CANON SIGHTS SPARC BOX WITH OPENSTEP

Advanced Technologies Operation (ATO), the NextStep-oriented unit of Canon Inc's Canon Computer Systems Inc (CCSI) US marketing arm looks ready to head out to Sparc pastures from its Intel Corp base and build itself a machine capable of running OpenStep, the operating system-independent version of Steve Jobs' object paradigm. It's also got SunSoft Inc's anticipated Solaris x86 version of OpenStep in its sights for its existing Intel Corp technology ATO will of course also handle the PowerPC gear out of Menlo Park, California start-up FirePower Systems Inc, the NeXT spin-out in which Canon Japan has majority ownership. Although primarily a Windows NT house, Firepower is also negotiating for the PowerPC version of Solaris on its Powerised systems which ATO will pick up. ATO, formed in March last year in a bid to redeem some of the $170m Canon sank into NeXT Computer Inc over the last few years and based in Portland, Oregon with the rest of CCSI is up to 30 staff. It's now got a couple of 486 boxes running NextStep - see page 3. It won't talk numbers although it claims to be selling everything it can build. The unit is aiming to do $50m by 1997 It's got PCI bus architecture in testing and although it had promised a Pentium system by the end of last year says it's waiting on good parts from Intel Corp.

CANON's NEXT ARM ADDS NEW INTEL BOX

The Advanced Technologies Operation (ATO) unit of Canon Inc's Canon Computer Systems Inc (CCSI) US marketing arm, will this week unveil a second NextStep-on-Intel box as the entry-level object.station 31. ATO has pared down the specification of its existing object.station 41 to create the 100MHz 486DX4-based desktop which comes with an IDE interface instead of the 41's SCSI and a standard, not high-resolution 17inch colour screen. It costs from $4,000 from the second week of next month compared to the $5,000-odd an entry model 41 costs. Object.station 31 comes with from 2Mb VRAM, 16Mb RAM, and 500Mb disk, ATO's proprietary video sub-system which speeds throughput but retains compatibility with standard monitors and support for Insignia Solutions Inc's SoftPC Windows-on-Unix software, though only a demo version is bundled.