

Mazda and NEC to Test Grid-Based Core System

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Mazda Motor Corporation and NEC Corporation today announced that Mazda will test grid computing technology, which will be incorporated into its core system, in order to efficiently utilizes the IT resources of many servers in various locations and provide countermeasures in case of disasters. NEC will assist Mazda in the construction and evaluation of the trial system.

This trial is a part of the business grid computing project promoted by Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). It is one of the first attempts to use the grid technology in a corporate core system.

Grid technology that links many various types of computers creates a virtual high-performance computer and efficiently utilizes IT resources such as the processing power of each computer as needed even though connected computers are broadly dispersed. If the grid technology is used in a corporate core system, there are technical issues such as the smooth takeover of functions from a server that handles various tasks online to other servers and the guarantee of response time at the event of the takeover. Although grid technology has hitherto been mainly used in the science and technology computation area, the development of business grid that can be applied to entire corporate activities including core systems is expected.

As part of "Focus 21", an economic stimulus project of METI, the ministry started "Business Grid Computing Project". NEC is a member of this project, which lasts from fiscal year 2003 to 2005, promoting joint development of business grid middleware, global standardization of



development results and the commercialization of business grid through trials linking users.

For the planned trial, Mazda will participate in it as the user while NEC will support the system construction by applying the results of business grid middleware joint development. The system will be built and evaluated jointly by Mazda and NEC.

Specifically, by using the business grid technology, the system will consolidate the operation of Mazda's IT resources that are so far constructed bound to the job, and prove the allocation of jobs to available IT resources in remote locations when the volume of jobs exceeds system capacity; the continuous operation and seamless transfer of jobs at certain locations to IT resources of other areas as a disaster recovery system; and efficient management of many servers located multiple sites. As the result, we aim to achieve IT cost reduction and the improvement in ROI.

In this fiscal year, requirements of application systems will be defined and job operation procedures will be designed. Building, operation and evaluation of the system will be done in the fiscal year 2005. The contents of the definition of operation requirements will be reflected on the joint development of the business grid middleware, which will then be used in the construction of an actual system.

Mazda has been proactively utilizing IT to improve competitiveness. In the marketing area, for example, the company is engaged in the development of "Web Tune Factory" that enables customers to order their own customized cars through the Internet. The company is also considering on the reduction of IT-related costs including the operation and management of several hundreds of servers and investment in backup systems for countermeasures in case of disaster. Mazda thought the grid technology would help further these issues and decided to participate in the METI's Business Grid Computing Project. If the



effectiveness of the trial is confirmed, Mazda will consider applying the business grid to company-wide IT infrastructure.

NEC has accumulated know-how and strengthened its grid technology through advanced R&D at its Central Research Laboratories and supplying grid systems to universities and research institutions. By applying the results of these activities and expertise to the construction of the grid system for Mazda, NEC aims to build a business grid system that can be used for regular office work, contributing to the advancement of "Business Grid Computing Project" as a whole. The result of this project will be incorporated into NEC's software product line and through building systems for users and participating in activities of various organizations for standardization, NEC plans to globally promote business grid.

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