



# THE OMNI USER

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## SJP, We Hardly Knew Ya

Typically my introduction to the newsletter is a bit of a breezy how-do-you-do, but not this month. This month I want to tell you a little story, and I want to get your reaction. The story is about a company that will shortly cease to be, and about the real impact of superstores on America.

This is *not* a diatribe against superstores; I'm not an "investigative journalist" (trust me, I wouldn't look good in a Geraldo mustache). But I do want everyone in our community to understand the real, immediate effects of our economic practices. I'm just providing the facts; what you choose to do with that knowledge is up to you.

Okay, the story is about a little manufacturing company in New London, Wisconsin called Simmons Juvenile Products. Spun off from the Simmons Bedding company, this factory employed 300 workers (and an iSeries) to build wonderful cribs in the Simmons line. I'm not just being polite when I say wonderful; had we not gotten hand-me-downs from my sister-in-law, my son Anthony might well be sleeping in a Simmons Shaker crib today (it grows with the child; what a great piece of furniture!). This was no fly-by-night venture, either: Simmons has been making baby furniture since 1927.

Well, that was then, this is now. According to a source at the company, everything changed when the superstores took over. Even though they still built the same number of cribs, in a few years the number of buyers dropped from thousands to half a dozen, and eventually one customer made up 80% of the business. And since that customer could get furniture from China, built, shipped over the ocean and trucked halfway across the continent, for \$50 less than what Simmons could build it for, keeping the factory going eventually became a losing proposition.

Note how this happens: first, the superstores move in and buy locally made goods and offer them at a lower margin than the mom and pop stores. In relatively short order, this puts the local distributors out of business, leaving the playing field clear except for the superstore. The superstore becomes the only buyer the area, and the monopoly begins to grow. Now the superstore can begin importing cheaper goods to squeeze the local manufacturers. Since they are unable to compete with offshore labor living at 1/10<sup>th</sup> the American standard of living, the manufacturers too begin to bow to the pressure and go under. The superstore doesn't care; it can always get product from some "emerging economy". As long as it has customers, it does fine. And if it runs out of customers, it closes that store and moves on.

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*Edited by Joe Pluta - omni-comm@plutabrothers.com*

So, superstores reduce the number of local distributors, distributors who would buy from the community. Instead, because of their massive buying power and huge international infrastructure, the superstores can import things built with labor at 1/10<sup>th</sup> the cost of a typical American. Then, by passing part of that savings on to the consumer, they make it unprofitable for the local businesses to stay in business, because there's no way they can compete with the cheaper products coming in from overseas. So now you're down to only what the superstore brings in, and since it has no real ties to the community, all it will bring in is the cheapest stuff it can find.

Sure it's nice to save \$50 on a crib; in fact, for a struggling couple just starting out, that can be part of a security deposit. But if that means 300 local jobs, is it really a good idea? In New London, that's about 5% of the *total* population of the city and a loss of \$10 million in income, not to mention the loss of an entire SMB and the iSeries that supports it. Besides, there are some people who would gladly buy the more expensive crib from a local distributor. They might buy it for the service, for the quality of the product, or even just because it was made by a neighbor. But once the superstore is in the picture, the local manufacturers shut down, the local distributors go away, and you no longer even have the chance to support a local company because there are no more.

Is this good? Is this bad? I don't know. I honestly don't know the answers to this situation. I know there's little that can be done, and in fact I know that the Simmons name will live on, at least for a while. Delta Enterprise Corporation bought the assets of the SJP company, which include the Simmons brand name, which will now be used on cheap imported furniture. So the superstore even reduces the quality of the company name.

And the PR side of this is a little unsettling as well. Read the news release Delta put out announcing the acquisition:

<http://www.productivity.net/Delta/Simmons/PRSimmonsBusiness.htm>

Does anything in that article make it sound like the plant is closing? Doesn't it instead sound like the Simmons brand will continue to be manufactured, and just distributed by Delta? Sadly, that's not the case. And because of that, another American factory will be shuttered and 300 more workers will be out of jobs. Of course, they could get jobs as greeters at the new superstore...

How does this relate to you and I as iSeries developers and users? Well, it has to do with the strength of the American economy and particularly the small to medium businesses that once flourished throughout the country. As the superstores expand their hold, it looks like consumers will get slightly cheaper goods at the expense of jobs. Am I advocating boycotting superstores? No, especially if you can't afford the higher prices of goods elsewhere. Nobody should go without. But if you can afford to help keep your local businesses afloat, you might want to do so. Spend a little more time finding out where your goods are made, and especially for one-time purchases of medium-ticket items like furniture and appliances, buy an American-made product if you can: Maytag, Oreck, BroilKing, Little Tikes, Step 2.

Because otherwise if we continue to only shop for the cheapest products, our own American businesses can never compete with the peasant wages of emerging economies, and if IBM is looking to get into the SMB market it better hurry, because from the looks of things the SMB market may not be around for that long, at least not in America. You'll certainly never be able to buy another Simmons crib made in New London, Wisconsin, and for that we're all a little bit poorer.

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# **June Dinner Meeting**

## **Tuesday, June 21, 2005**

**Embassy Suites Hotel  
707 E. Butterfield Rd  
Lombard, IL**

5:00 Registration and User Discussions

6:00 Dinner and Break

6:45 Business Meeting & Presentation

### **SQL on iSeries – Concepts and Implementations**

SQL is mostly an under-utilized technology on the iSeries. This presentation is designed to show the audience what can be done with SQL. The topics covered in this presentation include:

- DDL: SQL's Data Definition Language
- SQL Common Usage Methods
- Two SQL Implementations – Interpreted SQL and SQL Stored Procedures
- Performance Considerations with SQL

Most of the points in the presentation are covered with examples which illustrate each point.

### **Thibault Dambrine**

Mr. Dambrine is a programmer with over 20 years of experience, most of them working on System/38, AS/400 and now iSeries. He has written a number of articles on programming techniques, published in the Toronto User Group Magazine, iSeries News, and MCPress Online. An independent contractor, he currently works for Shell Canada Limited, in the Data Warehouse department.

## Dinner Menu Options

Starter: Caesar Salad

Meat: Lemon Herb Chicken

Veggie: Pasta Primavera

Dessert: Carrot Cake

## June Dinner Meeting Registration

Please make your reservations by Thursday, June 16, 2005 at Noon. Call (630) 953-6312, and leave your company name, names of those attending, and the type of meal desired (meat or vegetarian.)

## Cancellation Policy

Full refund will be issued for cancellations made before 9:00 am Friday, June 17th.

After 9:00 am Friday, 06/17/2005, cancellation refund depends on meeting attendance. All cancellations must be made as described below.

## Dinner Meeting Cancellation

It is VERY important to cancel your reservation(s) if you cannot attend, by calling (630) 953-6312 and leaving the name(s) of those unable to attend, or by using the web cancellation feature.



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# **July Golf Outing**

## **Wednesday, July 20th, 2005**



**Wednesday, July 20th, 2005**  
Tee Time 8:30 am (Shotgun Start)  
**Tamarack Golf Club**  
24032 Royal Worlington Drive  
(Route 59 & 111th Street)  
Naperville, IL



### **Are You Game for Golf?**

Fore! Grab your clubs, balls and Tees - Omni will be holding its annual golf outing again this year. Wednesday, July 20<sup>th</sup> we will meet once again at Tamarack Golf Club in Naperville, and begins with a shotgun start at 8:30am. Bring a foursome, or register individually. You'll love this day of camaraderie. And you'll have the chance to win a multitude of prizes. Contests include low gross and net, longest drive, several closest to the pins in both men's and women's categories, longest putt and maybe even a best dressed contest!

So warm up your swing, dust off your shoes, and get ready for a great time. Register at [omniuser.org](http://omniuser.org). The cost is only \$85.00 – same as last year. Last day to register is July 10 – the date we have to commit to a number to the course. If you have questions, call Bill Parks at 708-267-1516 or via email at [wparks@att.net](mailto:wparks@att.net)

### **Golf Sponsors Wanted.**

Get your name out in front of our golfing members and their guests. All prize donations will be acknowledged. Donation value should have a minimum value of \$15. Hole sponsors for long drive or closest to the pin are also needed and will include signs on the holes. For details call Bill Parks at 708-267-1516 or via email at [wparks@att.net](mailto:wparks@att.net)

### **Course Workers Wanted**

OK, maybe you don't golf but you would like to share our golf day with us. If not you, maybe you have other workers in your office who would like to help us make our golf outing a success. We need registrars, picture takers, hole watchers, etc. If you care to lend a hand contact Bill Parks at 708-267-1516 or via email at [wparks@att.net](mailto:wparks@att.net)

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## Coming Midrange Events (Golf isn't **ALL** We Do!)

June 21 5:00 PM	OMNI Monthly Dinner Meeting i5 Virtualization and LPAR Thibault Dambrine	Embassy Suites 707 E. Butterfield Rd Lombard, IL
June 28 6:30 PM	OMNI Board of Directors Meeting <i>all are welcome</i>	Hosted by IBM Two Lincoln Centre Oakbrook Terrace, IL
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> July 20 8:30 AM	OMNI Annual Golf Outing Tamarack Golf Club <a href="#">Online registration available here!</a>	24032 Royal Worlington Dr (Route 59 and 111 <sup>th</sup> ) Naperville, IL
September 14 8:30 AM	WDSC Workshop Hosted by Genisys Group and IBM Featuring Joe Pluta <a href="#">Online registration available here!</a>	IBM - 10 North Martingale Rd Room: South White Pine - 2nd Floor Schaumburg, IL 60173
September 18 - 22	COMMON Fall Conference 2005 <a href="#">Online registration available here!</a>	Orlando, FL
October 17 - 21	IBM i5/iSeries Technical Conference <a href="#">Online registration available here!</a>	Miami Beach, FL
November 7 - 9	iSeries DevCon <a href="#">Online registration available here!</a>	Rio Hotel and Casino Las Vegas, NV

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## May Dinner Meeting

A special thank you goes out to Jim Oberholtzer from Computech Resources, Inc. and his power packed presentation on eServer iSeries Virtualization and LPAR.

Jim covered a lot of ground in a short hour and a half and everyone was focused. Keep your eyes peeled for Jim to make a return appearance at our fall day of education which is tentatively scheduled for October 18, 2005 at IBM in OakBrook. It is shaping up to be quite an event so mark your calendar today!

This was another timely presentation on an important subject, and we are following it up with a great piece on virtualization in this month's COMMON Corner.





# Ask the Audience

From last month:

*Last month, I put some questions out to you the reader. So far, the response has been less than stellar. In fact, it's been downright abysmal. I'm going to try the same questions this month to see if I get a little better response. If this doesn't work, then expect to see a huge, blaring banner on the front page.*

Okay, I'm not going to go medieval this month, primarily because I've already got a banner cause for the cover page. So instead, I'll republish this list. In the meantime, though, you should check. We're already beginning to listen to your suggestions! And I guarantee you... if I don't get some responses this month, you'll be hearing from me on the front page! ☺

Here are two questions (send your responses to [omni-comm@plutabrothers.com](mailto:omni-comm@plutabrothers.com)):

**First, if you had your choice, what would be the ideal time of week and length for our Fall conference?** Assume that the longer it is, the more excellent tracks we have. Would you like:

- |                           |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| One day, midweek          | One day, Friday           | One day, Saturday        |
| Two days, Thursday/Friday | Two days, Friday/Saturday | Two day, Saturday/Sunday |

**Second, please let us know which of the following you would like to see in the newsletter and/or on the website.** Putting them in order of preference would be nice (and just because I list it doesn't mean it will get done immediately!):

- A list of IBM Redbooks published this month on the iSeries
- A list of IBM sales/marketing programs and contact numbers
- A list of other user groups
- A list of great web sites (including perhaps Site of the Month)

## What else can you think of?



*"From the violent nature of the multiple stab wounds, I'd say the victim was probably a consultant."*

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## IBM Redbooks

A monthly compendium of recent IBM Redbooks of interest to iSeries developers.

### **WebSphere and .Net Interoperability Using Web Services**

Revised: June 10, 2005 ISBN: 0738492302 366 pages

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg246395.html>

### **Rational Application Developer V6 Portlet Application Development and Portal Tools**

Revised: June, 9, 2005

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/redpieces/abstracts/sg246681.html>

### **Rational Application Developer V6 Programming Guide**

Published: June 2, 2005 ISBN: 0738491209 1454 pages

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg246449.html>

### **IBM Express Runtime V2.1**

Published: May 20, 2005 ISBN: 073849108X 452 pages

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg246674.html>

### **PCI Placement Rules for the IBM eServer i5 and iSeries Servers with i5/OS V5R3**

Published: May, 17, 2005

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/redpapers/abstracts/redp4011.html>

## June 2005 COMMON Corner

Reprinted from the June 2005 issue of COMMON.CONNECT

### The “Real Scoop” on Virtualization

By Mark Bauman

Ah... finally, summertime has arrived. It's time to get outside and enjoy the warmth and sunshine, barbecues, baseball, and the music of the ice cream truck as it slowly moves through the neighborhood. Well, maybe I'm remembering a ways back with that reference, but no matter, because getting a scoop of actual ice cream directly from that on-wheels ice cream container was *so good!*

The ice cream trucks were, or depending on where you live, are, really neat. They come to where the demand is, having an enticing indicator that they are around and available (the bells and chimes and music) and of course, have a great product – all in one package. So if you let me stretch your imagination a bit here... maybe those ice cream trucks were one of the first implementations of a “virtualization” product. Why? Because those trucks consolidated multiple products within one view (the truck), they automatically and magically came around the neighborhood at exactly the right time each day, they were easy to access, the cost of the product was low considering the convenience, and they were even easy to manage with just one person. Now, if you encapsulate these ice cream truck aspects, and twist them to fit into the information technologies infrastructures that we work with, you can come up with a good scoop of real virtualization.

### What Is Virtualization?

The definition of IT virtualization is to provide a logical rather than physical view of data, computing power, storage capacity, and other computing resources, while automating the management of these virtual resources based on business goals. Virtualization allows the usage and presentation of computing resources such as servers, storage devices, distributed applications, routers, hubs, switches, etc. in ways that applications and users can obtain the most value from them. In a virtualized environment, the computing resources are not limited by which type of server, storage, or network devices is used, or where they are physically located.

Beyond the need for virtualization of hardware resources is the need for virtualization of data and applications. Customers need access to data resources as a single entity and need to have applications respond quickly to the dynamic needs of the enterprise. Therefore, virtualization is about enabling access to and creating a consolidated, logical view of IT resources across the entire IT infrastructure. It provides an abstract view of physical and “soft” resources so they can be accessed as a pool of logical resources. (See figure 1.) This enables improved utilization and consolidation of your information, applications, IT resources, and assets by treating resources as a single pool for more efficiently accessing and managing those resources across an organization. Virtualization technology allows you to simplify and consolidate servers and storage devices, reduce system management complexity (especially across a heterogeneous system environment), optimize the utilization of server capacity and access all data resources regardless of physical location and share multiple workloads across a single or multiple processors.

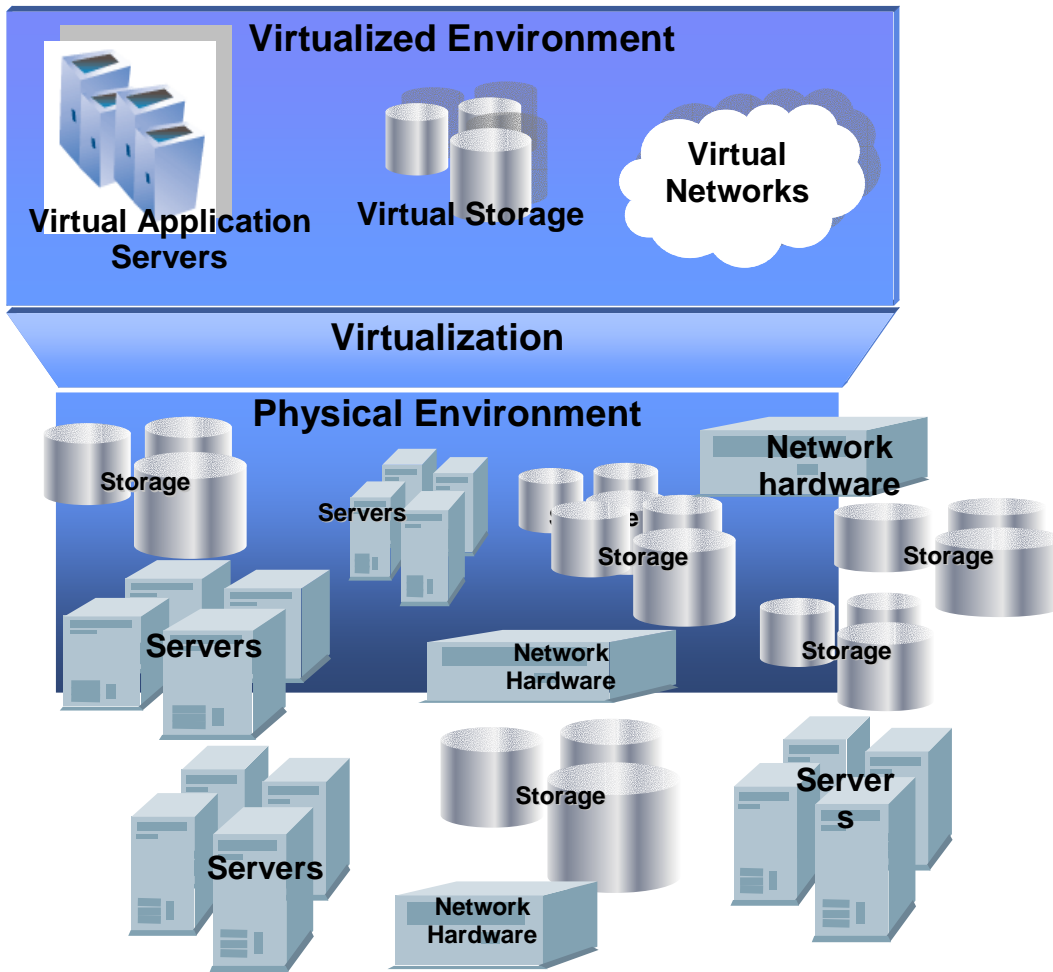


Figure 1: Virtualizing an enterprise.

### Where Does Virtualization Fit in Today's World?

Unfortunately, today's IT infrastructure is not an ice cream truck. It is just a tad more complex. Often, in fact, IT is rigid in the way its implementation imposes limitations on a business, and can force a business to compromise its approach to solving market, customer, and business needs. Successful businesses require timely responsiveness to change, whether it is due to new customer needs, changes in the supply chain, unexpected competitive moves, external threats, or changes in the economic climate. Rapid response to change requires an IT infrastructure that can turn information into a competitive advantage; the IT infrastructure should provide maximum benefit at an affordable cost, and must have the flexibility to support changes in business processes.

A business needs to be "on demand," where its operating environment provides a cost-effective and flexible IT environment. Success in an on demand world will depend on the ability to leverage information technology. What differentiates an on demand business is the ability to quickly sense and rapidly react to a dynamic marketplace. Virtualization is a key component of this "on demand" operating environment. Virtualization helps align IT environments more effectively with the needs of the business.

For example, ask these questions about your business and IT infrastructure:

- Can you respond quickly to application needs of your customers?
- Are you able to gather information across the enterprise quickly?
- Can you share departmental workloads easily and seamlessly across servers and storage devices?
- Are you viewing all your data resources as a single entity?
- Are you able to reduce operation and systems management cost while maintaining needed and fluctuating capacity?
- Are you utilizing information and resources across your organization efficiently?

In contrast, by implementing virtualization and pooling resources such as servers, memory, network devices, and storage into a single, virtual environment, your business can:

- manage multiple systems as one;
- run multiple operating systems per server;
- provision capacity rapidly;
- increase availability of data and applications within individual platforms and across heterogeneous networks;
- balance workload across a heterogeneous environment;
- reduce complexity monitoring and management;
- automate deployment, optimization of IT resources in real time; and
- maximize utilization.

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## **What Is the ROI for Virtualization?**

CEOs generally want revenue growth with cost containment; they want to be responsive to customer demands and needs; and they want to enable the skills, capabilities, leadership, and effectiveness of people and processes. CIOs fit into these goals by working to align IT and business goals to grow revenue and contain costs, build flexibility, responsiveness, and agility into the organization through IT, and help enable people and teams to be more effective.

So let's take a look at these three goals with virtualization in mind. Virtualization helps meet these goals in three main ways. First, there are cost savings with higher utilization rates: You need less hardware and software to run your business. You also need fewer human resources to manage and operate the virtualized IT environments. Secondly, you achieve higher efficiencies through simplified server, storage, network, application, and other IT resource management. This gives you optimal utilization of the resources, and better response to service requests (better levels of quality of service). Finally, virtualization gives you flexibility with dynamic utilization of the resources as the needs of the business dictate, faster time and response to market changes and requirements and thus a competitive differentiation that you can sell to your customers.

## **Incorporation Virtualization into your IT Infrastructure**

Being able to implement virtualization solutions in an IT infrastructure does not mean the whole IT environment has to convert in one major re-engineering project. There is a stepped virtualization approach that can be used.

The first step in the virtualization process is to simplify your environment by consolidating homogeneous or like systems platforms onto fewer, more manageable, more efficiently structured resources. Many companies have taken the first steps toward simplifying their environments by consolidating servers and storage into fewer physical boxes, or even reducing the number of distributed data centers. This has reduced costs and simplified the environment, to a point. They now have fewer servers or storage devices and pay for fewer software licenses. However, these environments are still not very flexible due to the diverse server types and their associated operating systems. For example, each server has a different management tool with a unique interface, and this makes the consistent management of them difficult and onerous.

This is where step two comes in – where a business will continue the upward penetration of simplification within their IT infrastructure by consolidating heterogeneous systems. Now you can manage dissimilar physical resources as a single unit.

The third step is automating the management of the resources, including allowing the addition or removal of capacity as needed. This will satisfy the business requirements and needs to drive resource usage, rather than having the resources drive how the business performs.

Automation of tasks such as increasing or moving capacity can lead to task automation of all associated processes or sub-processes, such as automatically increasing processing capacity for end-of-month rollup processing.

The fourth step is bringing together the consolidated resources across functions within the company, something called intra-enterprise consolidation. With this step, you begin breaking down the silos of technology and you start sharing resources across functions within the enterprise. By doing this, a company can use resources that may sit idle at times to assist another resource which is unable to accomplish its business goals with the resources it previously had available. The ability to share

these resources in a seamless fashion enables companies to quickly respond to changing business needs without investing in additional hardware, software, or technology. It begins to eliminate boundaries between resources that have been created by organizational silos or management processes

Finally, in the fifth step, businesses can begin using advanced virtualization concepts to push the virtualization of resources out into their partner and vendor IT infrastructures. In this step, resources are available when required and peak demands can be serviced without keeping excess capacity forever available, and information flows seamlessly within and across organizational functions and business boundaries.

All of these steps can be implemented today with existing technology support such as provisioning, enterprise-wide workload management, grid computing, virtual I/O support, partitioning, multiple operating system hosting capabilities, simultaneous multi-threading, capacity on demand capabilities, storage consolidation capabilities, and many other technologies. However, in many cases, a business cannot implement the virtualization technologies as rapidly as they would like due to outdated IT infrastructure and IT management processes. So, even before starting step one, businesses often need to take a serious look at their infrastructures and their associated processes (i.e. cultures) and determine what they need to do to take that first step in the virtualization journey.

Virtualization is real in the IT industry today, just as real as the ice cream truck used to be in our neighborhoods. Virtualization is providing a competitive advantage for the businesses that have implemented aspects of it within their IT infrastructure. As the acceptance of virtualization grows and as businesses pick and choose which parts of it make sense for them, the demand for existing applications to incorporate or interface with virtualization elements will increase. So get ready, because I hear bells and chimes. The virtualized ice cream truck is coming and I need a scoop of real “virtualization”!

### **Fall 2005 Focus on Virtualization**

The special educational focus for the COMMON Fall 2005 Conference & Expo is the timely topic of virtualization. This is a quickly emerging technology of interest to management, operations and programming staff. The focus will provide conference attendees and their organizations with workshops, sessions, labs and Expo solutions that will define and teach virtualization. These will include case studies and information that show how virtualization of resources provides a positive return on investment. It will also include how-tos on installing, configuring, and using currently available products and tools in your IT environment, such as the Virtualization Engine (VE), including the VE Console and Enterprise Workload Manager, LPAR, HMC, and other virtualization products. The educational content of the conference will teach you to optimally use the virtualization products and tools across your numerous systems for immediate dynamic deployment and optimization of your entire IT resource. So come and get quality hands-on education in Orlando on this exciting new technology.

## OMNI 2005 Board

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## Notes from the Field

- **Your Input Needed!** (by Joe Pluta)

I'm taking this month off, sort of. That's because I already wrote a small novel for the cover story, and we've also added the RedPaper section, as well as introducing a new advertiser: looksoftware. With all that going on, I'm going to leave the Notes from the Field be this month, and just ask you to start thinking about my next big issue: SQL Server.

Here's my problem... I keep hearing from the Microsoft advocates about how SQL Server can replace DB2/400. My problem with this is that I just can't see how. For example, in a typical BPCS shop, we regularly had files with tens of millions of records in them. The item history file in particular usually had that and about 25 logical views (because if you don't have a persistent view, good luck creating an index on the fly over 10,000,000 records). Have you heard of SQL databases out there with tables that large and that regularly used? I'd love to hear about it. And then next month hopefully I can talk a little more about DB2, SQL Server and the open source database world.