

Novell Tool Time

Where do you go for help in managing and troubleshooting Novell products such as Novell eDirectory, GroupWise, or ZENworks for Desktops? You probably visit the Novell Support web site (<http://support.novell.com>) and search the knowledge-base for answers to your questions. You may also check other Novell resources such as the Cool Solutions user communities, the Novell Support Forums, Novell *AppNotes*, and product documentation. If you still cannot find an answer to your question, you may have to call Novell Technical Support and open an incident.

Although all of these resources are useful, finding an answer to a question or correcting a problem may not be as easy as you wish it was. It may even be more costly than you or your company would like. Rather than searching multiple web sites, checking multiple support resources, or paying for an incident, you would probably prefer one technical support tool that could answer all of your questions about a particular product.

What would you like such a tool to include? When Novell asked network administrators to describe the ideal technical support tool, they gave five specific criteria:

- The support tool should be comprehensive.
- The support tool should provide in-depth technical resources.
- The support tool should have the most current information.
- The support tool should be portable.
- The support tool should be web-based.

Armed with this information, Novell Technical Services has created Novell Product Toolkits.

DEEPER AND WIDER

To make these Product Toolkits both comprehensive and in-depth, Novell has consolidated information from the Novell Support web site, Cool Solutions, Novell Support Forums, Novell *AppNotes*, and product documentation into one database with one interface and advanced search capabilities. As a result, you can find the information you need more easily, and you don't have to check multiple sources.

The Next Step in Technical Information

In addition to consolidating information, Novell Product Toolkits include advanced technical resources such as LogicSource, which provides in-depth explanations of the concepts, processes, and operations that make Novell products work. For

example, LogicSource includes process sections, which document the product's logical flow and provide detailed diagrams and explanations. If your company's network experiences a problem, you can use this information to identify the process that is not working correctly and isolate the cause of the problem.

LogicSource also includes descriptions of common error codes and provides the information you need to resolve them. This detailed information can help you avoid such errors in the future.

Real-World Implementations

In addition to understanding how products work, you may also want to know how other companies are implementing products to solve problems. To provide this information, the Product Toolkits include consulting reports, which Novell consultants create after they build a solution for a customer. As Tracy Smith, manager of Novell Technical Subscriptions and Support Tools, explains, "These reports are not marketing stuff. They are real-life implementations, explaining the nuts and bolts of the solution."

For example, the Novell eDirectory Tuning and Proactive Analysis report covers the following topics:

- eDirectory mechanics and communications
- eDirectory architecture
- eDirectory maintenance guidelines

Each section of the report includes recommendation summaries, explaining how you can apply the information you have learned. The last section of the report provides specific information to help you maintain a healthy eDirectory tree.

The Right Stuff

Because being able to troubleshoot a problem sometimes requires the right management utilities, the Product Toolkits include some of the most useful utilities available. To start, the Product Toolkits include the utilities that are available on Cool Solutions.

In addition, the Product Toolkits include new, unique utilities created by the experts at Novell. For example, Novell support engineers and consultants often write utilities to solve critical issues for customers. As Smith explains, "Having written a specific utility, however, the support engineer or consultant doesn't have time to create a user interface or to test the utility extensively."

Smith's team, which includes engineers and testers, identifies these utilities, creates a user interface, and tests them. For example, a Novell support engineer created the GroupWise User Locator utility, which identifies the GroupWise user associated with a user ID.

When errors occur, GroupWise produces a log file. If a user created that error, GroupWise reports the user ID, rather than the username. GroupWise administrators then have to search through the GroupWise database to find the username associated with the user ID—a lengthy process that may take hours. A Novell support engineer wrote a utility that allows you to type in the user ID and immediately get the domain and username associated with that user ID.

Recognizing that the GroupWise User Locator utility would save GroupWise administrators a lot of time, Smith's group created and tested a nice user interface for this utility and included it on the GroupWise Toolkit.

Test Driving the Next Version

Should you upgrade to the next version of a product? Will that new version be everything you've been told it will be? How can you test the next version before you install it in a production environment?

If these questions are keeping you up at night (or just giving you a headache), the Product Toolkits have the answers. Because the Product Toolkits include the latest shipping and beta versions of a product, you can evaluate the next version and make an informed decision on whether or not your company should upgrade. You can also test or develop to the product before installing it on your company's network.

UP-TO-DATE AND ACCESSIBLE ANYWHERE, ANY TIME

Keeping in mind customers' requirements for current information, Novell Technical Services will update the Product Toolkits every three months on CD and will post daily updates on the web through the Subscriber Portal. In fact, when you purchase a Product Toolkit, you receive a year's subscription, which includes a welcome kit with the latest set of CDs, updates for 12 months, and access to the Subscriber Portal (<http://support.novell.com/subscriptions>).

Novell is in the process of putting the finishing touches on the Subscriber Portal, which will be completely functional by fall 2002. In addition to providing the latest technical updates via the web, the Subscriber Portal will include all of the information available on the CDs. Because you receive the Product Toolkits on CDs and via the web site, these toolkits are both portable and web-based—two more customer requirements.

Finally, the Subscriber Portal will allow you to manage your subscription online. You will be able to track shipments, renew your subscription, and report problems. You will also be able to purchase subscriptions to other Novell technical support tools.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Three product toolkits are now available: eDirectory Toolkit, ZENworks for Desktops Toolkit, and GroupWise Toolkit. The suggested retail price for a one-year subscription, single-user version is U.S. \$249, making these toolkits very affordable. The toolkits cost less than a

technical support incident and can be used over and over again.

If you are interested in more than one Product Toolkit, you may also want to check out the new Novell Professional Resource Suite, which includes all of the technical resources in the toolkits, the complete Novell Support Resource Library, and the Software Evaluation Library. (For more information about the Novell Professional Resource Suite, visit <http://support.novell.com/subscriptions>.)

CONCLUSION

With the Product Toolkits, Novell has done its homework, creating a technical resource to meet every network administrator's wish list. Smith sums it up nicely, "We're really excited about the Product Toolkits because they were built specifically to address our customers' needs. For an extremely reasonable price, a toolkit subscription provides the most complete, in-depth, and up-to-date set of technical resources available for a Novell product—where and when you need those resources." ●

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