

HP Labs Focuses On 'High-Impact' Work

Reorganization Meant To Speed Progress Toward Profits

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[Video of an HP event](http://video.mercurynews.com/mms/rt/1/site/medianewsgroup-bang-mercurynews-pub01-live/current/launch.html?maven_playerId=mercurynewsvideomc&maven_referralPlaylistId=ffc117e0783f2eba73d2dda62711aa62c96ecd29&maven_referralObject=da3ee3e5-eb8b-43a7-873d-40b62abaeda9) link is: http://video.mercurynews.com/mms/rt/1/site/medianewsgroup-bang-mercurynews-pub01-live/current/launch.html?maven_playerId=mercurynewsvideomc&maven_referralPlaylistId=ffc117e0783f2eba73d2dda62711aa62c96ecd29&maven_referralObject=da3ee3e5-eb8b-43a7-873d-40b62abaeda9

In his 27 years with Hewlett-Packard, HP Labs program manager Steven Rosenberg has worked on high-powered computer work stations and artificial intelligence. Now he sings the praises of "a wonderful display device."

"It's a reflective display that is highly readable in all kinds of light," he explained, holding a model in his hand. "It's flexible. It's light. It's cheap."

Durable, too. "You can spill coffee on it and it still works," he said.

This technological marvel is called paper - in this particular format, a paperback book. Rosenberg's handheld was a handsome replica of a 1923 edition of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by Frank L. Baum, with illustrations by W.W. Dunsmore. It was published by HP BookPrep, HP Labs' 21st-century answer for on-demand publishing for books long out of print.

"The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" seemed an apt choice because Rosenberg was part of a battalion of researchers giving a peek behind the curtain of HP Labs, offering previews of wizardry in progress.

Another project is called BRAIN, a kind of consulting tool that puts algorithms into business forecasting. The acronym stands for Behaviorally Robust Aggregation of Information in Networks. You can already imagine the jingle: *If you only had a BRAIN* . . .

In all, 14 projects were showcased in a recent press event heralding a dramatic reorganization of HP Labs. projects to 20 to 30 "high-impact" projects that focus on the emerging opportunities within Web-based "cloud computing."

Like many other tech leaders, HP executives say consumers in the near future will be able to use multiple devices to connect wirelessly to the Web, accessing an extraordinary amount of data and services.

Founded in 1966 by HP founders Bill Hewlett and David Packard, HP Labs is the creative heart of the company's research and development. It includes more than 600 researchers working in seven locations around the globe.

The lab reorganization, HP executives say, is designed to put more resources into "big bets" and accelerate their progress toward profits. The winnowing process has just begun, but the selection for the showcase would seem to suggest a strong chance they'll survive the internal shakeout.

Several are in HP's core businesses of printing and computing: CloudPrint, for example, would enable people to use a cell phone to order the printing of a document digitally stored on the Web on any printer with a phone number. Trusted Converged Client uses virtualization technology to enable a business PC to be used for both personal and business needs, without exposing data to the risks of the open Internet.

The range was striking. FaceBubble is a new, visual shorthand for organizing digital photos. Mediascapes, also called "mscapes," uses location technology to replicate a user's surrounding

environment in digital form, which can be used in games, tours, education. WaterCooler is a Web-based service that aggregates a company's blogs, forums and other communications to share knowledge and stimulate discussion.

BookPrep has already jumped from research to development to the marketplace. In a partnership with Applewood Books, a Massachusetts publisher, HP BookPrep is turning crudely scanned pages of old cookbooks and children's books into pristine new paperbacks that can be ordered through Applewood or on Amazon.com, with paperback replicas of original covers.

The cookbooks are also featured in a Web site called Foodsville at www.foodsville.com. If you like the recipe for baked squirrel, say, you might also want to order your copy of the 1904 Bluegrass Cookbook. Hard-to-get titles will become easy to replicate, Rosenberg says, because so many books are now digitally archived by universities, the Library of Congress and the non-profit Internet Archive at www.archive.org.

For now, BookPrep is focusing on pre-1933 titles because the 75-year copyright protection has expired. Plans call for partnerships with more publishers, who might enable more recent titles. HP Executive Vice President Shane Robison said on-demand publishing holds promise for cost savings: "One part of the supply chain, called the warehouse, is going away."

Plans also call for more "democratization" of publishing. Families will be able to use BookPrep for, say, multiple copies of family cookbooks, scrapbooks, travelogues, memoirs.

Paper and books, Rosenberg says, may seem like an old technology, but he figures it will continue its long run. He said he has always loved to read, loved books, and collected the works of favorite authors.

But in the future, he predicted, content may seek a favorite medium. Travel information may be better presented by electronic "mashups" that allow users to share photos and comments. "Medical textbooks will be read differently from romance novels."

At the HP Labs showcase, BookPrep was also showing off a new replica of a classic "Humpty Dumpty," illustrated by Dunsmore. Applewood, he said, had HP brighten up the colors for the modern market.

It's far afield from artificial intelligence, but Rosenberg said it's fun being involved in a high-tech project publishing cookbooks and children's books. One benefit: "I can show it to my kids."

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Hewlett-Packard Adds Faster Presses To Woo Customers

Selling faster presses Bloomberg News Article Launched: 03/11/2008 01:35:56 AM PDT

Hewlett-Packard, the world's largest printer maker, announced a faster version of its Indigo digital press to win customers away from Xerox and added its first wide-format inkjet for commercial printing. The Indigo 7000 prints as many as 120 four-color pages a minute, while the Inkjet Web Press can print newspapers, books and signs, Hewlett-Packard said in a statement Monday. Pricing wasn't disclosed. Printing is HP's most profitable business, accounting for 38 percent of earnings last quarter. The company said it boosted speed and quality while lowering the cost per page to persuade companies to shift from older analog and offset presses. The new Indigo is faster than rival digital presses from Xerox and Eastman Kodak, said Jim Hamilton, an analyst at researcher InfoTrends in Weymouth, Mass.

- Bloomberg News

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