



What's New at Robelle



Stromasys Charon / HP 3000 Emulator

By Neil Armstrong Software Architect

There has been a lot of interest again in the HP 3000 platform, mainly due to the Charon HPA emulator by Stromasys Virtualization Technologies. Robelle has been running on a test instance of the 3000 for the last two years. We knew from very early on that this project was going to be successful in getting a Virtual HP3000 running.

I recently downloaded and tested the "Freeware" version of the emulator. Unfortunately I only had my iMac that was able to run under VMWare Fusion that had the chipset to support the Emulator, but with only 2 GB of memory and other machines running under VMWare.

I was in the market to purchase a more powerful PC to house my RedHat/SUSE and Ubuntu development environments, under VMWare. I decided to research Intel machines that supported SSE 4.1 as required by the Stromasys Emulator.

I went to BestBuy and Staples and viewed some models online. I needed powerful CPU and make sure that the chip had the SSE 4.1/4.2 Instruction Set Extension. There were a few models on sale. Googled CPU info 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-3470

The google search took me to this link:
<http://ark.intel.com/products/68316/>

This site gives details on the specific chipset. Low and behold showed that it had the necessary Instruction Set Extensions, specifically SSE4.1/4.2.

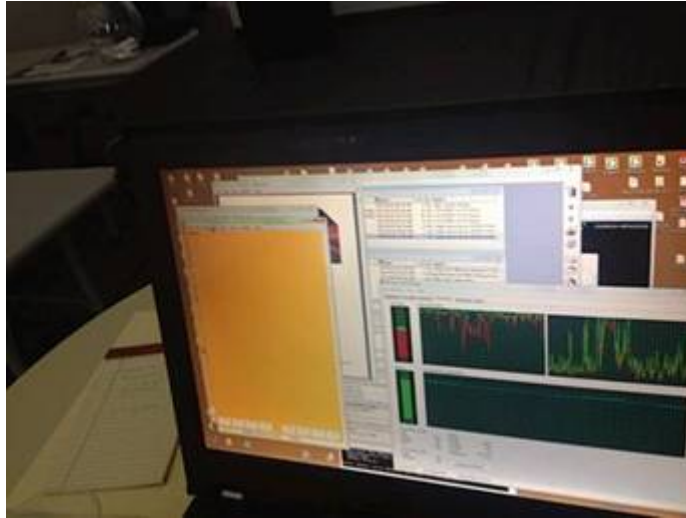
I purchased the machine on sale at Canadian Staples website for \$659, ASUS Desktop, 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-3470, 10GB RAM, 2TB HDD (CM6340-CA001S) running Windows 8.

The machine arrived the next day and two hours later it was up & running. Downloaded and installed VMWare and HP 3000 running on a PC in my home office. After a bit of memory searching on how to run xhpterm and navigate NMMGR I had the 3000 on my network thru my usual connection of Qedit for Windows and Terminal Emulator.

Fast forward a couple of weeks. I'm on my way to Computer History Museum in Silicon Valley to attend a one day seminar sponsored by Stromasys to introduce us to the Charon-HPA/3000 emulator. The first topic of discussion was actually how to pronounce Charon, which phonetically ranged from "Karen" to "Sharon", but more accurately it is "Sharone".

The first topic was from Bill Driest an introduction on why to choose emulation and Stromasys' history creating emulators for Alpha, VAX and now the HP 3000. The main points were that emulators help keep companies investment in their software and can maintain their current application and built in business rules which can be extended by continuing to run on up to date new hardware.

Questions were encouraged by receiving a flying "slingshot" monkey for when you asked a question.



Paul Taffel was next, a long time HP3000 expert whose worked for such companies as Quest (Netbase), Vesoft (MPEX and Security/3000), Orbit (Backup Plus) and others. Paul was a great choice for Stromasys as he's been a long time systems programmer, has worked with many different companies and brings a broad range of experience.

Paul gave a detailed talk on first the Freeware version of the Emulator, which was handed out by Becky Harris on a small silver thumb drive. Paul showed us, how to unpack and install the HP 3000 on a PC.

Details of the Freeware Emulator and the Production Emulator will be in the following articles on the Charon HP 3000 Emulator.

Contact Neil if you have any questions neil@robelle.com

What's New with Suprtool & Qedit

Neil Armstrong our software architect has been a busy beaver with new enhancements for Suprtool & Qedit:

Suprtool 5.6 (release date July 2013)

- Suprtool extract command now has three special keywords to help with extract using a range, which is designed to make your Suprtool scripts more easily maintained. Suprtool now has \$all, \$first and \$last which respectively means all fields, the first field or the last field. Note that \$first and \$last may only be used in a range extract.
- \$Subcount has been added to keep a running count for a given sort break.
- Suprtool, Suprlink and STExport now handle 512 fields on HP-UX and Open platforms.
- Suprtool for Itanium and Suprtool/Open had problems sorting display type keys with Overpunch characters.

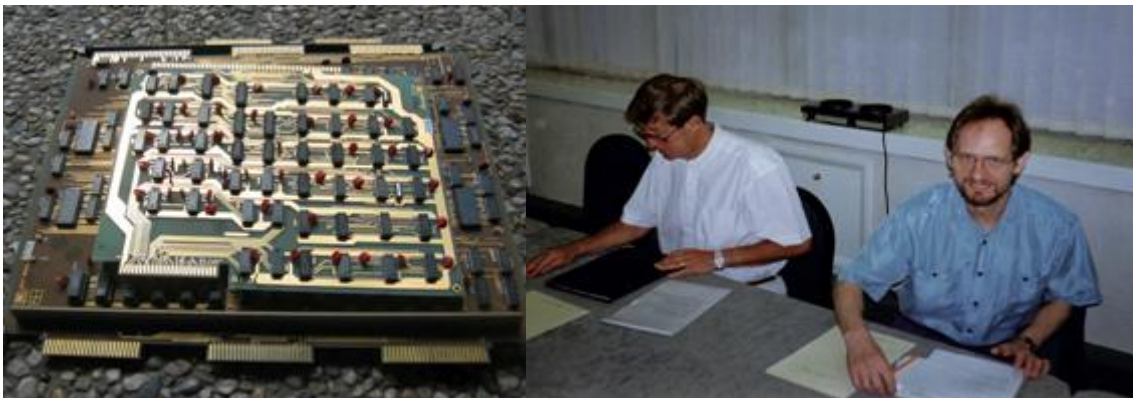
Qedit 5.8.10 (release date July 2013)

- Qedit Server on HP-UX now supports the Long Password feature described here, which supports >8 character lengths for Shadow Passwords.
- Improvements have been made to error reporting for login error messages.
- Qedit now recognizes .cob and .COB as Cobol files.

<http://www.robelle.com/sitemap.html#whatsnew>

Once Upon A Time ...

... there was a small software company called Robelle in western Canada. Robelle sold the Qedit and Suprtool utility software to HP 3000 users in North America. As the products became well known, they received a few orders from overseas. Supporting international customers was difficult as they were many time zones away and English was not their native language. In those days email did not exist!





I was reminded of all this when Marius Schild, our dealer in Holland, sent us a copy of a 30-year old letter where we offered him our dealership. In the letter I ask him if he has a Telex number! Technology has changed a lot in the last 30 years. Who knew 30 years later we would literally have a virtual HP 3000 on a USB thumb drive.

I recalled that we were excited to receive purchase orders from many countries and thought it would be better to have local reps we called "dealers". The first dealer was actually one of our first international customers: London Business Schools. They had an HP 3000 to support instruction and admin and the IT people were encouraged to be entrepreneurial to supplement their salaries! They took over our customers in the British Isles and were our dealer for many years. Eventually the HP 3000 was mothballed at London Business School and our team disbanded. Clive Oldfield one of our stalwart reps took over the dealership and continues to have it today.

Over the years our international customers grew. We had dealers in France (Cogelog, Pierre Senant being our original primary contact), SWS Software for German-speaking countries (Kurt Sager being our top booster there), Scandinavia (Ole Nord!), Holland (Marius Schild), Australia (Michael Redmond), South Africa (Synergy Computing) and other locations.

In each country, we selected for our dealer the team which was the most technically competent on the HP 3000. The one time we chose a firm whose primary focus was marketing; we had a lot of problems! After that we stuck to techies. As we wrote to Marius Schild (Samco) when he took over the dealership for Holland, "Our primary objective is high-quality support for our customers, **not** the highest number of sales."

Having international customers gave us the opportunity to travel the world - we had a lot of fun visiting dealers, attending international conferences, giving training classes, and speaking to national users groups in many countries. The dealer arrangement allowed us to have a global presence for Robelle products without the associated costs of setting up offices and all that it would have entailed.

We are very grateful to our dealers for the job they have done for us and our customers. Above are some dealer photos from our archives. Perhaps you will recognize some of these HP 3000 experts.

Thanks to all our dealers, past and present,
Robert Green

**Bob, Neil, Tammy & Fran wish you a happy summer full of
laughs and sunshine**