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Here, There, Everywhere

Making Collaboration Transparent

by Ken Baker

Novell.

Last month Novell announced the acquisition of SiteScape, a leading provider of team workspace, enterprise social software and real-time conferencing solutions. In case you didn't know, in 2007 Novell began licensing SiteScape technology to create Novell Teaming + Conferencing.

Like any acquisition, this one has excited market watchers and created new opportunities for Novell and SiteScape customers alike. (See [Benefits for Novell Customers](#) and [Benefits for SiteScape Customers](#).) But the big question is, "Why move from a licensing relationship to one of ownership?"

The acquisition of SiteScape puts Novell in a prime position to move forward with a broad plan to lead the way in Unified Communications from the team workspace perspective.

Of course there are multiple answers, with a main one being to strengthen the ability of Novell to deliver the flexible, next-generation collaboration environments organizations need.

But if you dig deeper, you'll realize it's much more than that. The acquisition of SiteScape puts Novell in a prime position to move forward with a broad plan to lead the way in Unified Communications from the team

workspace perspective.

Understanding Unified Communications

The rate of communications innovation has grown exponentially in the last few years. Beginning in the 1980s with worldwide deregulation of the telephone industry, cell phones, overnight couriers, fax machines, cheap long distance, calling plans, cable television and many other innovations appeared. The 1990s brought the Internet, the World Wide Web and ubiquitous e-mail. And in the 21st Century, Web 2.0, or the collaborative Internet, has again changed the landscape with wikis, blogs, social networking Web sites and more.

While it's great to have so many choices, it can also be overwhelming. Do I send an e-mail or call the person? Should I call her cell or desk phone? Can I call him at home? Maybe an Instant Message is the way to go, or should I send a text message? Is he even online? Should I fax this document, send a hard copy using regular mail, attach a PDF to an e-mail, or all three? Should we do a Webcast or a conference call? Does he use Skype or some other free VoIP service?

In addition, all of these communication tools focus on devices and networks primarily, and on people as a by-product. Business owners wonder about their PBX options. Does it have Interactive Voice Response? How many conference call bridges do I need? Even home consumers talk about communications via their technical setup. Is DSL or cable better? Should I install WiFi? Will my TV still work when my local affiliate goes digital next year?

Benefits for Novell Customers

The acquisition of SiteScape demonstrates the firm commitment Novell has to the technologies included in Novell Teaming + Conferencing. And it provides opportunities to further integrate those technologies with other Novell solutions, such as GroupWise. Technology ownership will also streamline development efforts, since product innovations will be delivered by a single organization. The acquisition also gives Novell greater freedom to offer licensing programs and promotions that meet the needs of its partners and customers. Finally, it opens the door for Novell to directly offer Telephony and Advanced Workflow add-on modules that previously were only available from SiteScape.

Benefits for SiteScape Customers

The Novell acquisition of SiteScape gives SiteScape customers continued access to the innovative, next-generation collaboration solutions they've received from SiteScape in the past, as well as a host of complementary and interoperable Novell solutions driven by the company's twenty-five years of experience meeting its customer needs.

Since Novell Teaming + Conferencing is functionally equivalent to SiteScape's ICEcore Enterprise Team and ICEcore Enterprise Conference products, this acquisition will bring existing ICEcore Enterprise customers the same functionality, as well as the benefits of a single development team to deliver future innovations.

For customers using its popular Forum and Zon products, Novell will honor SiteScape's support commitments and help customers maintain these products as a core part of their infrastructures. Novell is also committed to releasing Forum version 8.1 in the next few months and will continue to provide maintenance releases of both Forum and Zon, as needed.

Novell will also help Forum and Zon customers transition to Novell Teaming + Conferencing as their business needs call for more flexible and innovative collaboration solutions. Novell Teaming + Conferencing leverages SiteScape's latest platform and runs on Linux or Windows. It also integrates with a variety of instant messaging protocols, office productivity applications and e-mail clients. It can run with Microsoft Exchange, Lotus Notes or on GroupWise, which is known for its proven scalability, security and reliability.

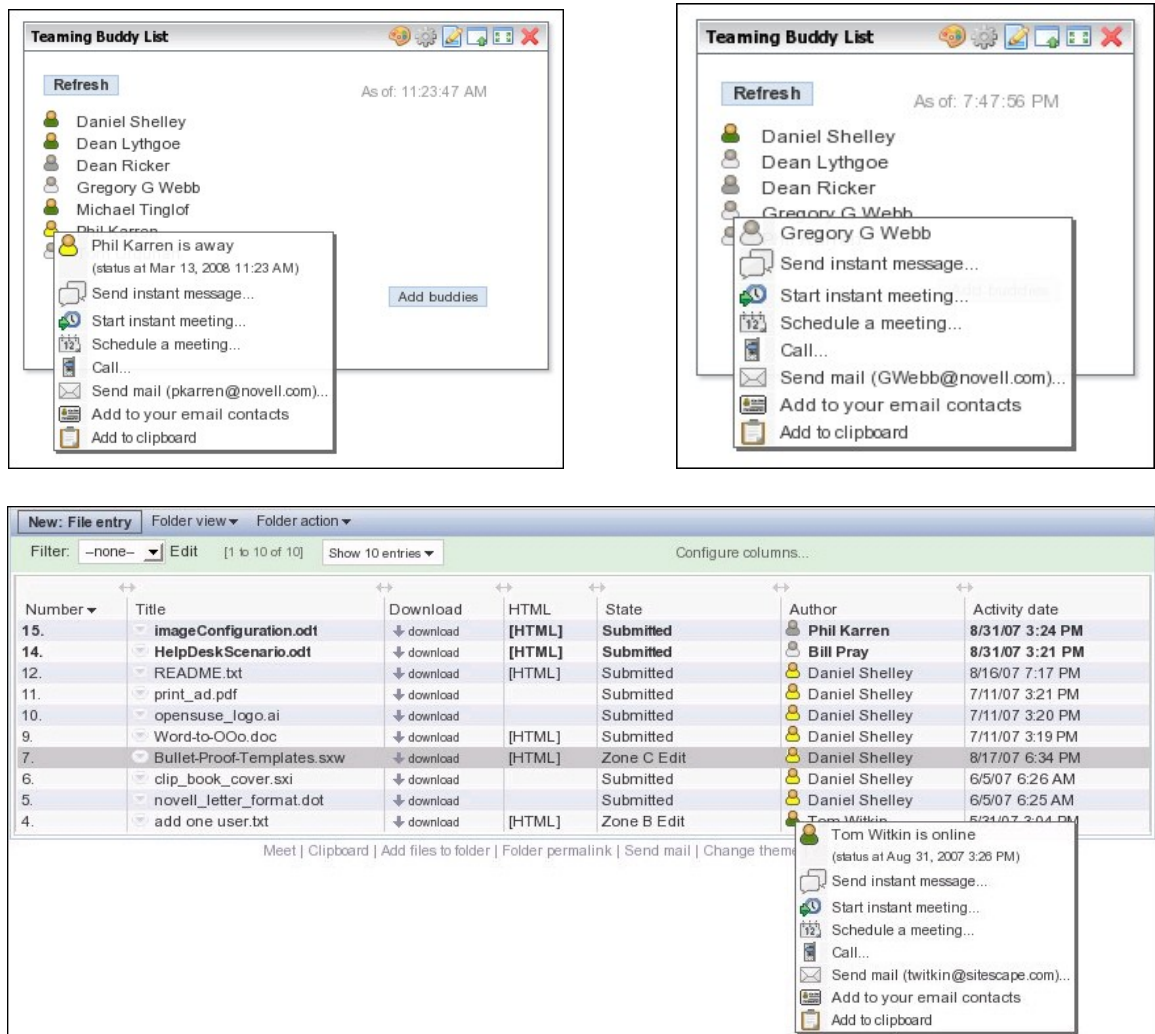
Future releases of Novell Teaming + Conferencing will feature innovations sparked by the ICEcore open source project as well as even greater levels of integration and interoperability with Novell and other vendors' collaboration tools.

The latest topic—one that shifts the focus from the means of communication to the ends—is Unified Communications. At its core, Unified Communications is a way to provide an integrated set of tools that help people share information in the best way, no matter where they are, what time it is, or with whom they need to communicate. It's about focusing on people and their communication needs rather than on devices and networks.

Of course, that's the short definition. The long-term goal of Unified Communications is to provide the same rich and simple experience online as people are used to in face-to-face encounters. In some cases, it provides even more advantages than face-to-face contact. As Unified Communications tools are adopted, people will be able to share knowledge, convince others of a point of view, reach agreement, coordinate time and resources, educate, entertain, brainstorm new ideas, foster relationships and build human networks more effectively than ever before.

For example, the "integrated presence" in Novell Teaming + Conferencing allows you to instantly see if someone in a team workspace is online—that is, available for an online meeting or chat. It automatically forwards phone calls to an appropriate telephone number (cellular, land line or VoIP) when team members are out of the office or on the move. It tells you not only who is participating in a conference call or online meeting, but who is talking at any given time. And Novell Teaming + Conferencing integrates all of these forms of

collaboration with a wide array of other collaboration tools in a way that allows you to get your message across in the easiest and most effective manner possible. In essence, it simplifies and elevates your ability to communicate and collaborate effectively. (See Figures 1, 2 and 3.)



Figures 1, 2 and 3: Novell Teaming + Conferencing supports extensive presence integration—a practical application of Unified Communications concepts that shift the focus from the means of communications to the ends.

A Unified Communications Pioneer

Although Novell can be considered a relatively new player in the Unified Communications arena, the company was a pioneer and leader in collaboration long before the term “Unified Communications” gained currency. Since it was launched, NetWare revolutionized collaboration with its file sharing and print sharing capabilities for workgroups using Local Area Networks. These capabilities—along with many other collaboration-enhancing innovations—continue in Novell Open Enterprise Server today.

While e-mail was still in its infancy, Novell offered its Message Handling Service, an open standard technology that facilitated the development of e-mail-enabled applications. With the WordPerfect merger, Novell bolstered its communications and collaboration offerings with GroupWise. A few years

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ago, Novell added secure, enterprise Instant Messaging to the mix. And with GroupWise Mobile Server, Novell made e-mail, calendaring, contact management and task management available to mobile users on hundreds of devices. The recent release of Novell Teaming + Conferencing—with its team workspaces, enterprise social networking and collaboration tools such as wikis and blogs, online meetings and instant messaging—represented a big step forward for Novell in its broad, Unified Communications strategy.

By acquiring SiteScape and the technology for Novell Teaming + Conferencing, Novell can take even bigger and broader strides in carrying out its plans for Unified Communications. In responding to questions regarding these plans, Novell talked about the key Unified Communications components it currently provides, such as e-mail, instant messaging, mobile collaboration, team workspaces, online meetings and office productivity applications. And, ownership of the teaming and real-time conferencing technology will enable it to further extend and integrate these solutions.

Though some of these integration plans are still on the drawing board, Novell has made great strides in integrating its team workspaces, conferencing tools and social software. In fact, an analyst being briefed on the SiteScape acquisition indicated that in this area of integration and presence, Novell has a significant lead over other vendors competing in the space.

As Novell leverages its lead in integrated team workspaces, continues to enhance its current product set and builds out other critical Unified Communications components, customers will be able to make quantum leaps in employee effectiveness, team productivity and organizational success. (See Figure 4.)

In discussing its plans for Unified Communications, Novell indicated that some of the additional capabilities it is working to provide include the integration of voice mail, PBX and fax with e-mail; video conferencing; workflow integration with business applications; open unified communications APIs and presence integration among all these different components. As Novell leverages its lead in integrated team workspaces, continues to enhance its current product set and builds out other critical Unified Communications components, customers will be able to make quantum leaps in employee effectiveness, team productivity and organizational success. (See Figure 4.)









Component	Enabled by
 E-mail and Calendaring	Novell GroupWise
 Instant Messaging	Novell GroupWise / Novell Teaming + Conferencing
 Mobile Services	GroupWise Mobile Server / BlackBerry Enterprise Server for Novell GroupWise (from Research In Motion)
 Team Workspaces	Novell Teaming
 Online Meetings	Novell Teaming + Conferencing
 Office Productivity Applications	Novell Edition of OpenOffice.org
 Integrated Voice Mail	Third-Party Partners
 Integrated Fax	Third-Party Partners

Figure 1: Novell currently offers the powerful core of a Unified Communications solution, and has partnerships to enable unified messaging. Novell is working on building out a fully integrated Unified Communications platform including video conferencing, PBX capabilities, integration with business applications, open APIs and integration among all components.

An Openly Different Strategy

In addition to its lead in the area of “integrated presence,” another key element that differentiates Novell from other vendors in the Unified Communications market is a focus on delivering more flexible and interoperable solutions. With Novell Teaming + Conferencing and GroupWise playing a central role in this area, the acquisition of SiteScape makes it even easier for Novell to ensure the delivery of robust and interoperable Unified Communications solutions.

In fact, this acquisition represents further proof of Novell's commitment to delivering innovative and flexible collaboration solutions, and not just for its current customers. Even if you don't own Novell products yet, you now have an alternative for team productivity based on open standards and open source—one you can count on for the long term.

Much of the innovation and interoperability to come in this space will be driven by the ICEcore open source project, to which Novell and SiteScape have been contributors. As part of the SiteScape acquisition, Novell will now sponsor the ICEcore open source project, actively contributing to the project and fostering community participation to drive collaboration innovation forward.

Mark Levitt, program vice president for Collaborative Computing and the Enterprise Workplace at IDC talked about how the SiteScape acquisition and the interoperable nature of the combined technology offerings benefit customers. He said, “Enterprise and SMB customers are looking for solutions that combine real-time messaging, conferencing and IP voice calling along with online workspaces, social networking, blogs and wikis to improve team and enterprise productivity and innovation. Solutions that combine team collaboration and UC like those offered by the combined Novell-SiteScape, which are based around open source for rapid innovation and open standards for interoperability and platform flexibility, represent the next major step forward for business collaboration.”

Next Gen Collaboration

A recent study by IDG Research indicates that next-generation collaboration solutions that enable knowledge workers to work together effectively, no matter where they may be located, have become critical to business success. The research points to a market need for flexible, next-generation collaboration suites that can deliver all the benefits of increased individual and team productivity, along with choice of application vendors. Novell and CIO Magazine have recently published a white paper, based on this study, that looks at the issues customers need to be aware of when considering such collaboration solutions. To access the white paper, visit novell.com/teaming.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that existing Novell technologies—strengthened by the acquisition of SiteScape—set the stage to deliver a much richer set of innovative and interoperable tools to help you achieve your Unified Communications objectives. A major part of that goal is to preserve your ability to choose the Unified Communications components you need from the vendors with whom you want to do business. An equally important goal is to push the tools and supporting technology into the background, so you and your users can focus on *what* you need to communicate rather than *how* you'll have to do it. When Unified Communications is fully realized, you'll simply be presented with the best ways to communicate with the right people at the right time. In other words, you'll have the freedom to focus on the end rather than the means. **N**

