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ROCK RIDGE GROUP SUBMITS PRELIMINARY CD-ROM SPECS TO NIST

Sixteen Companies Offer Their Support

SAN JOSE, Calif.— March 18, 1991 — Sixteen companies known as the Rock Ridge Group have submitted two new preliminary CD-ROM specifications -- System Use Sharing Protocol (SUSP) and the Rock Ridge Interchange Protocol Specification (RRIP) -- to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). These specifications offer industry-standard solutions for the distribution of data and software on CD-ROM media. They extend and are completely compliant with the current international standard format for CD-ROM, the ISO 9660-1988. CD-ROM media can significantly reduce cost and improve software installation and ease of use.

Members of the Rock Ridge Group include Anvil Software Limited, Digital Equipment Corporation, Fulcrum Technologies Inc., Hewlett-Packard Company, Highland Software, Interactive Systems Corporation, Lehman Brothers, Mentor Graphics Corporation, Meridian Data, Next Technology Corporation (UK), Philips Kommunikations Industrie, The Santa Cruz Operation, Silicon Graphics Computer Systems, Solbourne Computer, Sun Microsystems and Young Minds.

The goals of the Rock Ridge Group and its submission to NIST will be discussed by Andy Young, founder and president of Young Minds, on Wednesday, March 20, at the Sixth International Conference and Exposition on Multimedia and CD-ROM being held here.

The Rock Ridge CD-ROM specifications have been submitted to NIST for its review and consideration in developing a Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) for CD-ROM technology. NIST develops FIPS for use by United States federal agencies in the acquisition and management of computer and telecommunication systems.

"We are interested in developing standards-based solutions within an architectural framework that will give federal users faster access to data and software within open systems environments," said Allen Hankinson, chief of NIST's Systems and Software Technology Division. "The Rock Ridge specifications combined with the current ISO 9660 standard will deliver this to the user."

Rock Ridge Specifications

The SUSP extension to the ISO 9660 standard allows multiple file system extensions to coexist on one CD-ROM disc. The existing ISO standard allows for this, but does not define a mechanism.

The RRIP specification, which is built on top of the SUSP extension, lets POSIX files and directories be recorded on CD-ROM without requiring modifications to files, such as shortening file and directory names. POSIX is the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Portable Operating System Interface IEEE Std. 1003.1-1990. This recorded information can then be read by any computer system on which the new specifications or the current standard are implemented. RRIP makes it very easy for UNIX[®] applications to be executed directly from CD-ROM without copying them on the hard disk and using disk space. A standard CD-ROM holds more than 640 megabytes of data.

User Benefits

The Rock Ridge specifications primarily benefit software developers, software distributors and end users. Developers can now produce single CD-ROM discs that contain multiple applications or a single application that runs on systems from different vendors. In addition, developers can transfer their software to CD-ROM more easily because the Rock Ridge specifications eliminate the need to shorten file names.

With the Rock Ridge specifications, software distributors can now stock a single version of a product instead of multiple versions. End users save time because they now have direct access to data on their discs, eliminating the need to copy data to a hard disk first. In addition, users save money because they don't need to buy a hard disk on which to copy data.

Rock Ridge Information

Rock Ridge is a group of companies that began meeting in July 1990 to resolve difficulties in distributing software on CD-ROM. For companies interested in reviewing the specifications, please contact Robert J. Niland at Hewlett-Packard. He can be reached at (303) 229-4014 or at rjn@fc.hp.com. The Rock Ridge Group will hold its next meeting on April 16 in Mountain View, Calif. Please contact Larry Kluger, Sun Microsystems, at (415) 336-4708 for meeting time and location.

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