Novell Broadens Desktop Management Capabilities with Mac Support and Full Disk Encryption in ZENworks 11 SP2

Novell Releases ZENworks 11 SP2

On February 21st, 2012, Novell announced Novell ZENworks 11 Support Pack 2. Included in this latest update of the popular heterogeneous systems management platform is integrated device management support for Mac clients, full disk encryption capabilities, expanded platform support, and performance improvements. Additionally, two new product suites have been added to offer pre-packaged options of the ZENworks solution sets: Novell Endpoint Protection Suite and Novell Total Endpoint Management Suite. This release exemplifies Novell's commitment to delivering frequent product updates to meet evolving customer expectations.

Novell ZENworks 11 Support Pack 2 will be generally available in March 15, 2012. ZENworks Full Disk Encryption (FDE) will be offered for $55 per managed endpoint. For a limited time, however, Novell is offering the Endpoint Protection Suite – which includes *both* FDE and Novell Endpoint Security Management – for the same price as FDE alone.

Consolidating Endpoint Management

Since its introduction in 1998, the Novell ZENworks suite of IT management solutions has been focused on providing consolidated automation solutions designed to simplify support for the entire lifecycle of managed endpoints from initial deployment through final retirement. Currently, the ZENworks product line consists of six packages – ZENworks Configuration Management for Windows, Linux and Apple OS X devices, ZENworks Application Virtualization, ZENworks Asset Management, ZENworks Endpoint Security Management, and ZENworks Patch Management Novell Service Desk – that can each be purchased independently, but are fully integrated, utilizing common agents, data repositories, and a centralized console interface. With this latest release, Novell introduces a new product, ZENworks Full Disk Encryption, to the integrated family of solutions.

Novell's modular approach to IT management allows organizations to cost-effectively choose which solutions are most applicable to their business requirements and expand their automation capabilities as the need arises. In this way, long term viability of the platform is achieved for organizations of all types and sizes. Further, Novell displayed a commitment to ensuring the product set continually evolves to meet emerging enterprise IT requirements with frequent updates. The release of Support Pack 2 for ZENworks 11 carries out this promise with the delivery of new capabilities and product improvements.

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New Features and Product Sets

Novell has expanded the already extensive capabilities of the ZENworks 11 platform with the release of a number of new key functional support capabilities, including:

- Full Disk Encryption – Supporting and consolidating management of both hardware and software based encryption on Windows endpoints. The new product set is fully integrated with the ZENworks console, server, and agent and includes support for emergency recovery and drive decommissioning.

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- Integrated Mac Device Management – Fully integrated capabilities are now included to allow application management, remote management, software and hardware inventory and patch management on Macintosh OS X 10.5 or higher endpoints running on Intel architecture up through and including the most current edition, Mac OS X Lion.
- Expanded Platform Support – Novell Open Enterprise Server (OES) 11 is now supported as both a ZENworks Primary Server, and a managed device; also, , Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) 6.1 devices can now be managed.
- Performance Enhancements – Imaging on Windows 7 NTFS platforms has been accelerated by 200-300% with a new high-performance imaging driver.
- User Experience – Login experience is improved with FDN caching and network credential manager support for virtual desktops. Increased scale and platform support for Citrix implementations.

In addition, Novell has introduced the following two new package sets:

- Novell Endpoint Protection Suite – Including ZENworks Full Disk Encryption, ZENworks Endpoint Security Management solutions, and an optional ZENworks Patch management subscription, this suite offers an ideal security-focused complement to Novell Endpoint Lifecycle Management Suite at a discounted price.
- Novell Total Endpoint Management Suite – Combines both the Novell Endpoint Lifecycle Management Suite and the Novell Endpoint Protection Suite into a single product offering.

EMA Perspective

The areas of focus included in the latest release of the ZENworks management platform are very revealing about the development direction and priorities Novell has determined for the product set. Rather than providing solutions focused solely to achieving marketing points by leveraging the latest hot buzz words, Novell has taken the revolutionary approach of actually listening to its customers. The principle features introduced with ZENworks 11 Support Pack 2 – full disk encryption and Mac device support – enable management consolidation that will greatly simplify support practices while helping to meet security and compliance requirements. Similar improvements can be expected with the more frequent product updates promised, and maintenance contract customers are advantaged with a platform that is continually evolving to meet their changing needs. The principle value with this approach is that it creates a long-term viability for the platform that will improve overall customer satisfaction and will further strengthen Novell's loyal customer base.

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Novell's focus on enhancing the quality of its solution to meet the needs of existing customers is also exemplified in the vendor's rather quiet expansion of capabilities in application virtualization – a topic that is not well represented among many competing client management solution providers. The latest edition of ZENworks Application Virtualization (version 9) was, in fact, just released in January, 2012, and introduced a number of performance improvements, new features, and additional off-line support. Although there will certainly be cases where this and other ZENworks products will be adopted independently, the true value of the solution comes from using multiple of the integrated solution sets concurrently in order to consolidate management. Enterprise Management Associates believes organization that invest in the Novell ZENworks solution suites are adopting a platform that is customized to meet their unique needs, scalable to support expanding requirements, and eminently supported to ensure long-term value.

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