

NEW CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER IS A CAN-DO TYPE OF GUY

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Friends describe Dave Moon as a nerd disguised as a normal person.

He can program a computer application with the best of 'em. Grasp the potential of a new technology when others are still trying to figure out what it does. Spot a hot emerging technology company in the bat of an eye. But all that expertise hasn't overshadowed his guy-next-door, average Joe side. He revels in the outdoors. He loves the Jazz. He's a lousy tennis player. Is considered a real people person. Has tried running a business and failed.

The mix of perspectives, people who know him say, makes Moon ideal in his new role as the state's chief information officer, where he'll spearhead technology initiatives. He replaces Gordon Peterson.

Moon cut his technology teeth at WordPerfect. He joined the company in 1982, a year before he finished a computer science degree at Brigham Young University.

He is a "brilliant developer," said John C. Lewis, a former WordPerfect vice president.

He developed the PlanPerfect spreadsheet product and the tables feature in WordPerfect 5.1 and WordPerfect for Windows. Moon also created and managed the InForms and Presentations products and was instrumental in development of GroupWise, an electronic mail and schedule planning program now owned by Novell Inc.

Back in 1985 when WordPerfect co-founder Bruce Bastian gave the employee of the year award to Moon, he remarked on his ability to do it all.

He'd design an application, write the code that made it work and even come up with product packaging that would make the program sell.

"He is one of those all-around talented individuals who can go from right brain to left brain easily," said Lewis, who is now director of alumni and public relations at Brigham Young University's Marriott School of Management.

What quickly became apparent at WordPerfect, though, was Moon's skill at pulling people and resources together to make a project happen, Lewis said.

By 1992, Moon had moved quickly through a handful of slots - from developer, senior developer, manager, director to vice president of development.

In 1992 Moon was named chief technology officer, a position he held until the company was acquired by Novell in 1994. At Novell, Moon served as senior vice president of development within the Novell Applications Group, which included WordPerfect. He also served as interim general manager over the GroupWare division.

Moon left Novell in 1995 when it sold WordPerfect to Corel Corp.

He started a sporting goods store in American Fork and joined other former WordPerfect officials in creating EsNet Ltd., an investment company with holdings in real estate and technology companies.

Moon hawked fishing poles and sleeping bags for two years before giving into the pressures of making it as a small business. He closed the doors of the sporting goods store at Thanksgiving.

"It was a nice hobby, but it was not a profitable business," he said.

EsNet is still going strong.

As Moon talked over the position with state leaders, he was intrigued.

Technology is on the verge of making real differences in society, government and education,

he said.

“It's not often you get the opportunity to hopefully do some real good,” he said. And he was impressed by Gov. Mike Leavitt's vision of “improving our world through the use of technology.”

The decision to take on the job surprised his friends. “They said, ‘Dave, you just got a normal life!’”

But they also recognize Moon's desire to serve the public good.

“He's one of those guys who are really dedicated to the state of Utah,” Lewis said. “He wants to see Utah do important things and play a meaningful role in technology.”

Moon's belief that government has a key role to play in an information-based world was evident back in 1994. He joined government and business leaders in a daylong conference to plot Utah's technology future.

A newspaper account of the event quotes Moon as saying it's critical for government and business to share information electronically to make the information highway worth driving.

He still holds that view. Work needs to be done to better coordinate technology use across state government and to apply technology in creative ways to improve services to residents.

“One of the things that will be a challenge to me is to remove barriers and build bridges between agencies and branches of government so these initiatives can move forward,” he said.

Moon proved expert at that bridge-building role in the past.

“Dave is a team player,” said Ad Rietveld, a former CEO at WordPerfect who, like Lewis, is one of Moon's partners in EsNet. He has “respect for the individual, but he will always look at the best result for the team. Where there was always competition between the different product divisions at WordPerfect, and even more later at Novell, Dave was one of the few people who could bring those teams together and let them focus on the overall results instead of individual gains.

“Dave is good in forming alliances, and I am sure that Utah will benefit from that,” Rietveld said.

Moon is a neophyte in the political world and admits he'll spend some time learning how to avoid stepping on toes and how to apply just the right sort of pressure to keep things moving.

Moon also knows he'll have to adjust to the realities of government, where constrained resources and tough funding choices are the norm.

“Does that mean you shouldn't have a vision? No,” he said. “We still need to have a vision identified and work to get there.”

He said he plans to take a more visible role in coordinating technology standards across state agencies. And while he thinks Utah has made impressive strides in pushing technology - particularly with the digital signature law and in education projects - there's much still to do.

Implementing technology in Utah's schools will be a high priority. Moon in particular talks of ensuring that content available via new technology is “right and enhances education rather than just providing another research tool.”

Another priority will be using technology to improve delivery of government services.

“I think we have not yet made progress as a state that we need to in terms of delivering services electronically to citizens,” he said. “The challenge for me and my staff is to try and identify ways to apply technology innovatively to create the real wins that improve service and reduce costs.”

One target in Moon's scope: making it possible for companies to handle corporate filings electronically, which would save a tremendous amount of time for both the companies and state

workers.

Lewis thinks Moon will be able to balance the funding challenges, the political realities and his vision of what's technologically possible.

``He takes a balanced look at things. He takes a strategy and then tries to fit things in with it. He exercises great prudence as well as being visionary," Lewis said. ``As a guy who lives in Utah, I think that's the kind of person I like looking at technology."