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London-based tech firm brings its HQ to Austin

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Aruna Solutions Inc. is trading tea and crumpets for margaritas and Tex-Mex.

The business intelligence software firm is moving its headquarters from London to Austin, setting up shop at 9600 Great Hills Trail.

CEO Jack Hewitt says the move came about to enable Aruna to tap into the U.S. market. The company spent several months evaluating cities such as Washington, D.C., and the Bay Area in California, but ultimately landed in Austin because it had the right ingredients, such as a high-quality talent pool and a relatively low cost of doing business.

“With Austin being centrally located, it became an ideal choice, Hewitt says, “I feel like we made the right choice. It’s a wonderful place to live and work.”

Aruna’s software serves as a type of Google for business data. Its main product, called Aruna Companion, is built on a high-performance search engine that allows users to run queries or reports faster than with other technologies, such as Oracle or SQL Server, the company says.

Aruna has 10 employees throughout the United States, with the three executive members in Austin, including Hewitt, who formerly served as CEO of Versata Inc.; Chief Technology Officer Steve Atherton, most recently serving as CTO of ClearCommerce Corp., which was acquired by eFunds Corp. in 2006; and Vice President of Marketing Hollis Tibbetts, former vice president of marketing at M7 Corp.

Now that it has its roots firmly planted in Austin, Hewitt says Aruna will ramp up quickly, tripling its staff by the end of 2007.

Hewitt says the company is ramping up its sales and business development staff to increase its U.S. presence.

Aruna has 16 clients in the U.K. and recently landed Austin’s NCsoft Corp. as its first U.S. customer. The company still has a sales team focused on England, as well as a small development team in Canada.

Hewitt says the privately held company does not disclose revenue, but that it’s growing toward profitability “rather quickly.”