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British data company wins contact management software patent

A US Patent has been granted to ContactTree Ltd., a registered Microsoft ISV Partner based in central England developing software tools and systems for collaboration in sales and contact management. It covers processes for sharing and display of contact and opportunity knowledge in team environments. In a world where information is growing at an exponential rate, this sort of ability to share business information and distil it into accessible corporate knowledge is paramount.

ContactTree has been a first-mover in graphical display of hierarchic groups of client contacts – ‘the picture worth 1,000 words’. Its first product, **ContactTree™ Personal** for Outlook was launched in 2002, to provide the ability to visualise the relationships between your key contacts within a client organisation. The company is now looking for potential investors and licensees as partners to participate in the roll-out of their multi-user products. ContactTree Co-founder David Davidson said “we have demonstrated the power of our technology, what we need now are the resources to make a big impact on the Market.”

“In a world of software where everyone is striving for competitive advantage, ContactTree has the only granted patent in this specialised field of graphical display of shared contact knowledge. While ContactTree products for Outlook have the ability to make a significant impact in a \$100M market for Contact Management utilities, we believe that there is significantly greater potential, with the right partner, for this Patent to become a significant discriminator in the \$30Bn market for CRM and ERP systems, especially in future Web 2.0 environments.”

ContactTree™ Personal, which was launched in 2002, also brings its Axelerator™ input forms to Outlook to simplify the rapid entry of often fragmentary data for on-going elaboration. The automatically-generated OrgCharts provide intuitive single-click navigation to contacts that may be only half-remembered. This can be a real boon in multi-lingual situations where names are not always easy to remember or to re-enter for conventional alphabetic search. It can also help to identify where there may be a missing link for the contact that you actually ‘need’ to get to know.

Managing Director, Duncan McCreadie said “the processes that we have been developing provide a new level of sophistication in the way we capture and share knowledge about the contacts we all use in making our businesses successful. What we have done is also make it extremely simple to record and manage this information. Conventional systems generally don’t work because they are too much trouble to use, and they don’t help to reveal the knowledge that you need.”

ContactTree™ Prospector now allows individual users to graphically encode these OrgCharts from Outlook according to the significance of each relationship. **ContactTree™ Enterprise** will enable network users running SharePoint to share and create composite records to create a MyBestView™ chart showing your entire team’s view of the other team. In contrast to conventional ‘de-duplication’ strategies, ContactTree™ creates this composite view while still preserving the full richness of content of all individual users’ records. “The Company’s ambition”, said McCreadie “is to produce the Contact Management System that Microsoft Outlook® BCM could be, and that ACT! might have been. We also expect to see it migrate into true CRM and ERP environments.”

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