News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NeXTstep OBJECT-ORIENTED SYSTEM SOFTWARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR 80486-BASED COMPUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO, January 22, 1992 — NeXT Computer, Inc. today unveiled NeXTstep 486, a version of NeXT's highly regarded object-oriented system software that runs on computers powered by Intel's 80486 microprocessor. The announcement was made at NeXTWORLD Expo, a conference and exposition devoted exclusively to NeXT products and technology, being held at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium (Brooks Hall) through January 24.

"NeXTstep 486 is a customer-driven product — several of our key customers and many industry pundits strongly urged us to port NeXTstep," said Steven P. Jobs, president and CEO of NeXT. "This move extends the benefits of the industry-standard NeXTstep to the huge installed base of 486 users, and instantly explodes the potential market for NeXTstep applications."

The current installed base of 486-based computers is estimated by market researchers at Dataquest to be approximately 2 million.

"This is a very exciting announcement," said Andrew S. Grove, president and CEO of Intel. "The combination of the Intel486 microprocessor performance and NeXTstep's advanced object-oriented technology will provide PC users and developers with a powerful operating environment that can handle natural data types such as graphics and audio."

NeXTstep 486 is the same complete object-oriented system software that is offered on NeXT's computers, and includes NeXT's advanced software development environment and bundled applications such as NeXTmail, Digital Webster and Digital Librarian. In addition, NeXT computers and 486-based computers running NeXTstep 486 can interoperate seamlessly, as well as communicate with DOS- and Windows-based PCs, Macintosh and UNIX-based computers.

Because NeXT supplies the entire development environment, porting current NeXTstep applications to run on NeXTstep 486 is both simple and reliable. For example, during the past week several NeXTstep developers, including Lotus Development Corp., WordPerfect, Adobe Systems Inc. and Wolfram Research, have created versions of their NeXT applications running in NeXTstep 486. As of press time, more than 20 companies have committed to port their applications to NeXTstep 486 (please see attached list), and virtually all of the more than 200 companies shipping NeXTstep products have pledged support for the 486 version of NeXTstep.

Product and Pricing

NeXTstep 486 will be offered in two versions: a user version with a suggested retail price of $995 and a developer version with a suggested retail price of $2,495. Both will be distributed on CD-ROM media.

The user version includes all the software needed to run any NeXTstep application.

The developer version of NeXTstep 486 offers, in addition to everything in the user version, the entire NeXTstep application development — including the NeXTstep Application Kit, Interface Builder and a full range of standard development tools, such as compilers and debuggers. Most developers expect to pay far more than $2,495 to get far less. (For example, Sun Microsystems charges $2,000 for its C compiler alone.)

Both NeXTstep 486 versions are based on NeXTstep Release 3.0, announced today. (Please refer to separate press release and backgrounder.)

NeXTstep 486 features built-in networking software to share information with other computers, such as NFS (Network File System) for workstations, Novell NetWare for PCs and AppleShare for Macintosh computers. As a result, NeXTstep-based computers can communicate with virtually all other desktop computers with no additional software.

NeXTstep 486 incorporates NeXT's advanced Mach 2.0 operating system, which is compatible with the standard Berkeley 4.3 UNIX. In addition, it features NeXT's easy-to-use Workspace Manager, which allows "mere mortals" to easily harness the power of UNIX.

486 System Requirements

NeXTstep 486 requires 8 to 16 MB of RAM, a mouse or similar pointing device and either 120 MB (user version) or about 400 MB (developer version) of hard disk space.

NeXTstep's advanced graphics can be displayed as grayscale on selected Super-VGA cards, and as 16-bit color on EISA color graphics boards that will soon be announced by major PC manufacturers. This will enable the entire installed base of 486 computer users to use NeXTstep 486. In addition, newer 486-based computers expected to ship in the first half of 1992 will incorporate their graphics memory on the processor bus, enabling even faster display of NeXTstep's stunning, true-color graphics. Many 486-based PCs are expected to move to these higher-speed graphics in 1992.

Distribution and Availability

NeXTstep 486 will be available in two ways: as a "shrink-wrap" product (in user and developer versions) and through selected OEMs, pre-installed on their 486-based computers. OEM partnerships will be announced in the coming months.

NeXT Computer, Inc. designs, manufactures and markets professional workstations based on the pioneering NeXTstep object-oriented system software. NeXT computers are used by medium and large organizations to develop mission-critical custom applications and to run these applications alongside breakthrough productivity applications.

NeXT is headquartered at 900 Chesapeake Drive, Redwood City, California, 94063. For further information, customers and potential customers are encouraged to call 1-800-TRY-NeXT.

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NeXT Third-Party Developers Who Have Commited to a NeXTstep 486 Product

Adobe Systems Incorporated
Contact: LaVon Collins or Russ McCann (415) 961-4400

Altsys Corporation
Contact: Meaghan Hogan (214) 680-2060

Appsoft, Inc.
Contact: Emily Brower (415) 585-8113

Atherton Software
Contact: Jayson Adams (415) 321-3720

Conextions, Inc.
Contact: Ed Kodinski (508) 475-5411

Digital Instrumentation Technology, Inc.
Contact: Liz Shrum (505) 662-1459

HSD Microcomputer U.S., Incorporated
Contact: David W. Peter (415) 964–1400

Lighthouse Design Ltd.
Contact: Jonathan Schwartz (800) 366-2279

Lotus Development Corporation
Contact: Jeanne Heston (617) 577–8500

Marble Associates, Inc.
Contact: Ray Bloom (408) 436-7299

Metaresearch, Inc.
Contact: Lee Buhler (503) 238-5728

Modernsoft
Contact: Chip Goodman (415) 328-2221

OTI
Contact: Eric Bergerson (212) 227-6767

Pencom Software
Contact: Pam O'Neal (512) 343-1111

RightBrain Software
Contact: Joyce Dickerson (415) 326-2974

Sarrus Software, Inc.
Contact: Andy Turk (415) 364-1432

Software Ventures
Contact: David Hindawi (415) 644–3232

Stone Design Corporation
Contact: Andrew Stone (505) 345-4800

Visual Understanding Systems, Inc. (VISUS)
Contact: Bob Thibadeau (412) 488-3600

White Pine
Contact: Scott Darling (603) 886-9050

Wolfram Research, Inc.
Contact: Jane Rich (217) 398-0700

WordPerfect Corporation
Contact: Royce Bybee (801) 225-5000