

Intel inside Memphis

Business links lead to local tests of new chip

By Daniel Connolly

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When computer chip maker Intel Corp. presents a video promoting its vPro processor, it will feature scenes from an unlikely place: a commercial real estate office in Memphis.

A string of business relationships led Santa Clara, Calif.-based Intel to choose one of the Memphis offices of CB Richard Ellis as a test site for the new chip.

Intel plans to use the office as an example of how the new chip allows information technology professionals to manage computers from a long distance, even when the machines are turned off or have crashed, said J. Michael Drake, chairman and CEO of Bartlett-based masterIT LLC, a firm that offers a range of information technology services to companies.

Drake said the chip, formally known as Intel vPro Processor Technology, allows computer professionals to perform tasks such as installing software updates when computers aren't turned on.

"The other thing is that, God forbid, if there was a crash, whether it be of a server or a PC, we would have the ability to access the chip even if the computer is down," he said.

Here's how the real estate office ended up as a test site:

Intel worked on the vPro project with Ottawa-based N-Able Technologies, a company that makes software for remote monitoring of computer networks.

That firm, in turn, contacted masterIT, one of its customers, said Gavin Garbutt, N-Able's president and CEO.

"It's absolutely safe to say that masterIT is one of the top managed service providers in North America," Garbutt said.

Then the Memphis firm picked one of its existing clients, CB Richard Ellis, for the test. Drake said he picked the firm because it makes proactive use of technology. For instance, it recently installed a telephone system based on the Internet.

The real estate firm relies on computers for everything from accounting to dealing

with maintenance requests at its office buildings, said Mary F. Sharp, CB Richard Ellis' chief operating officer in Memphis.

The testing only involved three of the Memphis market's 70 computers and didn't interrupt work, she said.

"We don't see disruption, and that's the most important thing for our operations because downtime is critical," she said. "We have very strict deadlines for reporting, and we have to meet those deadlines."

Intel plans to describe the test in a written case study and a video that is scheduled air in venues that include trade shows, Drake said.

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masterIT

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