Features

// Great Vibes
Get insights on bringing together Novell Pulse and Novell Teaming under a coordinated product offering known as Novell Vibe Cloud and Novell Vibe OnPrem.

// Novell ZENworks 11: A First Look
Learn about the new release of ZENworks Configuration Management 11, packed with new features and capabilities that extend how you can secure and manage devices.

// Secure Superusers
Uniformly control and limit superuser and root access privileges for all your Windows, UNIX, and Linux servers with Novell Privileged User Manager.

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// Keeping Your Competitive Edge
In an announcement on November 9th, Novell reaffirmed its commitment to innovative team collaboration through its plan to bring together Novell Teaming and Novell Pulse into a coordinated development roadmap. As part of this coordinated effort, Novell will leverage the strengths of each offering to deliver real-time, enterprise-class team collaboration through on-premise and cloud-based deployment options. In conjunction with this merging of product roadmaps, Novell has renamed Novell Teaming and Novell Pulse to Novell Vibe OnPrem and Novell Vibe Cloud, respectively. This article will explore the details surrounding this announcement and what it means for Novell collaboration customers.

> Unified Platform
Both Novell Vibe OnPrem and Novell Vibe Cloud address common team collaboration needs. These include helping people stay informed; tapping into innovative ideas; making better decisions; finishing joint work faster; better leveraging knowledge assets; fostering productivity; and connecting more effectively with team members, partners and customers. And while the two products were based on different approaches to achieving these goals, Novell saw an opportunity to better leverage the strengths of both tools and deliver one cohesive solution for enterprise team collaboration.

As part of its coordinated development effort, Novell Vibe will harmonize the two deployment options over time, bringing together the best of the team workspace approach featured in Novell Teaming and the social business approach pioneered by Novell Pulse. To accomplish this, the Novell Vibe development team will work to combine next-generation capabilities such as real-time social messaging and online document co-editing with file management, groups, profiles, workflow, and security and management controls. The result will be a unified platform that makes it even easier for users to work together and drive better and faster business results, while giving organizations the deployment flexibility and security they need.
The first results of these coordinated efforts will be seen when Novell Vibe OnPrem ships in late 2010 and Novell Vibe Cloud ships in mid-2011. But the initial steps toward this integration are visible in the open betas available now for both deployment options.

> Implementation Strengths
Even though Novell Vibe OnPrem and Novell Vibe Cloud now share a common name and will blend closely over time, there are several distinguishing features in each product version today. Obviously, the deployment method differentiates the two at the highest level—with one in the cloud and the other on premise. But there are also differences in emphasis and functionality between the products as they exist today.

Novell Vibe OnPrem is known for its customizable and easy-to-create team workspaces; advanced workflows, customizable forms; and centralized project collaboration and knowledge management. As a proven collaborative application now entering its third generation, it facilitates team productivity, knowledge retention, document and content management, and business process automation.

As part of its coordinated development effort, Novell Vibe will harmonize the two deployment options over time, bringing together the best of the team workspace approach featured in Novell Teaming and the social business approach pioneered by Novell Pulse.

For example, Novell Vibe OnPrem facilitates your organization’s ability to preserve, manage and make accessible the information team members need to collaborate more effectively. It lets project leaders and team members leverage Novell Vibe workspaces as central, secure and easily accessible locations to store, organize and share all information related to a specific project, including documents, conversations, media files, research, milestones, tasks, expected outcomes, work in progress, business processes and more. It also lets teams leverage e-mail, calendars, documents and Web landing pages—and the latest Web 2.0 technologies and social tools such as wikis, blogs, discussions, profiles and activity streams. All of these capabilities combine to help you increase team productivity, information access and project awareness.
On the other hand, Novell Vibe Cloud focuses on new dynamic interactions that are fast and simple, enabling highly effective cross-business collaboration and B2B interactions. It combines enterprise-quality security and productivity features with the real-time social tools your people want, like social following and feeds, online document co-editing; self-service group collaboration across the enterprise; and fast, ad-hoc groups and communication. It provides next-generation, in-the-cloud collaboration that lets people across organizations (or across the world) work together in a better way that’s natural and intuitive.

For example, to streamline the creation of collateral for a cross-functional company effort—or even an inter-company effort—Novell Vibe Cloud lets you easily and quickly create an ad hoc team consisting of people that can add value, knowledge and expertise to the process. Invited team members can instantly and simultaneously contribute copy, post and see feedback, comment on proposed graphics and refine content to build the collateral piece. Every invited team member can see the work unfold in real-time as information is added, edits are suggested and comments are made. Additionally, since all team members work on the same copy of the document, version control and edit aggregation problems are eliminated. When finished, the team can also invite key management personnel to review and approve the resulting collateral piece.

> Unifying the Roadmap

Even though Novell Vibe OnPrem and Novell Vibe Cloud have significant differences in their current state, Novell plans to unify the products and ultimately provide the same fundamental functionality in both versions. One of the first questions customers may ask about this process is how long will this product merging take? While Novell can’t offer a definitive answer on the length of the process, insights can be found in the on-premise version’s track record of frequent releases and the fact that the cloud service is inherently easy to update, too. Novell plans to use these frequent releases to enhance both versions while putting a major emphasis on aggressively bringing them closer together.

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In the open betas available today, you’ll see that the interface of both versions has been changed to give them a more similar look and feel, specifically in terms of font type, colors and icon treatments. Quick profiles in the on-premise version will be similar to that of the cloud service. You’ll also see a “What’s New” capability in Novell Vibe OnPrem that’s modeled after the unified message stream found in Novell Vibe Cloud. In both product versions, this gives users a
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A consolidated view of the people, groups, discussions and content most relevant to their work. Next year you can expect to see even more blending in the rolling updates for each product. Watch for the interface and navigation structure of both versions to continue to meld, and watch for tighter integrations with GroupWise in both deployment options. In the cloud service, you’ll also see the incorporation of folders, task management, calendars and other elements from the on-premise version.

Over time, integration points will also be introduced between the two versions, such as synchronization of access controls and content. For example, you might want to keep the majority of your core content behind the firewall in the on-premise version, but synchronize certain team documents between your workspaces and cloud repositories that external team members can access. The whole point will be to give you the flexibility to best leverage the functionality and strengths of each deployment model.

> Previewing Novell Vibe

If you’ve been eager for a look at Novell Vibe—or you’re simply curious about how these products are starting to come together—now is the time to take advantage of their open betas. For the cloud service, just visit vibe.novell.com, sign up for the beta and give it a spin. To get a feel for the real-time collaborative nature of Novell Vibe Cloud, it’s best to invite your colleagues to sign up and experience it with you.

To check out Novell Vibe OnPrem, you can download its beta at www.novell.com/beta or try it online using the sandbox version at tryvibeonprem.novell.com. If you use the sandbox version, you’ll be able to try out some of the sample workspaces, workflows and forms that have been available in what has been known as the Teaming Library. This will give you a feel for what it’s like to use Novell Vibe OnPrem in a production environment.

Whether you’re interested in traditional on-premise software, new cloud delivery models or both, find out how Novell Vibe brings together team collaboration and social business tools to enhance the way your people work together to drive business results. For more product information, visit www.novell.com/vibe.

Additional Resources:
- Novell Vibe (www.novell.com/vibe)
- Novell Vibe OnPrem beta (www.novell.com/beta)
- Novell Vibe sandbox (tryvibe.novell.com)
Novell ZENworks 11: A First Look

by Sam Tessier, Product Manager, Novell

In some respects it’s hard to believe that the release of Novell ZENworks 10 Configuration Management was more than three years ago. With that release of ZENworks, Novell introduced an entirely new modular underlying architecture—one that was cross-platform, Web services based and directory agnostic.

Now we’re writing the next chapter of this product’s long history—Novell ZENworks Configuration Management 11. This release is packed with many new features and functions that broaden the platforms you manage and greatly extend how you can secure and manage those devices throughout their lifecycle.

Integrated Endpoint Security Management

In 2007, Novell acquired Senforce and gained endpoint security capabilities that differed greatly from the traditional device lifecycle management policies in ZENworks. Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management was made available as a standalone, non-integrated product. That has changed now with Novell ZENworks 11. Featuring fully integrated endpoint security management capabilities, ZENworks 11 represents the convergence of device lifecycle and endpoint security management from a single management console.

As with other ZENworks functions, communications to and from the ZENworks infrastructure happen via the Adaptive Agent on standard HTTP(s) protocols, and all features are managed via the ZENworks Control Center. Client self defense features prevent users from tampering with the security enforcement components of the ZENworks agent. Enforcement continues to be at the driver level for both network and storage security functions.

Key features:

- **Feature-specific policies**—Granularly define security settings for the device, then combine them to implement a holistic policy.
- **Policy groups**—Combine security and configuration policies and make a single assignment for enforcement.
- **User/device-assigned and global/location-specific policies**—Merge policies to ensure the right set is applied for the combination of location, device and user. Merging is unique to endpoint security policies and does not apply to non-endpoint security policies.
- **USB device management policies**—Control what devices or types of devices users are allowed to access (if any). (See Figure 1 and 2.)
- **Storage management features**—Control access to storage devices and AutoPlay execution.
- **Wi-Fi management**—Limit access to protected networks and to specific wireless access points.
- **Layer 2 firewall**—Control all incoming and outgoing traffic on the managed device.
- **VPN enforcement policies**—Require the use of VPN in specified locations.
- **Application control policies**—Restrict application execution or Internet use by application.
- **Data encryption policies**—Configure the encryption of removable devices and folders or sub-folders on fixed disks.
Figure 1: Integrated endpoint security management capabilities in Novell ZENworks 11 allow administrators to set and enforce USB device management policies.

Figure 2: Detailed USB attribute settings mean thumb drives and other removable media need not represent a significant threat to network security.
Integrated Linux Device Management

Novell ZENworks has been managing both SUSE Linux Enterprise and Red Hat Enterprise Linux environments for several years via Novell ZENworks Linux Management. With the release of ZENworks 11, these Linux management capabilities have been extended to Novell ZENworks Configuration Management 11. This integration qualifies ZENworks 11 as a truly unified tool for Windows and Linux device management.

The Linux agent is Java based, and has multiple deployment options. Discovery and deployment functions are now extended to Linux devices via SSH, and allow for remote deployment of the ZENworks Adaptive Agent. The agent can also be “pulled” down via YaST, YUM or a single-file download. (See Figure 3.)

Key features:

- **Inventory**—Conduct full hardware and package inventories and track change histories. Inventory integrates with Novell ZENworks Asset Management so you can map purchase records to installed packages.
- **Linux OS deployment**—Deploy Linux OSes on SUSE Linux Enterprise and Red Hat Enterprise Linux based distributions via integration with AutoYaST and KickStart. Continued support for Dell PowerEdge server bare-metal provisioning via Dell Tookit integration. Full support for ZENworks system variables within AutoYaST/Kickstart scripts, and improved Linux imaging capabilities for imaging EXT3 and ReiserFS partitions, even within LVM.
- **Package and repository management**—Graphically configure and schedule subscriptions to external package repositories such as YUM, Novell Updates, RedHat Network and Novell ZENworks Linux Management.
- **Flexible Linux bundles**—Deploy packages and files while performing required configuration tasks.

Figure 3: Novell ZENworks 11 lets administrators graphically configure and schedule subscriptions to external package repositories such as YUM, Novell Updates, RedHat Network and Novell ZENworks Linux Management.
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- **External Service Policy**—Centrally configure external repositories to specify which managed devices should have access.
- **Bundles and bundle groups**—Export to YUM format for easy consumption by unmanaged Linux devices on your network.
- **Novell ZENworks Application Windows for Linux**—Bring the power of Novell Application Launcher to the Linux desktop.
- **Remote management**—Get remote management for Linux devices via the ZENworks Control Center through integrated VNC and SSH clients.
- **Puppet policies**—Leverage the configuration management capabilities of the puppet project to configure your devices. There are currently hundreds of puppet recipes available on the Web.

> **Core Enhancements**

*Novell ZENworks 11* introduces numerous enhancements to the underlying core of the product. One such enhancement is a 64-bit JVM on 64-bit hardware and OS, allowing you to fully leverage the horsepower in today’s hardware.

In addition, new location awareness capabilities greatly extend your ability to assign policies and bundles based on ‘where’ a user or device is located. Location awareness adds a new dimension to the identity-driven nature of ZENworks and is available for both Windows and Linux device management. You can define "locations" that consist of various elements of data including networking hardware and addressing information. Locations can be used a) as system requirements for policies and bundles, b) to determine closest servers and c) as the basis for bandwidth throttling.

Other enhancements include:

- **The Sandbox**—A bundle and policy change management feature that helps ensure changes are only deployed to your production network when you publish them. (See Figure 4.)
- **The ZENworks Control Center**—Assign administrative authority to existing Novell eDirectory and MS Active Directory groups.
- **Action level system requirements**—Get more flexibility when it comes to building bundles for software delivery.
- **Manual device creation and reconciliation**—Pre-create devices and then have them reconciled based on serial number, MAC address and/or host name.

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**Figure 4:** Change management features in Novell ZENworks 11 let administrators fine-tune settings in a sandbox environment and then publish them for deployment.
> PC Power Management and Reporting
There are two actionable elements in power management—enacting changes across your environment and viewing the compliance of your devices with respect to your policies.

Managing the power settings on a device with previous versions of Novell ZENworks was possible with bundles that ran scripts or modified the registry. This has been made much simpler via a new power management policy. (See Figure 5.) As with other ZENworks policies, you can define over-arching power management policies that apply to everyone, and then assign separate policies for specific users/groups or types of devices. You can be even more granular with your policies by leveraging location awareness and having the power profile of a device be dependent upon its physical location. New reports in ZENworks 11 even allow you to view compliance with your power management policies.

Additionally, Intel vPro integration allows you to remotely perform power-on actions to supported devices on a scheduled basis, or even enhance other activities such as software distribution, patching and remote control.

Figure 5: Novell ZENworks 11 lets administrators enforce fine-grained power management controls, including location-specific policies and remote or scheduled power-on actions.
> Enhanced Patch Management
The patch management functions have been improved in ZENworks Patch Management 11 as well. Novell ZENworks Patch Management 11 provides cross-platform patch management for Windows, SUSE Linux Enterprise and Red Hat Enterprise Linux devices.

Most notably, you can now promote existing Novell ZENworks Configuration Management bundles to patches. This allows the discover applicable update (DAU) process to help you quickly identify the devices on your network that need a specific bundle and then target those devices. It allows you to track these bundles/devices via patch management reporting as well.

Also, new e-mail notification features make it easier than ever to determine when new patches are available for your environment.

> Enhanced Reporting Services
The ZENworks Reporting Server is an optional component of Novell ZENworks and is based on the latest version of the BusinessObjects Enterprise engine. Leveraging this capability is as simple as installing the ZENworks Reporting Server on a primary server in an existing ZENworks zone. These reporting services allow you to execute canned reports and build new reports quickly and easily via a Web-based interface linked to the ZENworks Control Center.

Novell ZENworks Reporting Server has several key features, it allows you to:
- Leverage the expanded reporting universe, which includes endpoint security policies.
- Build custom reports (or leverage several new preconfigured reports) for information about any endpoint security management policy
- Build custom power reports related to the “green” capabilities and power policies of your machines.
- Take advantage of new preconfigured reports for power policy and capability compliance reporting.
- Build custom reports for Linux repository subscriptions and leverage new preconfigured reports for subscription status using the new reporting universe objects for subscriptions.

> Supported Platforms

The ZENworks Primary Server can be hosted on Windows 2003 Server, Windows 2008 Server, Windows 2008 R2 Server, SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 10 or 11, and Red Hat Enterprise Linux Server 5.5.
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> On the Horizon
Novell ZENworks 11 takes us into 2011 with new features that enhance how we provision, manage and secure our endpoints—but that’s not all 2011 will offer. For the first half of the year, we are working on a support pack for ZENworks 11 that significantly increases platform support and security functions. And in late 2011, look for a ZENworks release that greatly enhances how ZENworks manages your endpoints across physical, virtual and cloud environments.

Additional Resources:
- Novell ZENworks 11 (http://www.novell.com/products/zenworks)
- ZENworks 11 Demo (http://www.novell.com/solutions/endpoint-management/demo/)
- “Relax: It’s Only Windows 7” Virtual Event (http://techweb.com/novell)
Secure Superusers

Manage Superuser and Root Privileges with Novell Privileged User Manager

by Ken Baker

Whether Linux or UNIX drives your mission-critical services and applications, your servers are the backbone of your IT infrastructure. But when multiple users in different types of roles need administrative access to those systems, it can be a major challenge to securely control that access—especially if those users all have unbridled superuser or root-account access. The more users in your organizations with carte blanche control of your IT resources, the more you leave yourself open to costly security risks and regulatory penalties. The seriousness of this concern becomes even more evident when you realize that according to the Verizon 2010 Data Breach Investigations Report, 48 percent of all breeches originate internally, with a large portion of those due to improper access or misuse of credentials.

The high security risks associated with granting administrators and developers full superuser and root-account privileges should make you reevaluate how and to whom you grant privileges. It’s very likely that many of your administrators really only need limited access to your systems to perform specific functions that require superuser privileges. So how do you limit their privileges to the access that they actually need? That’s where Novell Privileged User Manager comes in to action.

> Policy-Controlled Command Execution

Novell Privileged User Manager removes the need for administrators or programmers to know the root-account credentials for Linux and Unix servers, operating instead on the concept of “least privileges” (limiting users’ privileges to only what is absolutely necessary to perform their jobs) and using a process of delegation. Rather than providing root credentials to your administrators so they can do their jobs, delegation lets users log in with their unique user ID and password and assume the root account rights needed to perform a specific action. So, when a logged-in user attempts to execute a specific command that requires superuser or root privileges, Novell Privileged User Manager uses policy to determine whether its execution should be allowed. If authorized, Novell Privileged User Manager executes the command on that target host using privileged-account credentials on behalf of the user. (See Figure 1.)

According to the Verizon 2010 Data Breach Investigations Report, 48 percent of all breeches originate internally, with a large portion of those due to improper access or misuse of credentials.
To enable this, Novell Privileged User Manager sits between the user and the operating system, intercepting typed commands and sending those commands to a central authorization data base for approval. Novell Privileged User Manager determines approval according to policies you define in the context of who the user is, what the command is, where it’s being executed and when it’s being executed. It can also provide separation-of-duty verification and accountability of user actions. Privileged User Manager eliminates the need for users to know the superuser or root password, while still allowing them to do their jobs.

A powerful aspect of Novell Privileged User Manager is its centralized, policy-based architecture. You define policies in a single location, and Privileged User Manager automatically and consistently enforces the policies across every Linux and UNIX server in your environment. When you make a policy change, the policy is updated in real time and automatically enforces the revised policy consistently across all servers. As a result, you don’t have to touch every box to control or change specific privileges for users’ local accounts, allowing you to react more quickly to emerging security concerns or changes in regulatory rules.

**Novell Privileged User Manager removes the need for administrators or programmers to know the root-account credentials for Linux and Unix, operating instead on the concept of “least privileges.”**
To help you ensure that delegated superuser or root privileges are being used in a proper manner, Novell Privileged User Manager watches everything the user does on the server. According to policy, you can have it record single commands or entire user sessions. It extracts full keystroke data, storing it in secure, redundant databases. It automatically analyzes and grades the collected commands based on activity risk levels, the user, the host, the working directory and the typed command, and then presents them with color-code risk ratings to help you or auditors make sense of large amounts of event and session data. (See Figure 2.) You can even drill down into a session event to view and playback its keystroke activity. Novell Privileged User Manager can also provide you real-time alerts of anomalies or command attempts that don’t adhere to policy.

> Modular Framework Architecture

The following four main architectural components make up the Novell Privileged User Manager product:

**Framework**

The framework provides the product’s modular plug-and-play functionality and scalability so its different manager modules and agents can be deployed as needed. It provides a centralized registry that enables services and administration of the entire framework from any single point on the enterprise network. The framework handles distribution of components, acts as a certificate authority, and ensures communication between the product’s various components.
Manager Modules
The Manager Modules comprise a collection of modules that can be plugged into the framework to provide a variety of different services and functions, including the following:

- **Command Control Manager**—The policy database
- **Audit Manager**—A collection of databases that maintain a history of the events and keystrokes for audit purposes
- **Registry Manager**—Maintains a database of all framework hosts and modules, and provides certificate-based registration features for the hosts
- **Access Manager**—Maintains a list of user accounts and provides authentication services
- **Package Manager**—Manages a repository for the different modules and components in the product

Manager modules can be distributed onto multiple framework hosts to provide load balancing and fail over for the framework.

Command Control Agent
The Command Control agent provides both client- and remote-execution functionality. It obtains command execution approval from the Command Control Manager and acts as the product’s policy enforcement point, authorizing or denying the execution of commands based on decisions made by the Command Control Manager.

Command Control Interface Console
The Command Control Console provides a unique Flash-based GUI management console that can be used from within any Web browser. Its intuitive drag-and-drop interface lets you centrally create rules and manage security policies, review high-risk commands and electronically sign-off on user activity. With the drag-and-drop interface you don’t have to manually code rules and security policies. Instead, you can easily build sophisticated control structures by simply dragging your rules into nested hierarchies, giving you granular control over even the most demanding environments. (See Figure 3.)

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Figure 3: Novell Privileged User Manager automatically analyzes and grades recorded keystrokes, and then presents them with color-code risk ratings to help you or auditors make sense of large amounts of event and session data.
To learn more about how Novell Privileged User Manager can help you secure your IT infrastructure, visit its resource library at [www.novell.com/products/privilegedusermanager/resource-library/](http://www.novell.com/products/privilegedusermanager/resource-library/) where you can view Webcasts and read white papers, flyers, and case studies.

**Additional Resources:**
To comply with the state’s budget mandates, the Texas General Land Office continually seeks creative ways to conduct business in a way that’s highly cost-effective. Novell Teaming has brought profound improvements in productivity across the agency.

> Overview
The Texas General Land Office is an agency with a diverse mission that includes a myriad of programs, including the Texas Veteran’s Land Board, state oil spill response, coastal resource protection and more. As the manager of oil and gas exploration and production on the state’s 20 million acre Permanent School Fund, the Texas General Land Office brings in nearly one billion dollars in public school revenue a year.

> Challenge
With employees spread out throughout the state, the agency needed a way for users to work together in a much more efficient fashion. “We’re operating in a radically diverse business climate,” said Steve Fouchek, director of Network Services for the Texas General Land Office. “To operate at peak performance, we need to make it easy for users to share information and collaboratively manage tasks so that we can effectively track the status of projects. This meant getting projects out of email.”

In addition, the agency was subject to regular audits that consumed a good deal of employee time. “Our agency has a significant impact on the largest bond funds in the state, so we’re audited frequently to ensure compliance with grant programs, mineral rights management and other regulations.” said Stephen Paxman, deputy commissioner of Information Systems for the Texas General Land Office. “Gathering information to prepare for these audits diverted attention from our core responsibilities.”

“We found that Novell Teaming had the most robust feature set and attractive price point. Having integrated team calendars, workspaces, task management, document management, wikis, blogs and more is extremely beneficial.”

Stephen Paxman, Deputy Commissioner, Information Systems, Texas General Land Office

> Solution
The agency evaluated several solutions and selected Novell Teaming. “Novell Teaming had the most robust feature set and attractive price point,” said Paxman. “Having integrated team calendars, workspaces, task management, document management, wikis and blogs—all in one place—is extremely beneficial.”
The agency had Novell Teaming up and running in a matter of days, and quickly realized its value for improving both user productivity and streamlining administrative tasks. “Novell Teaming gives us a great opportunity to achieve standardization,” said Cory Wilburn, assistant director of Business Automation Services for the Texas General Land Office. “Using wikis in Novell Teaming, we’ve documented standard policies, such as configuring new servers. There’s no longer a need to ‘reinvent the wheel’. We get work done right the first time, every time.”

Initially, the agency deployed Novell Teaming to its Network Services and Agency Land Project (ALPS) teams. “Based on the immense value these teams realized, we quickly deployed it to the entire organization,” said Paxman. “Novell Teaming has already improved decision making processes and helped prevent costly mistakes. As an example, we’re simultaneously redeveloping five major systems as part of our ALPS project. This entails many moving parts. The size of our staff is probably adequate for only two projects but amazingly, the ALPS project has been going on for more than a year and it’s on track and on budget. We use tools like Novell Teaming to make that happen.”

The solution has also proven invaluable during regular audits. “We’ve gone through two audits since deploying Novell Teaming,” said Paxman. “The first thing we did was give the auditor access to a Novell Teaming workspace that had everything they needed. It went beautifully. The auditors had almost no questions, and were very complimentary of our approach. That’s pretty amazing!”

The agency also has nearly 40 servers running Novell Open Enterprise Server on Linux, and is taking advantage of features, such as iPrint, NSS and Novell Cluster Services. To manage its 640 workstations, the agency uses Novell ZENworks, which provides centralized application deployment, patch management, imaging and remote control functionality.

“We use every technique and tool we can to make users as efficient as possible. With Novell Teaming, we’re able to achieve a lot more with a lot less.”

Stephen Paxman, Deputy Commissioner, Information Systems, Texas General Land Office

> Results

Despite recent mandates to cut their budget by 5 percent, the Texas General Land Office continually adds value for its constituents across the state. “Slashing our budget in just 30 days was a real challenge,” said Paxman. “We try to get every ounce of value from the dollars we spend. Using Novell products, we’re able to deliver more services to citizens, without incurring additional cost to the state.”

Novell Teaming tracks entire project lifecycles, including discussions, decision making, task management, documentation and more. “If someone wants to change credit card business rules, for example, we need to demonstrate to auditors how those decisions were made,” said Michael Ashton-Moore, systems administrator for Texas General Land Office. “With Novell Teaming, you can see the entire discussion, including its resolution. And being able to keep everyone informed about when a task was completed or how far along it is really comes in handy. That’s worth its weight in gold.”
Novell Teaming has enabled the agency to accomplish goals it could not have done otherwise. “We use every technique and tool we can to make users as efficient as possible,” said Paxman. “With Novell Teaming, we’re able to achieve a lot more with a lot less.”

Additional Resources:
• Novell Teaming (http://www.novell.com/products/teaming/)
Your job as a manager of IT cannot be done in a vacuum. Because there are so many variables to every decision, it’s nearly impossible to know everything you may need to know. You need information to help you with the decisions of your job, but getting the right information can be difficult.

A common approach, therefore, is usually to get as much information as possible. That creates problems of a different sort when you’re inundated with too much data and end up suffering from “analysis paralysis.” The best approach is to access information that’s already suited to your particular situation. Maybe even your particular type of business.

You can get this type of specialized information from a variety of sources: trade publications, vendor collateral, user groups, blogs, trade conferences, online communities, etc. But a resource you may rely on as much as any other is the industry analyst.

There are many different analyst groups out there—from the largest and most comprehensive firms to small, specialized boutiques. But if you or your company subscribes to the services of one or more analyst firms, ask yourself this: are you taking advantage of all the services and opportunities you’re paying for?

The most common product of most analyst firms is the subscription to publications. These groups produce a prodigious number of reports, and many are extremely useful. But when it comes to getting information from analysts, you may well have some additional options.

You can work one on one with the analysts of the firms to whose services you subscribe. That means you have the option, through a phone call or e-mail, to contact analysts directly and ask specific questions. This cost is usually included with the subscription you’re probably already paying for.

You can also invite analysts to visit your company. Or you can visit them by attending their sponsored events or conferences. These options, however, tend to be fairly expensive. You’ll have to balance the cost and reward for yourself, but if you’re facing a high-priced buying decision, the cost can easily pay for itself if it supports a solid IT decision.

Once you have the analyst’s attention, what kind of things can you ask about? The answer to that question is about as varied as the number of analysts out there, but the rest of this article will give you some ideas.

Find out the name of the industry analyst who specializes in the area you’re wondering about and shoot off a phone call or e-mail. This person will not only answer your question, but can also offer great advice if you’re facing a buying decision.
#1: Ask About Market Trends
If you’re trying to keep up with specific market or industry trends, the regular publications that analysts publish is a good place to start. The biggest challenge of any analyst is to be relevant. And staying on top of market information and what’s happening in the technology industry is something that all of the top firms do quite well.

Sometimes, however, you have a specific question about an industry trend that relates to a project your company is undertaking. Perhaps the last time you read an analyst report was two years ago, and you’re looking for information that’s a little more current. That’s when you need to contact the expert directly.

Find out the name of the analyst who specializes in the area you’re wondering about and shoot off a phone call or e-mail. This person will not only answer your question, but can also offer great advice if you’re facing a buying decision. Which brings us to . . .

#2: Ask For Help With a Purchase Decision
Most of the time, analysts are approached by their customers when money is on the line. And with good reason. These are the folks who live and breathe their area of specialty, and it’s their job to know the strengths and weaknesses of a particular solution.

Your questions can range from the general to the specific. For example, maybe you’re looking for a new way to manage multiple hypervisors from different vendors. Ask the analyst who the top vendors are.

Or maybe you narrowed it down to three vendors already. Ask the expert about the relative merits of each—especially for your specific infrastructure and industry. They’re great with competitive analysis.

And if you’ve already chosen a specific product or solution, you can ask the analyst about that as well. For example, “I’m looking at vendor XYZ. What do you know about them? What are other customers saying about their product?” You can reap the benefit of the collective knowledge that analysts have about the vendors they’ve researched as well as the clients they’ve talked to. And once you’ve made your decision, don’t forget to . . .

#3: Ask About ROI
Any cost incurred by IT these days is expected to show a return on the initial investment. ROI information is often provided by vendors, but those numbers usually show how returns compare to costs if the product is used in an ideal environment.

If your infrastructure is a little tricky (and whose isn’t?) you might need some clarification that only an analyst, who has been talking to customers in the same boat as you, can provide. With some effort, you should be able to get an answer that measures the probabilities of different ROI outcomes. And when it comes time to put your plan in action, be sure to . . .
Four Questions to Ask of Industry Analysts! // Novell Connection Magazine

#4: Ask For Help With Implementation
Remember, analysts spend a lot of time talking to customers just like you who are facing the same technology decisions you’re facing. And since they have a wide variety of real-life information at their disposal, they can usually provide implementation guidance in two ways.

The first is through case studies. Many analyst reports include real-life case studies about organizations who have gone through the same things as you. And unlike many vendor success stories, these case studies talk about all the hiccups that happened along the way. With luck and the right questions, you might be able to avoid some of those same snags.

The other area of guidance analysts can provide is though best practices they’ve observed from scores of installations and implementations. Best practices are like travel guidebooks that show you the areas to plan for and the areas to avoid on a trip. Looking to migrate your company to Windows 7? Why not take advantage of the wisdom shared by those who went before.

> Conclusion
Analysts can provide a particular insight to the decisions you’re facing, and it’s a mistake not to take advantage of their wisdom. It’s their job to stay current on IT markets, including the technologies and products that are meeting the needs of customers just like you. However, analysts are just one source of good information. Keep getting your information from the trade publications, vendor collateral, user groups, blogs, trade conferences and online communities. Do your own due diligence, but use the analysts as a key source of expertise and experience. And you’ll never come close to making decisions in a vacuum.

Additional Resources:
- Enterprise Management Associates (enterprisemanagement.com)
- Forrester (forrester.com)
- Gartner (gartner.com)
- Kuppinger Cole (kupingercole.com)
- Ovum (ovum.com)
Keeping Your Competitive Edge: Certification Style!

by Wes Heaps

In today’s fast-paced IT world, it’s hard to keep up with current technology. New and updated products are constantly appearing, while methodologies and best practices are always changing. If you aren’t careful, your knowledge can quickly become antiquated—especially in a field as dynamic as information technology. Only through constant education, both on and off the job, is it possible to keep up. Attending training and achieving a current IT certification is an excellent way to keep your knowledge fresh and stay competitive in the IT job market.

> Why Get Certified?

It’s not a secret that enterprises value qualified IT professionals. Even in the current economic climate, certified IT professionals enjoyed noticeable increases in their salaries according to Certification Magazine’s 2009 annual survey.1 Additionally, more than 85 percent of respondents felt that since they’ve become certified, there is a greater demand for their skills. In today’s marketplace, that’s great news for those who are certified and an excellent reason for getting or updating to a current IT certification.

The bottom line is this: getting certified pays off for both the company and the employee. The Information Technology Certification Council reports that a recent CompTIA study found businesses employing a high number of certified helpdesk staff can handle 11 percent more phone calls and 28 percent more field service calls than companies employing low numbers of certified helpdesk staff.2 And Global Knowledge and TechRepublic recently reported that “professionals who earned an IT or project management certification during the last five years earned an average of $5,242 more [per year] than their counterparts.”3 With increased productivity and higher compensation—getting certified is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

With so many choices in technical certifications today, it’s hard to know which ones are relevant in the current IT marketplace. Certification Magazine’s 2009 Salary Survey lists top certifications by salary—a good indication of what certifications employers are valuing. The Certified Novell Administrator (CNA) and Certified Novell Engineer (CNE) certifications were two of the many specifically mentioned, with CNEs earning above the industry average salary for 2009.1 While many certification programs have declined over recent years, MaryJo Swenson, Executive Director of Novell Technical Training, notes that, “Novell certification testing has been showing a steady month-over-month increase for the past six to eight months.” That’s good news, both for Novell and the IT industry in general. It appears that people are looking to increase their knowledge, demonstrate their competency and expand their career portfolios in today’s competitive IT marketplace through certification.
Keeping Your Competitive Edge: Certification Style! // Novell Connection Magazine

> What’s New on the Novell Certification Front?
Novell has recently announced some innovative new programs and promotions in the certification marketplace. Here are some of the highlights:

Three-for-One Linux Certifications
What’s better than holding a Linux certification? Holding three of them! Novell has teamed up with the Linux Professional Institute and CompTIA to offer you the opportunity to get three certifications at the same time. By passing the CompTIA Linux+ Powered by LPI exams, you achieve both the CompTIA Linux+ and LPIC-1 certifications. After getting those certifications, simply fill out the required form at http://practicum.novell.com/LPI2CLAForm.php to earn the Novell Certified Linux Administrator (CLA) certification as well. That’s three certifications for the effort of one.

And until November 30, 2010, you can even win an Amazon Kindle or an Apple iPad through a great promotion associated with this three-for-one Linux certification offering. By taking a free Technical Skills Assessment, you are entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle, and by completing the three certifications mentioned in the promotion above, you will be entered into a drawing for an Apple iPad. To find out more about this promotion, visit www.novell.com/promo/email/cert_3for1.html.

Calling All CNEs!
Certified Novell Engineers (CNEs) might be closer than they think to getting updated to the Novell Certified Engineer (NCE) certification. Novell has made it easy for CNEs to transfer their networking skills on NetWare over to Linux and Novell Open Enterprise Server 2. With two preparatory courses and a single certification test to take, getting a new NCE certification couldn’t be easier. Find out how close you are by taking two free Technical Skills Assessments for Course 3089: Implementing Novell Open Enterprise Server 2 for Linux and Course 3090: Deploying Novell Open Enterprise Server 2 for Linux at www.novell.com/training/assessment (under the End-User Computing tab).

> New Markets, New Technologies, New Certifications
Identity and Security
Novell is a recognized leader in the identity and security market. Some analyst firms have lauded Novell technologies, such as Novell Identity Manager and Novell Sentinel, as innovative leaders in their respective areas. In conjunction with the release of the new Novell Identity Manager4 product family, Novell also announces its first identity and security certification: the Certified Novell Identity Manager Administrator (CNIMA).

Recipients of the CNIMA certification know how to effectively administer and use Novell Identity Manager 4 to perform advanced reporting that shows real-time user activity, to set up and provision roles for greater efficiency and security, as well as extend their identity management solutions beyond their firewall to manage common software as a service (SaaS) applications.

With two courses and a single test, candidates get to prove their knowledge on both the recently released Novell Identity Manager 4 Advanced Edition and the forthcoming Novell Identity Manager 4 Standard Edition. This means no matter what Novell Identity Manager 4 family member customers are using, the CNIMA recipient is a qualified administrator. To find out more about this new certification, visit www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cnima/.
End-User Computing
In any enterprise, managing software and applications for servers, desktops and mobile computing devices such as smart phones, tablet computers and laptops is a time-consuming task. Usage policies must be enforced, software patches must be installed, and software licenses and use must be tracked. Novell promises to make managing applications and environments on servers, desktops and mobile devices easier with Novell ZENworks Configuration Management. From a single, consolidated framework, administrators can now manage applications, environments, personalities and devices with ease.

With two courses, you can learn how to use the configuration management, patch management and asset inventory services of Novell ZENworks to manage an entire enterprise. And with a single test, you can demonstrate your knowledge of Novell ZENworks Configuration Management and get certified. To find out more, visit www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cnza/.

Workload Management
According to a recent IDC report, in order to take full advantage of the dynamic and heterogeneous infrastructure environment of physical, virtual, and cloud computing, “IT teams will need to shift to a more policy-based, automated approach to managing the building, provisioning, migration, monitoring, measuring, and securing of corporate workloads.”

This emerging market has been called intelligent workload management. Knowing how to consolidate, migrate and manage workloads is a critical component to success in any intelligent workload management strategy. Novell offers the Certified Workload Management Administrator (CWMA) certification to demonstrate knowledge on their own workload management PlateSpin products: part of its WorkloadIQ portfolio.

With a single course and test, you can be on your way to consolidating, migrating and managing workloads on physical and virtual servers using PlateSpin products. To find out more about the CWMA program, visit www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cwm/.

> The Bottom Line
In the constantly changing world of information technology, it’s easy to let your knowledge and skills slide. However, countless surveys and studies repeatedly demonstrate the continued relevance and importance of having a current IT certification. Both the organization and the individual benefit from investing in IT certifications like those offered by Novell, an acknowledged leader in the IT certification marketplace. No matter how you look at it, when it comes to IT, it pays to be certified.

Additional Resources:
- Novell Certification information (http://www.novell.com/training/certinfo/)
- Certified Workload Management Administrator (www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cwm/)
- Certified Novell ZENworks Administrator (www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cnza/)
- Certified Novell Identity Manager Administrator (www.novell.com/training/certinfo/cnima/)
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1 “2009 Salary Survey” Certification Magazine Vol. 11 Issue 12 December 2009
http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/mediatec/cm1209/#/14/OnePage

2 “Why Certify: Business” CompTIA website
http://www.comptia.org/certifications/whycertify/business.aspx

3 “2010 IT Skills and Salary Report” Global Knowledge and TechRepublic
http://www.slideshare.net/NLDT/2010-it-skills-salary-report-tech-republic

4 IDC, White Paper Sponsored by Novell, “Intelligent Workload Management: Opportunities and Challenges”
Doc.#223661, June 2010.