

VSE at CA-World

BY LEO J. LANGEVIN

Computer Associates certainly knows how to put on a technical conference! Depending on whom I spoke with, attendee estimates were between 12,000 and 15,000. I have a suggestion for a CA-World T-shirt: "CA-World: We're big!" There was also a great party atmosphere. When I first walked in I was greeted to a video of some CA employees singing "Why I'm CA" to the tune of "Y.M.C.A." Every evening there was an over-abundance of food. However, despite the free drinks, the experience from a VSE point of view was quite sobering. I'll get to that in a minute.

Although there were several sessions that directly or indirectly dealt with VSE, I only participated in two VSE sessions at CA-World: TCP/IP for VSE and NFS for VSE. According to one CA employee just about every VSE participant attending the show was at this session — all two dozen of them. That's right, VSE folks made up one-fifth of one percent of the attendees! No wonder I didn't see many familiar faces.

Now what could have caused VSE attendance to be off? Could it be the price? Computer Associates offered a price reduction for VSE shops. Perhaps it was too close to the IBM Technical Conference in Reno. Or maybe it was because a typical VSE person can go to only one conference a year, and would rather go to a VSE-only event, such as WAVV. For whatever reason, I was part of the minority.

Anyway, at one session I encountered a person who wanted to write his own FTP client to run under CA-IDMS to send IDMS database information to his LAN. He asked me how hard this would be. I told him that it should take less than a week to write. The socket macro makes it easy to use the Telnet and FTP protocols. Remembering that FTP uses two port numbers (one for sending commands and the other for sending data), you would invoke the SOCKET macro as follows to write your own FTP client:

1. Open the ports with the following:

```
SOCKET OPEN,FTP,LOPORT=21, FOPORT=21.....
SOCKET OPEN,FTP,LOPORT=22, FOPORT=22.....
```

2. Send commands and receive responses (over and over) with the following:

```
SOCKET SEND,FTP,LOPORT=21, FOPORT=21.....
SOCKET RECEIVE,FTP,LOPORT=21, FOPORT=21.....
```

3. Send data and receive acks (until data reaches EOF) with the following:

```
SOCKET SEND,FTP,LOPORT=22, FOPORT=22.....
SOCKET RECEIVE,FTP,LOPORT=22, FOPORT=22.....
```

4. Close the ports with the following:

```
SOCKET CLOSE,FTP,LOPORT=21, FOPORT=21.....
SOCKET CLOSE,FTP,LOPORT=22, FOPORT=22.....
```

Computer Associates certainly knows how to put on a technical conference! Depending on whom I spoke with, attendee estimates were between 12,000 and 15,000. I have a suggestion for a CA-World T-shirt: "CA-World: We're big!"

That's all there is to it. TCP/IP will do most of the work for you. Daemons/servers, on the other hand, require a lot more programming and can take months to develop. But for FTP or Telnet clients (with the exception of NFS), there's no problem.

My NFS presentation went well. I discussed how NFS allows a PC to access mainframe data using common applications such as MS-Word and Excel. For those of you who missed it (and I assume there are many of you), you can download it from www.TCP-IP4VSE.COM/nfsppt.zip.

CA-World also made it easier to stay in touch with the outside world while in attendance. Several PCs hooked up to

the Internet allowed me to Telnet to my ISP and use PINE to look at my email from UNIX. One message in particular on VSE-L caught my interest. Someone wanted to know how to use TCP/IP for VSE to send email via batch mode. After reading several misleading responses, I pointed this person to my web site where the source code for SENDMAIL exists. (This is also available for download from the NaSPA Internet server as filename JUN98001.ZIP.) This would do pretty much what the person wanted, and the source code is pretty straightforward to modify. After all, writing TCP/IP for VSE client code isn't too difficult.

CA-WORLD: A SOBERING EXPERIENCE

So getting back to the part of the conference I found sobering: If you want to know where the hot technology is, look at peoples' hair. The more gray hair (or the lack of hair), the older the technology. The 18- to 24-year-old crowd isn't entering the industry with a knowledge of VSE, VM, MVS or even CICS. These technologies aren't taught in most schools, so we aren't getting any new blood.

So perhaps the dinosaur is a good mascot after all. Once we die off, the old technology will become extinct. If you don't believe me, compare the number of grandparents attending a WAVV conference to the number of "teenagers" at the recent COMDEX conference.

I looked for this younger generation at CA-World. They weren't at the four booths with VSE software. Rather, they were at the booths watching demonstrations of Java, object-oriented design, web design, search

engines, 3D interfacing, and Windows 98. If we ignore these same technologies, we may end up in the tar pits.

So next year, be sure to attend CA-World. Learn what's hot. Check out what the young folks are working on. Get a feel for what other technologies are out there waiting to be explored. You might even ask the consulting firms that are represented at the conference what skills are desired these days. So the next time you see me, say hello. I'll treat you to a glass of Geritol. 

NaSPA member Leo J. Langevin is the lead developer for NFS for VSE from Connectivity Systems. He has been involved with VSE since its inception. He can be reached at leo@tcpip4vse.com.

©1998 Technical Enterprises, Inc. For reprints of this document contact sales@naspa.net.

technical[®]
Supporting Enterprise Networks and Operating Environments
SUPPORT