THE FALL '88 MIGRATION: NEW DIRECTIONS?
Presented by: Charles H. Finley, Jr., ConAm Corporation

"DEC has it now" or so the ads read. What does DEC have now? Is it a good thing to
have? Do we want it? What will it cost us? Can we afford it? Being the curious sort
I set out to learn more. Upon further examination I discovered, much to my relief, that
what DEC has is not some new dreaded disease, but a broad, compatible line of products
all running under the same operating system, with some inexpensive, low capacity
machines at the low end, and some very expensive but very large machines at the high
end. What they also have, now, is a solid networking and data communications product
line. Moreover, they are working hard to successfully integrate both IBM compatible and
MacIntosh compatible products with their larger computers. They probably also believe in
motherhood, like apple pie and a few of them, I'm told, listen to Willie Nelson from time-
to-time.

The HP 3000 we know is a family of computers that share the same or very similar multi-
user, multi-tasking operating systems, MPE and MPE XL. At the low end of the HP
family there is a computer suitable for use with only one terminal and priced such that
many companies, organizations and individuals consider it cost-effective. At the high end,
there is a large, powerful computer that we understand is able to handle as many as 200
users concurrently. Moreover, through networking and data communications, multiple
computers can be linked to form an even more comprehensive distributed solution to data
processing problems. In addition, personal computers can be networked with the HP 3000,
thereby allowing the user to derive benefits from the PC world as well as the HP 3000
world. HP has also made products available to allow HP 3000 connections to IBM, DEC
and other manufacturers' computers who use their proprietary communications protocols
and networking disciplines. HP has also been one of the staunchest supporters of
international standards in networking and data communications. They have offerings in
the X.25 arena as well as the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI).

Digital, we believe is in a similar position to HP both with respect to the range of
offerings on their VAX computer family and in the range of their data communications
offerings. A notable difference between HP and DEC, however, is at the high end of
their product offerings. DEC has for a long time offered larger VAX computers than the
largest available HP 3000. Also, the VAX cluster and the multi-processor offerings allow

for an environment that supports more transactions per hour at the high end than does the HP 3000.

HP we know and DEC we believe both have a family of highly compatible computers that allow the same software to be used on the largest machine that runs on the smallest computer. Few people have the illusion that this is true of IBM's offerings. IBM offers several disjointed computer systems that are only barely compatible with each other. To add to the confusion the power of these different computer families overlap.

Most of you probably already realize that it is becoming less and less useful to talk about only the largest computer we own when we discuss alternatives for getting all of our work done. Rather than a computer system nowadays, it is probably more appropriate to speak of a "computing climate," the "climate" being a collection of data processing equipment consisting of at least one mid-range to large on-line transaction processor (HP 3000), and one to many personal computers (PC's) integrated together (networked). This commercial data processing climate is what HP, DEC and IBM all offer to various degrees.

As the number of choices in computer products increases, I believe that users will tend to select one or two primary vendors and assemble their data processing climate from these. The number of alternative computer and networking products seem to be increasing exponentially and this can be overwhelming to a user. It is possible that in a few years, if all alternatives are to be considered before some new application is implemented, an MIS staff will consist only of evaluators. This is not reasonable given that other problems need to be solved as well.

Given this belief that vendors who are able to provide an entire "climate" are the ones who will prevail and prosper in the long run, this paper will consider only the migration of users between HP and DEC or IBM. Other changes are taking place but the author believes those considered here are the most significant to the HP 3000 user.

In a paper presented in the Spring of 1988 the author reported that most defections from HP to IBM and DEC occurred due to the need on the part of the end-user for more transaction processing power. It was also found that most users who had changed would have preferred not to have changed.

By the time this talk occurs, some HP Precision Architecture machines will have been in use for several months. Also, we will have moved closer to the date when the 955 (or

some other larger machine yet unannounced as of this writing) will be available. The author will continue to interview users during the months and weeks immediately prior to the conference and will be prepared to discuss how things have changed since the Spring. The talk will explore what migrations have been taking place most recently, and will also address such questions as: Are HP 3000 users moving to other manufacturers' systems? Have some who thought they might change decided to stay with HP? Did any HP users start to leave and change their mind or leave and come back?

This session is expected to be more of a discussion rather than a presentation. Audience participation will be not only welcome but encouraged.