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DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Adobe Lends A Hand To Developers

Software maker, remembering its leaner days, launches a venture fund to promote startups

Submission Solution

Swartz struggled with ways to funnel large amounts of data and reports developed on differing software and hardware platforms into concise new-drug submissions to the Food and Drug Administration. Then he discovered Acrobat, which allows documents to retain their original look on any platform.

Swartz started ESPS to develop CoreDossier, submission generation and publishing software for the pharmaceuticals industry, built around Acrobat technology.

"This fund will bring more and better solutions to customers sooner," says Adobe's Mitchell. Adobe has received calls from companies looking for guidance to develop similar funds, including several manufacturers that want to fund startups developing software specific to their platforms.

Adobe knows something about the importance of outside funding. As a struggling startup in the mid-1980s, Adobe launched its pioneering PostScript page description software with the help of an investment from Apple Computer Inc. —Mary Hayes

CONSOLIDATION IN the software industry has made it more difficult for small startups developing good corporate solutions to compete with the marketing ammunition of better-funded rivals. Enter Adobe Systems Inc., which believes it pays to help the little guys, particularly if they're building applications that complement Adobe's fledgling Acrobat electronic publishing software.

Adobe, with 1994 sales of \$600 million, has started a \$25 million venture fund in partnership with investment bankers Hambrecht & Quist, providing seed money to five startups in exchange for ownership stakes in the companies. "If we tried to own the world and penetrate every market on our own, we wouldn't succeed," says Fred Mitchell, director of business development at Adobe in Mountain View, Calif.

For example, one of the startups is Electronic Submission Publishing

Systems Inc. (ESPS) in Fort Washington, Pa., which is using Acrobat to develop software for the pharmaceuticals industry.

Startups Funded By Adobe Ventures LP

Company	Adobe Technology	Application
Managing Editor Software Inc.	PostScript, Acrobat	Publishing management
Cascade Systems International	Acrobat	Newspaper industry archival and retrieval
Saros Inc.	Acrobat	Corporate document management
ESPS Inc.	Acrobat	Pharmaceuticals industry; new-drug submissions to FDA
Crosswise Corp.	Acrobat	Cross-platform document conferencing

ESPS president Ron Swartz says Acrobat solved a problem he experienced as a programmer for Sterling Pharmaceutical Inc.