

# The Multi-company Project: A Journey to the Extranet

As many businesses embraced the concepts of core competencies and outsourcing, and as increased globalization brought many independent companies together in a consumer/supplier relationship, the multi-company project was born. Cross-company collaboration is now a reality for almost every business. The agile business is able to work in this environment, share the appropriate information, create business networks of virtual teams that span many companies, and still remain confident in its reliable and comprehensive safeguards that will ensure the integrity and safety of its digital resources.

### Customer Scenario

Excelsior Widgets embraced the ideas of core competency and outsourced services and made the appropriate organizational changes to reflect this new approach to business. The change was sometimes painful because of the necessary labor adjustments. Other times it was painful because of the realities of having some traditionally important service located out-of-house. Additionally, the focus on core competency made Excelsior more dependent than ever upon partner relationships in development and reseller relationships in sales and marketing. The theory was that the Internet made it possible for everyone to work together. The reality was that data security and participant identity were now more important than ever.

The initial response of the IT staff was to create some dedicated user identities that could be used across corporate boundaries. They worked with the IT staffs from the other companies to do the same, but this quickly

became an administrative headache. The other companies were just as dynamic as Excelsior and keeping up with change became a constant challenge.

Excelsior became aware of the long experience Novell® has in identity and in the granular and secure management of data, so Novell was invited to work with Excelsior to implement a solution.

### Fossa Project Today

The immediate solution rests on three aspects of the agile product line from Novell. Novell is able to migrate company files into a file system that allows a highly granular approach to data access control. The system can rigidly enforce access control both at an individual level and at a group level. Access rights can be inherited through the data tree, but all access is denied until a member of the IT staff formally grants access through an individual right or by making the person a member of a group.

### Key Customer Benefits

- Ease inter-company collaboration through granular data management, identity-based software services and virtual engines to power the system
- Provide cross-company interoperability in the heterogeneous workspace
- Provide identity-, security- and policy-driven environments that allow you to share information—while remaining compliant—inside and beyond a single enterprise

**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.**

The existing Novell identity fabric helps to regulate authentication to the system. At the same time that the storage was being brought under access control, the Novell identity framework was being deployed throughout the company. Every user had to be authenticated to the system before the authorization to services or data could take place. While Novell had these technologies for years, it was the need to engage project participants from other companies that really brought out the value in the Novell identity-based system. Because of the focus Novell has put on interoperability over the years, Excelsior was able to actually synchronize select elements of its corporate directory with those of other companies, even when the directories were from different vendors.

Virtualization and orchestration solutions from Novell also allowed the hardware computing resources to adjust to the varying demands that come from multiple companies engaging in common work.

### **Fossa Project Vision for 2012**

When the Fossa Project vision is fully realized, employees from other companies will have identities created within the system and from that identity gain certain levels of access and use privilege. The growth of the Fossa Project architecture is due to the anticipation that there will be increased inter-business authentication. The Fossa Project will evolve toward a system of cross-domain attested identity that will allow for tokenized identities to be sent between and within companies to facilitate work across heterogeneous IT environments.

Once identity is established and the employee, from Excelsior or another company, is placed into a work group, that employee will access the relevant data and be denied access to all other data. The employee will participate in teaming and conferencing collaboration software with the other members of the project. The corporate boundaries become selectively transparent, yet completely secure.

Because Novell has embraced the twin concepts of service-oriented software and virtual machine-based services, those services will be securely made available to anyone who has an identity in the system and who has been granted the appropriate privileges. There will be enough digital horsepower to make sure that the service was powered at a level that allowed productivity to take place. The optimized data center will take the agile environment from within the four walls and outside to other companies. With virtualized storage working in a virtual computing environment and removing service silos, the Fossa Project vision will allow the company to respond quickly, securely and productively to any business opportunity.

One of the concepts of the optimized data center is that services will live in virtual machines that can be placed on any piece of hardware that hosts the virtualization platform. Thus, a service running within Excelsior could also be placed in a virtual environment in another company.

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.