

Novell eDirectory: Building a Human Network



The editors at *Novell Connection* have asked me to introduce this issue, which focuses exclusively on Novell eDirectory and the solutions that can be built on it. Although I talk about eDirectory every day, finding the right words to adequately describe eDirectory's importance is sometimes challenging. Not surprisingly, I often lapse into what people outside the computer industry call *techno-babble*—explaining cool facts such as the millions, even billions, of objects eDirectory can accommodate.

Although these technical facts are important and relevant to anyone building an e-business solution, they sometimes obscure the real value of implementing that solution. Whether you are building an enterprise solution, an eProvisioning solution, or an eCommerce solution, you are, in reality, building a human network. People must be able to access each other with ease, and they must be able to access the information and the tools they need precisely when and where they need them. In fact, this is what Novell's one Net vision is all about—simplifying the complexities of today's networks and accelerating e-business transformations—and we're delivering on these promises today.

As quintessential Net services software, eDirectory puts people at the center of your company's e-business strategy. By storing and managing user identities, eDirectory allows you to control who accesses the information on your company's network. And because eDirectory is secure, user identities are protected: Only those with the necessary rights can view information about the users on your company's human network.

eDirectory allows you to reach across technical borders, across your company's firewalls to extranets and the Internet. As a result, your company's human network can link employees, partners, customers, and anyone else with whom your company does business.

In addition, you can use eDirectory to power applications and services across your entire network. Because eDirectory runs on multiple platforms, it has no boundaries, which means, of course, that you and your users have no boundaries. Whether your company's network includes Windows 2000, Windows NT, Linux, NetWare, or UNIX, eDirectory can help you manage and secure those platforms and the applications that run on them.

Multiplatform support also makes your company's human network more, well, human. How many passwords must users at your company remember in order to complete their work tasks every day? Whether users are accessing applications on Windows servers, Linux servers, your company's extranet or intranet, products such as Novell SecureLogin and Novell iChain take advantage of eDirectory to provide true single sign-on. Obviously, this single sign-on simplifies users' work experience.

With eDirectory, you can manage complex user identities. Because eDirectory is extensible, there is virtually no limit to the information you can store about users. eDirectory can then use this information to distinguish differences among users and to grant access based on these differences.

In addition, eDirectory is fully compliant with Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) 3, allowing LDAP-enabled applications to access eDirectory natively. Because both the applications and eDirectory are LDAP compliant, you do not have to write specialized code to enable that access. This interoperability both accelerates and simplifies the process of building e-business solutions.

Using eDirectory as the foundation, your company can build e-business solutions that create highly effective human networks. Employees are then more productive; partners are more cooperative; and customers are more satisfied.

As the articles in this issue explain, Novell and its partners have the technologies today that enable your company to build these human networks, allowing you to deliver electronic goods and services to your company's constituents—whoever those constituents are. Whether your company needs a full-blown eProvisioning system or a way to synchronize data among all the directories and databases your company uses, eDirectory can power that one Net solution.

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