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DEMO 07 Pushes People Power in Tech

Startups, established firms share stage at Demo

By **Ephraim Schwartz** | InfoWorld

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The annual DEMO conferences are always a useful instrument by which to gauge the health and stature of technology innovation; this year was no different, with 16 companies presenting in the first morning session and a recurring theme that might be dubbed "Power to the People!" said Chris Shipley, executive producer of DEMO.

"We are breaking away from putting technology at the center, and we are putting people at the center who have the authority to influence technology," Shipley said.

Of course, people have always been part of the fun at DEMO, where IT industry haves and have nots share a stage to sing for their supper in front of an audience of peers, venture capitalists, and the press.

Shipwire was the poster child for people-powered tech. The new company will help small companies compete with the largest retailers by offering a SaaS (Software as a Service) solution for warehouse management, and the pick-pack-and-ship process.

On the enterprise front, 6th Sense Analytics unveiled a kind of "outsourcing nanny" software that can help project managers maintain visibility into the progress of any project, capturing all development activities and delivering them back to a hosted server.

For example, a project manager in the United States can know when an offshore developer has instantiated the debugger or when he or she is editing the file. The system monitors files by checking byte count, measuring the amount of time spent actively developing software, and looking at how much uninterrupted time is spent doing a particular component of the project, according to Greg Burnell, co-founder and CEO.

Although DEMO is often thought of as a platform for startups, established firms were at the show in force, as well. Adobe showed off Apollo, a new platform for those who worry that too much of Web 2.0 is not a good thing.

Apollo offers nervous users the reassurance of desktop storage and desktop performance, Adobe officials say, overcoming "the constraints of a browser." At the same time Apollo will give developers the ability to work with the Web 2.0 tools they are familiar with to develop desktop applications.

Another old-line high-tech company, Wyse Technology, was on hand with a new concept in thin-client architecture dubbed "N10" that uses intelligent software to legislate where software is processed.

Ephraim Schwartz is an editor at large at InfoWorld. He also writes the **Reality Check blog**.

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