Software Asset Management- A Plan For The Long Term

By Greg Grisham

SAM, or Software Asset Management, is not a new term in the software business. With release cycles shortening from the 18-to-24- month cycle of the late 1980s to the aggressive 6-to-10-month cycles seen in a majority of markets today, this constantly changing environment makes it harder than ever for you, your employees and your clients to stay competitive.

BASIS has made some changes over the last couple of years to support our clients in this climate. We have doubled the development staff. You can download our Business Basic from our Web site. Additional seats can be licensed with a simple phone call. Soon, we will have a complete e-commerce site that will allow our clientele to purchase our products anytime, any day.

BASIS augments these offerings with the BASIS SAM plan, a plan for product release notice, free upgrades, specialized support, etc. designed to help your enterprise stay competitive. This plan is designed for those customers who want, and need, automatic real-time notification and availability of our latest releases. As we are constantly adding features to our development tools, many of our customers want to have these features as soon as they are available. The BASIS SAM plan facilitates our customers' ability to maintain a competitive edge over the long term.

Not all of our customers will need a SAM contract. Some applications operate just fine in a frozen, controlled release mode. But a majority of them, particularly in the ever-evolving and intensely competitive corporate enterprise world, will require it. These sites have constant updates to their internal systems, the corresponding operating systems, site acquisition and growth. Information Systems departments at these sites bear a heavy burden in keeping applications current and maintenance/support contracts active.

With the advent of electronic software distribution, shipping new diskettes or a CD every time there is a maintenance release is not practical. In most cases, by the time the media reaches the appropriate person and he or she has time to install it, the next release is available. So the new paradigm of electronic distribution is quite simple and affords a better methodology for the customer. Notices and products are delivered electronically. Manuals are all maintained in a real-time, online mode, and all of this is available through a controlled Web portal. This means that terms like "wait," "delivery date" and "shipping and handling" are terms of the past. If a bug fix for an operating system is available for download, then our corresponding release will be available too. You can evaluate new features and functions immediately rather than waiting at the mailbox as your competition passes you by.