. Recent announcements of new business growth in Michigan are a testament to the revitalization our state's economy is experiencing. Foreign and out-of-state businesses, such as the German-based EDAG Engineering and Ohio-based NewPage Corp., have announced investments in our area estimated to create nearly 350 jobs. These investments mark a great opportunity for our business.

As our region's economy recovers and becomes more dependent on IT personnel, Epitec is being called to action. Michigan businesses rely on us to provide them with top-level IT employees. The strength of our local economy depends on its ability to compete with a global market, and much of this ability comes from the work of IT staff.

Epitec is ready for this challenge. Knowing our employees are best suited to get the job done, we can confidently supply local businesses with some of the best IT talent available. The future looks bright – I can't wait to tackle the good things to come.

Sony Introduces Sweet New Battery

A new "bio battery," basically powered by sugar, has been developed by Sony. Sony researchers presented an academic paper at the American Chemical Society National Meeting and Exposition held in Boston this past August stating that its new battery is capable of generating up to 50 milliwatts, the highest output for a battery of its type. By utilizing enzymes that break down carbohydrates (similar to the way that bodies of living organisms use sugar to create energy), this bio battery creates enough energy to power music playback on a memory-type Walkman.

This ecologically friendly battery could reduce some of the problems associated with battery disposal today. The toxic chemicals often used in conventional batteries to create an electrical current are environmentally destructive. Because sugar is a naturally occurring energy source, bio batteries do not pose the same environmental hazard as current batteries. Additionally, the battery casing is made of a vegetable-based plastic, further bolstering its sustainability.

Sony plans to continue its research with the bio battery to increase energy generation and durability so it can be used in practical applications.

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Saving Energy Means Saving Money

As more and more technology is introduced into our workplaces, many companies have increased their efforts to conserve energy. A recent *Business Week* article states that rising energy costs could soon make up as much as 50 percent of corporate technology budgets. With this in mind, companies need to be creative in looking for budget conscious solutions and, unfortunately, various factors can make power-saving difficult.

For instance, it is often unclear what products are the most energy efficient. Vendors such as Dell, Hewlett-Packard and IBM are creating power-saving chips, computers and storage equipment. However, according to a recent Forrester survey of executives, only 15 percent of respondents had a high level of awareness of these vendors' energy-saving products. Many complained they had heard nothing from the vendors regarding energy-conserving products and services.

Going "green" also is made difficult by some of the confusing issues surrounding energy conservation. Some eco-friendly Web site designers, for example, have begun using black backgrounds on their pages in an effort to save energy. Cathode-ray-tube (CRT) monitors and some flat-panel screens use less power to display darker backgrounds. Liquid-crystal display (LCD) monitors, however, use the same, and sometimes more, energy to display darker colors. Seeing as LCD monitors dominate the market in the United States, Japan and Korea, it seems that black Web site backgrounds will not save us on energy costs.

Although some areas of energy conservation might seem difficult, here are a few simple ideas that can help.

Turn your computer off

If you will be away from your computer for more than a few hours, overnight, or over the weekend, turn it off. Some estimates show that you can save up to \$87.50 in one year by shutting a single computer off at the end of the workday. For best results, turn it off from the power source, as small increments of energy can be drawn through even if the computer has been shut down.

Put your computer in sleep mode

PCs use a considerable quantity of power to start up. If you will be returning to your computer within a few hours, put it in sleep mode rather than shutting it off. A study by General Electric showed that using a sleep setting on 75,000 computers saved \$2.5 million in one year.

Take advantage of cool air outside

A Wells Fargo data center in Minnesota uses a technique called freecooling to help cut power use. Freecooling utilizes the cool air outside to keep equipment from overheating. When the temperature drops below 42° F, the data center can turn its chillers completely off.

Use energy-conserving power strips

Some power strips, such as Wattstopper Plug Load Control and Smart Strip Power Strip, can tell if a desktop has been idle and will shut off power to peripherals such as monitors, scanners and printers. In one study, a smart power strip used throughout the workweek saved 73 percent in energy costs. And when all equipment is off, these smart power strips can prevent idle currents from being drawn from your outlets.

Reduce your monitor brightness

One of the easiest ways to start saving power is to reduce your monitor's brightness. This will save a substantial amount of energy and can also help prevent eye problems.

Look for the Energy Star label

In 2006, Americans saved \$14 billion in utility bills by cutting down on energy costs with the help of the Energy Star label. Sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy, the Energy Star label denotes products for the home and office designed to be more energy efficient, helping you conserve cash. For more information on the Energy Star label, visit www.energystar.gov.

Use energy-efficient cooling systems

Did you know that nearly half of the power used in corporate data centers is directed towards cooling systems? Energy efficient cooling systems, such as High Delta-T cooling, can help keep these power suckers from draining your budget.



Dial-up Internet Becoming a Thing of the Past

As rural America slumbered after sundown August 14, a new state-of-the-art satellite owned by Hughes Corp., shot into space. Unbeknownst to most of these people, this satellite, Spaceway 3, was going into orbit as part of a plan to target many Americans without access to DSL or cable Internet service.

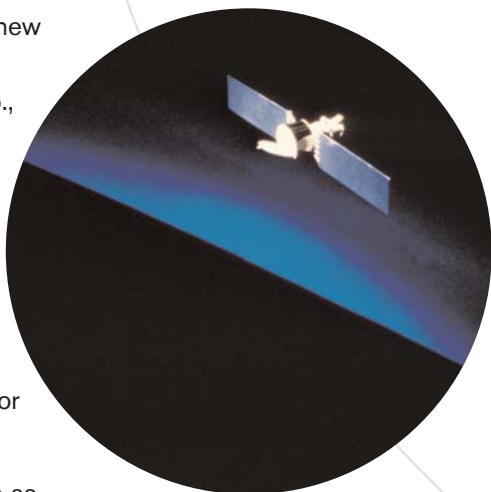
As major providers such as Comcast and AT&T create Internet/phone service packages for customers, a considerable percentage of potential users are left out. These packages have traditionally been aimed towards urban and suburban users in areas with dense populations. Potential customers in areas where the population is more scattered are often left with

dial-up as their only option because providers have not invested in extending their networks to rural regions.

Hughes Corp., along with its chief competitor Wild Blue Communication, want to change that. Both companies are vying for customers from the estimated 15 million American homes and businesses without access to DSL or cable Internet. Wild Blue Communication began operating a satellite in March and since that time has added roughly 1,000 to 1,500 customers per week.

In addition to servicing customers who are left out by other major providers, Spaceway 3 will aid some of the common ailments seen by satellite-provided Internet users. Typically, satellite Internet is slower than DSL or cable because a signal must leave a user's dish, bounce into space and come back again before a new Web page is displayed. Since Spaceway 3 has an on-board router, some of that lag time will be reduced.

As Spaceway 3 orbits around Earth, rural America can sleep soundly, knowing that it will no longer have to resort to dial-up Internet connection.



Epitec's Web Makeover

Over the past few months, we've been working to update the look, feel and messaging on our Web site. If you haven't already had a chance to log-on, please stop by and check it out. You'll notice that we've updated the overall look and color scheme to complement Epitalk. Additionally, we added new functionality and an improved layout to make things easier to find.

"Our Web site is truly the face of Epitec to the outside world," said Josie Sheppard. "I'm happy to say that this new site reflects the creativity, culture and overall commitment to excellence embodied by the employees of Epitec."

A Day at the Zoo

On September 16, more than 300 Epitec employees and family members gathered at The Detroit Zoo to celebrate our accomplishments over the past year. It was a beautiful day – the weather couldn't have been more perfect. The animals were out in full view as we enjoyed a lunch of hot dogs, veggie dogs, bratwurst, potato salad, chili, chips, and soft drinks. Thanks to everyone for a great time. We appreciate your hard work and dedication.



Please send any questions or comments to support@epitecgroup.com. Your input may become a topic in future issues of *Epitalk*.

Industry Insight

Sreenivas Cherukuri, Deputy Director, Information Technology Services, City of Detroit



Sreenivas Cherukuri serves as the Deputy Director of the City of Detroit's Information Technology Services Division. Prior to joining the City, Cherukuri held significant positions in the management, consulting and engineering professions, and has served a variety of clients across the industrial, technology, transportation and governmental sectors. He has an MBA from Arizona State University with a specialization in economics and supply chain management. He also is a Registered Professional Engineer, with a Bachelor's Degree in civil and environmental engineering from the University of Michigan.

Q: Where do you think Southeast Michigan's technology economy is heading in the next 15 years?

A: It's unclear. We know there is a future in technology. The question is whether or not businesses can uncouple their futures from the local manufacturers. The reality is that the worldwide auto industry will continue to grow. If the regional players can establish this area as a center of development supporting all worldwide manufacturers, then there is hope.

Q: What new technologies coming down the pipeline in the next 5 to 10 years will improve or revolutionize the way we do business today?

A: Mobile applications driven by technologies like GIS (geographic information systems), RFID (radio frequency identification), 3G/4G (next generation communications systems). As costs continue to drop and the infrastructure becomes more reliable, we will be able to deploy mobile solutions like never before. Workers will be able to do even more in the field. And that will make government and business more responsive than ever before.

Q: Given Michigan's economic climate, where do you see technology jobs fitting in? Is there room for growth amid these circumstances?

A: Michigan's current troubles are primarily due to the effects of globalization on a manufacturing-based economy. The region also continues to struggle with legacy costs that stem from a different era.

However, even in our primary industry (motor vehicles) as manufacturing jobs have continued to decline, the technology component has continued to increase. Areas like advanced engineering, manufacturing, hybrid engines and telematics are big creators of technology jobs.

Despite the challenges facing the Big-3, overall vehicle sales remain robust. As long as the technology players in our region are able to tie their fortunes to the industry as a whole, there is certainly room for continued growth.

Q: What obstacles do you anticipate IT professionals in Southeast Michigan will face in the near future, and what suggestions do you offer to overcome these obstacles?

A: The same challenges that face this entire region – cost reductions. The costs of technology contractors have already experienced pricing pressure. I expect this scrutiny will increasingly apply to solutions providers. I think mid-market entities that deliver professional managed solutions without the overhead of the large players, have a chance for growth.

Q: What significant changes have you seen in Southeast Michigan's technology economy over the last 15 years?

A: As technology continues to become cheaper (i.e. Moore's law), it also is becoming more pervasive. The technology economy continues to grow not only in areas like engineering, design, manufacturing, and telematics but also in many consumer areas. Just think of the technology that supports today's commonplace features such as On-Star, Bluetooth, iPods, etc. All these cutting edge areas are right in the middle of how Detroit meets consumer needs.

Q: How is technology changing interaction with the government? How will the changes benefit individual residents and businesses?

A: Quite simply, it has raised expectations of our citizens. Today's citizen is an extensive user of all the Internet has to offer, and they demand the same convenience when dealing with government. They would like government to be available 24-7 and all the self-service they're used to. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is that we can really increase the level of customer satisfaction. The challenge is that people don't always realize the costs or complexity involved – especially with government information. We have to be judicious in what we spend and how we roll things out – in a manner that makes sense from a cost-benefit standpoint.

The other challenge is there is still a significant population that prefers to interact in person. We can't automatically assume they will see the benefits from technology investment as benefiting them.

Consultant



Vidhi Gupta and Sudhir Srinivasan

STATS

Title: Vidhi is a senior testing specialist. Her husband, Sudhir, is a software engineer.

Hire Date: Sudhir, June, 2005. Vidhi, July, 2005.

Responsibilities: Vidhi maintains mainframe applications and works on the Test Automation Suite and production support. Sudhir maintains and develops open systems and mainframe applications while providing support and analysis.

Education: Vidhi, Masters of Business Administration. Sudhir, Masters in Computer Applications. Both degrees are from universities in India.

iSpot Exclusive: Vidhi and Sudhir first met in India while working with an Indian IT company.

Corporate Employee



Jenny Smitka

STATS

Title: Recruiter

Hire Date: November, 2005

Responsibilities: Recruiting top IT talent to place with clients who are in need of skilled professionals.

Education: Bachelors of Science in human resources and society from Michigan State University

Quote: "A good motto to live by . . . always be recruiting. You never know who you may meet next."

iSpot Exclusive: Jenny got her start in the HR field when the recruiter who sent her on an interview for a position with DaimlerChrysler left in the middle of the interview process. Jenny was then offered her position.



(L-R) Lee Fleming, Eric Natzke, Karl Knoflach, Jag Penumathsa, Rahul Muddulur, Sujal Raju, John Hope, Dave McCauley, Sri Vadlamani, Josh DeVolder, Earl Smith, Steve Marchessault, Lana Sandler, Steve Vilotti, Cindy Xavier, Doug Strange, Scott Gildner, John Pan, Vita Levchenko, Keith Wright, Saujanya Mulakala, Mario Giordano

The Epitec team, led by Karl Knoflach, John Hope, Steve Vilotti and Scott Gildner provides support for CareTech Solutions' Web Services department.

As CareTech Solutions built its customer portfolio beyond its IT client base, a series of new products were developed to accommodate new clients. These products include CareWorks CMS, a web-based content management system; MediCom Central, a physician's communications portal; and BoardNet, a board member communications portal. CareTech also purchased a document archiving system named iDoc, and continues to enhance this product. The Epitec team is helping fine-tune these products, develop custom applications and provide support to the CareTech Web Services department.

Epitec has and will continue to play a major role in the success of CareTech's Web Services department. The team has fit in perfectly and displayed the urgency required with today's continually changing client needs.

Milestones

July

Patrick Lademan (7 years)
 Simone Yuki (4 years)
 Cynthia Cottage (3 years)
 Venkataphanindranath Inampudi (3 years)
 Prasanna Jannu (3 years)
 Ashfaq Mohammed (3 years)
 Satyaprakash Tirumalasetti (3 years)

August

Anthony Hollamon (17 years)
 Vidya Acharya (6 years)
 Angela Chubb (5 years)
 Hanumathrama Venkata (3 years)

September

James Klann (15 years)
 Dennis Montrose (15 years)
 Gary Mercatante (14 years)
 Eileen Corbin (13 years)
 Gregory Brown (9 years)
 Gregory McCallister (9 years)
 Mubashar Ahmad (7 years)
 Aparajitha Duvvuru (5 years)
 Marre Tallerico (4 years)
 Patrick Ostrowski (3 years)
 Harshet Patel (3 years)



From Start To Finish, We're There For You.

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