Melard Technologies and IBM Announce the first hand-held workstation with a Fully Integrated CDPD modem

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Armonk, NY, August, 1995 - Melard Technologies and IBM announce a wireless version of Melard's RANGER rugged hand-held workstation equipped with a fully integrated IBM Wireless Modem for Cellular/CDPD. The RANGER CDPD Series is capable of Cellular Digital Packet Data (CDPD) and circuit-switched cellular data, voice communications, as well as high speed wireline communications, all in a single device. The result is a powerful, rugged computing platform that provides fully integrated wireless communications for cellular networks.

Until now, applications that required small hand-held platforms would have to contend with awkward external modem configurations or even larger, non-ruggedized laptops. With the advent of the RANGER CDPD Series no such compromises are necessary. This will allow the CDPD service providers to pursue opportunities that were previously inaccessible to them.

The IBM Wireless Modem for Cellular/CDPD is a multifunctional PCMCIA radio modem. It is designed to provide high speed connectivity and voice support for the mobile workforce. There are three main modes of operation: CDPD, circuit-switched cellular data, for areas where CDPD is not available, and voice using the JABRA EarPHONE (included), a high quality, compact all-in-the-ear headset. "The IBM Cellular/CDPD Modem is a perfect complement to the Melard RANGER," says Michael Mayer, Manager of Mobile Networking, IBM Networking Hardware Division. "Together they provide a comprehensive solution that can address a wide variety of communications needs and provide significant computing power while operating in the roughest environments."

RANGER is the smallest, most powerful computer of its kind. It provides significant flexibility through four (4) ExCA compatible PCMCIA Rev. 2.1 slots that can accommodate two (2) Type II and two (2) Type III PC Cards simultaneously. Standard Card and Socket Services software supports all the slots. For additional peripheral requirements, RANGER provides two (2) serial ports, a VGA port, and a bi-directional parallel port. Incorporating an Intel 386 or 486DX processor combined with a 25 by 80 column, backlit LCD display and an IBM AT compatible keyboard, RANGER provides exceptional computing capabilities for the mobile professional.

The IBM Wireless Modem for Cellular/CDPD occupies the two (2) internal PCMCIA slots in RANGER and is fully protected within the enclosure. This leaves two (2) external slots (one (1) Type II and one (1) Type III) still available to the user for additional memory or I/O card options. The radio antenna for the CDPD modem, located at the side of RANGER, folds neatly out of the way against the body of the computer. Cellular voice communication is available through the use of the optional miniature headset. RANGER CDPD Series comes with all the necessary software drivers, including NDIS, to achieve access to network services.

"This is the best example of how rapidly complete solutions can be brought to market when industry leaders cooperate based on standards" said Ali Sharif, President of Melard Technologies "Most of the packaging and electrical interface issues were already addressed through the PCMCIA standard. Working with IBM, we were able to quickly resolve the power management and radio integration issues. The integration took weeks rather than months."

RANGER CDPD Series supports the "wake-up on ring" feature, enabling the user to turn the computer off, yet still receive incoming messages in real-time. The CDPD modem is powered from RANGER's high capacity system battery. Supporting the Intel/Microsoft Advance Power Man-

agement (APM) standard, RANGER's operating system, BIOS and hardware work together to optimize power consumption by turning off peripherals when not in use. RANGER's AutoResume feature enables the user to turn off the computer without closing applications and to resume work at exactly the same point when the computer is powered on.

Designed for the mobile workforce environment, a fully configured RANGER weighs just over three pounds, including dio modem and battery, and measures 9.1 by 4.4 by 2.6 inches. RANGER runs on a standard Duracell DR17 NiMH battery which is recharged in one (1) hour. With a rugged weather- resistant construction that withstands the harshest environmental conditions, RANGER provides the essential platform for challenging mobile computing and communications applications including dispatching, messaging, logistics management and on-site diagnostics, among others.

RANGER CDPD Series is available now through Melard Technologies. For more information, contact Russell Schmidt at (914) 273-4488 Ext 206. For more information on the IBM Wireless Modem for Cellular/CDPD, contact Shay O'Donnell at (919) 254-1128.

Melard Technologies, Inc. is a leading supplier of mobile computing and data communications tools, systems and services, engineered to improve the productivity and quality of the mobile workforce. As a provider of mobile data solutions, Melard designs, manufacturers and markets ruggedized hardware platforms, application software and related computer peripherals for use by mobile workforces. Melard maintains a dominant position in the mobile workforce automation market, serving the field forces of high-tech field service organizations, Regional Bell Operating Companies, independent and international telephone companies and utilities.

IBM Networking Hardware Division develops and manufactures leading-edge technology and solutions in the networking area. The division, headquartered in White Plains, N.Y., with major facilities in Research Triangle Park, N.C. and La Gaude, France, also provides education, consultation, service and support functions to help customers achieve their business objectives.

Complete Wireless Hardware Solution for Field-Service Automation Available from IBM

Contact: Dana Cogan or Terry L. Wells for IBM
Baron, McDonald & Wells
770/492-0373
dcogan@bmwpr.com

Bre Wells
Marketing Communications
Melard Technologies
914/273-4488 (ext. 214)
Bwells.melard@internetmci.com

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC, June 4, 1996 . . . A cooperative agreement between IBM Corp. and Melard Technologies, Inc. will allow IBM marketing representatives to offer a complete wireless hardware solution ideal for use in field-service automation. The solution will integrate IBM's PCMCIA wireless modems for the ARDIS and cellular/CDPD networks with Melard's RANGER Wireless Series of rugged, handheld computing devices.

Companies with field-service forces, such as those in the equipment service/repair, utilities, transportation, healthcare and public safety industries, will benefit from the single-source availability of a complete, integrated device for real-time wireless data communications.

"RANGER's modular design enabled us to easily integrate the IBM wireless modems," said Russell Schmidt, Business Development Manager for Melard "Teaming up with IBM is part of our overall strategy to provide wireless mobile solutions to the general field service market. The combination of IBM and Melard's products and expertise creates a solid partnership."

"The agreement will allow IBM to further its participation in the wireless industry with a rugged and highly portable computing device for field-service applications," said Brad Silvernail, manager of IBM Mobile & Wireless Systems. "Together, IBM and Melard are delivering an effective solution, ready to meet the needs of field-service organizations for automation and wireless, real-time communications."

Handheld devices such as the RANGER Wireless Series are used in field service automation for real-time messaging, dispatching and two-way communications, helping to improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery. The durability and extremely small footprint of the RANGER Wireless Series makes it ideal for highly mobile field-service personnel.

The RANGER Wireless Series is built on an open systems architecture that allows it to be easily integrated with the proprietary systems of large corporations, as well as with commercially available field-service software. The RANGER Wireless Series includes such features as DOS OS, an upgradeable Intel DX486 or SL386 processor, a backlit CGA display, Duracell DR17 NiMH battery, and plug and play capability that allows PCMCIA peripherals to be connected with ease. The fully configured unit measures just 9.1s x 4.5s x 2.8s inches and weighs less than 3.5 lbs with batteries included.

For wireless data communications over the ARDIS network, the RANGER Wireless Series incorporates the IBM wireless modem for ARDIS in a Type II PCMCIA format internal to the device. It uses an internal IBM wireless modem for Cellular/CDPD in a Type II PCMCIA card for communications over the CDPD and analog circuit-switched cellular networks. The integrated modems are protected from weather and shock. A half-wave, dipole antenna ensures consistent and reliable performance, while Advanced Power Management (APM) is integrated for maximum battery life.

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Based in Raleigh, N.C. , IBM Mobile & Wireless Systems offers the most complete line-up of wireless products available today, including: Wireless LAN Entry adapters for Ethernet; Wireless LAN adapters for Token Ring and Ethernet; the AS/400 Wireless LAN family; RF data collection and multi-function terminals; and wireless modems for wide-area mobile communications over analog or digital (CDPD) cellular networks, and ARDIS and Mobitex radio frequency networks.

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