The Future of Newton

Given the uncertainty around Apple recently, the understandable question on everyone's mind has been, "What is the future of Newton?" I want to take some time now to reassure our developers and customers that the Newton platform is strong and moving ahead as planned. Amidst the chaos, the Newton Systems Group is completely intact. In fact, we have recently hired more staff. At the time of this writing, the MessagePad 2000 and eMate 300 are off the production line and in the hands of the first new customers. By press time, you should all have your units in hand, and the Newton Systems Group will be well on their way developing what's next for Newton.

Clearly the Newton effort does not end with shipping the eMate 300 and MessagePad 2000. New technology is being developed in the form of enhanced C++ and development tools, and developer releases of the Newton driver DDKs. New futures are being investigated in the form of Newton/Java research and development. Now, with the explosion of the world-wide-web, the shrinking costs of mobile communications hardware, and the publicly acknowledged need for low-cost high-tech educational tools, we're seeing the emergence of real-world problems for which Newton technology provides solutions. The new combination of greatly increased chip speeds, useful new form factors, a licensed OS, and modernized software make the answer obvious to the trained eye, and an exciting possibility to those new to Newton.

So let's get down to business. This issue of Newton Technology Journal is chock full of useful technical information. "Behind Bars" illustrates what you can do with the new soft button bar on the MessagePad 2000, and other button bar issues. You can find out more about sending and receiving binary data using Newton endpoints in "Binary Communications". As promised, part II of our data storage series goes into detail about how the OS caches entries and soups, and "Surviving the Grip" discusses what to do when Newton still needs the card you removed. Dragon Systems is our guest author this issue with an article outlining their efforts with speech recognition. See how WinCE stacks up against Newton in "Why Newton Beats Windows CE". We also introduce you to two key members of the Newton Systems Group, and let you in on the extraordinary experience of field-testing the eMate 300.

I recently had the pleasure of talking with many potential Newton customers at the HIMMS conference (Healthcare Information Management Systems) in San Diego, CA, where the MessagePad 2000 enjoyed a great reception. No less impressive than the hardware itself were the software solutions being demonstrated. Virtually every doctor, nurse, or healthcare administrator who visited the Newton pavilion left with a lasting impression of the promising possibilities that Newton solutions could bring to their organizations. To all our Newton developers: Thank you for the solutions you contribute, thank you for your faith in Newton technology, and thanks for hanging in there through the uncertainty. It's now time to watch what the future will bring, and then continue to create an even better one!