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Open Horizons Magazine is published quarterly by KLC-Comm BV - The Netherlands - info@klc-comm.net

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Staying Dry in a Difficult Climate!

by Erno de Korte



The current economic crisis obviously does not make things easier for many individuals and organisations – it's like with other disasters, for example the flooding of the New Orleans area by Katrina – many people are hurt and there's a lot of damage. However these disasters will always create new opportunities as well.

Some of these new opportunities might not immediately be recognised as positive. Many people, for example, simply abhor the vultures that find their way to dead animals in the flooded areas of the Serengeti desert. And the same is true for the scavengers that looted New Orleans properties. However, while the latter can be seen as a real pest, the vultures and other scavengers actually play an important role in cleaning up, and are thus a valuable part of "mother nature".

The same is true in the current economic climate: while some people are trying to take advantage of other people's miseries in a bad way, for many others it will offer great opportunities. In the case of the New Orleans flood area, there are now many Dutch civil engineers active in the area to help to protect the area against a new flooding, as the Netherlands has a long history in fighting against the water. I used to live in an area that was almost 7 metres below sea level with no real worries – we just paid our taxes to maintain the dikes and the rest of the protection system.

Here is an interesting parallel with our IT industry – as long as you pay your maintenance fees and keep your system on the current release, there is no need to worry much while you can benefit from the many

improvements which newer releases will offer to your organisation. As an example, if you are still using GroupWise 7.0, you are becoming vulnerable and with version 6.5 you are in the danger zone. When new colleagues compare your environment with more recent versions of other solutions, your great GroupWise environment could certainly look poor. Also, you are vulnerable in other ways – in the Netherlands we cannot stop the maintenance of our dikes, otherwise we will simply flood. The same is true for ZENworks – although version 7 might still deliver a lot of value to your organisation, it is time to take the next step and move on to better worlds.

It is therefore not so strange that for the remainder of 2009 Novell will offer many good deals to move their customers to newer versions. Although many people, like me, really love Netware, it is indeed time to "Move IT" to the next logical step in the evolution of your data centre – SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. I'm still proud of my MCNE certifications for Netware, however I'm ready to go for the "new kid on the block". We will soon shut down our last Netware servers (except the one that has been running for 1073 days now. Let it die in peace!).

Make sure to take these next steps on the evolutionary ladder. It is not so much because I want you to spend more money on Novell, rather I advise you to protect your investments and take advantage of the many benefits that these newer versions will offer. It is not based on marketing blah-blah, it is for real – GroupWise 8 includes an enormous number of relatively small im-

provements, often things that people have been asking for many years. As authors of the new "GroupWise Powerguide - Second Edition" we know there is a lot you can gain. The same is true for the latest version of ZENworks and SUSE Linux Enterprise, and the upcoming new release of Teaming will offer many improvements.

Here is one more recommendation Today we do not build dikes and windmills to fight against the water in the same way as we did hundreds of years ago. We have evolved and are now investing a lot of money to create "smart dikes" using all kind of telemetry systems to check the "health" of the dike. Make sure you are not flooded by the financial crises and invest money into new technologies to keep your existing IT systems current and up-to-date. Have a look at the many offerings which Novell partners are offering to strengthen your Novell solutions – they will help you with the protection against viruses, SPAM, offer more functionality like archiving and so much more.

The good news is that these partners keep adding functionality to your favourite Novell solutions – for example, have a look at SKYPRO, with their cool VoIP solution for GroupWise – they recently added a fax solution to their portfolio as well. Investing money in these solutions today is certainly a good idea, you will be able to fight the flood even better. Your Novell environment will double or triple the money you invest in it – soon it will prove to have been the best investment you have made – like the lighthouse in a storm or a strong dike around your community.