

Empowering the Flat Enterprise

Many companies evolved from a command and control hierarchical history. Yet the authority hierarchy still exists and often impedes the rapid change that typifies the life of the knowledge worker. When knowledge workers have to initiate an IT workflow to engage in a mundane task, valuable time is wasted for both the knowledge worker and the IT staff. The agile IT infrastructure can empower the end user to make such changes without direct IT staff involvement, and the IT staff can monitor the resulting workflow to ensure that the best interests of the company are met.

Customer Scenario

Excelsior had a record of steady growth over the last 20 years. It had grown and adapted to the various changes in the industry. More importantly, Excelsior had sought to exploit the “digital revolution” and the Internet to the maximum degree. The corporate culture had evolved and the workforce understands the value-add benefits of the newer technologies. Unfortunately, the growth had left the IT staff quite understaffed and unable to meet the user needs for change and adaptation.

The growth in IT staff clearly lagged behind the newest demands for IT services. The IT staff sought to manage the problem by establishing clear processes and procedures to help create some order and generate the right data to help them do their jobs. Unfortunately, this attempt to provide a solution was met with resistance as users claimed that the new “IT bureaucracy” was just generating long waiting lists and standing in the way of any progress. The CIO was told that she would have to figure out a way to keep everyone happy without a lot of additional staff members.

One of the side effects of the new processes and procedures was that some of the employees who had a little technical knowledge tried to craft their own solutions. They decided that violating the rules was the only way to get their jobs done. Unfortunately, this independence of spirit generally served only to complicate life in the data center. The violators, while well meaning, actually made things worse for others by disrupting the processes that were working efficiently.

Fossa Project Today

The CIO happened to meet a Novell® sales rep at a regional gathering. After a discussion of the problems and the constraints, the Novell rep proposed that the CIO look at obtaining software solutions from Novell.

The CIO thought that it was not a bad idea for the workforce to be more empowered to do common things so that the limited IT staff could concentrate on the truly compelling problems that come with such growth. The IT staff just wanted to know what was happening, but not be involved in everything that was happening. The employee focus

Key Customer Benefits

- Experience fluid computing resources, fluid data, fluid services and fluid work
- Improve productivity by enabling employees to share without having to think or act with respect to any other specific person
- Enable employees via self-service, thus increasing productivity while respecting IT policies—but without IT participation.

The Fossa is the most agile animal on the planet. We're working to make IT just as agile. Join us on the journey. Together we can define a world where IT is truly agile and where people and technology work as one.

meetings revealed that they just wanted to be empowered to do the common things needed to get their jobs done. They didn't want to become the *de facto* IT staff.

The combination of Novell products—including identity and collaboration software, all running on a Linux* foundation—appeared to be the right solution at the right time. Everyone realized that with empowerment came responsibility. The distribution of power still required roles and accountability. Fortunately, the Novell solution was created with such things in mind.

One of the things that drove the need for employee changes to the system was the need to engage in collaboration to get their jobs done. Excelsior had always prided itself on how quickly its employees could adapt to new projects and business changes. Novell provided a rich suite of collaborative software, expressed as services that could be accessed from anywhere in the world. Furthermore, because the identity factor permeated not only the system infrastructure but also the applications, data could now flow freely anywhere in the Excelsior organization without worry. Employees were able to quickly create virtual work teams for a project, grant the appropriate rights to the data and get moving on their real jobs. IT was still available if a problem arose, but that was a rare event.

The IT staff members liked the new system because it allowed them to work on complex problems. Additionally, because the Novell services sat atop a virtualized platform, the IT staff did not have to spend a lot of time worrying about the service load changes that came from empowered employees. The underlying hardware and software resources were very fluid and the resources were reallocated automatically to meet the demands of the day.

Fossa Project Vision for 2012

While individual identity permeates the Fossa Project architecture, Novell is still growing the capabilities and power of that concept. In the existing foundation, roles and privileges are easy to create. Moving forward, most of the mundane tasks will be implemented as software services. It will become easier to attach

role privileges to the task so that the appropriate employee could undertake a task and the event would trigger a report to the IT staff to let it know what had taken place.

The collaboration products that began by providing e-mail, instant messaging and shared data are evolving to provide message rerouting to different devices (PDAs, cell phones, workstations, BlackBerrys) and to integrate common whiteboards and video conferencing capabilities with the other services. The Fossa Project technology will even enable cross-domain attested identity so that interoperability and data access dramatically improve.

Everything from the hardware to the end-user capability will be fluid and will quickly respond to change without the direct real-time involvement of the IT staff. Projects can change, data center resources can fail and be replaced, and new services can quickly be added, and the system never misses a beat. The integration of identity, virtualization and the right set of collaborative services will solve the problem of the disempowered employee. The company can react to change quickly because individual employees can react to change quickly.

The Fossa Project represents our technical vision for the future of enterprise IT. The project is a key building block of our corporate positioning around Making IT Work As One™. It is also a key element in our strategy as an enterprise infrastructure software company. This strategy leverages the world's best-engineered Linux and IT management software. Our Fossa Project is about computing and collaborating with agility.

Novell invites you to join us on this journey. We offer applied technology that provides real solutions for today while bracing for, and in fact helping shape, the inevitable changes that are coming. Whether you are a customer, partner, Novell employee, a member of the open source community or just an interested observer, we welcome your input. Together we can define a world where IT is truly agile and where people and technology work as one.