

A Quantum Leap for Novell?

by Erno de Korte



If all the signs are correctly interpreted, by the time you read this you might have noticed that Novell has taken a quantum leap – in the collaboration sphere, to be more precise. Let's take a short look at Novell's track record, before I explain more about this quantum leap.

More than 25 years ago Novell became very successful with NetWare, changing the landscape for file and print services. The next step was conversion of the WordPerfect collaboration suite into GroupWise, making Novell one of the leading vendors in enterprise collaboration. Novell Directory Services matured into eDirectory and became a leader in corporate directory services. Likewise the ZENworks product line matured into a management solution which has even been purchased for use in environments which never previously used Novell solutions.

Then Novell surprised friend and foe by acquiring SUSE and developing the SUSE Linux Enterprise solutions into a corporate grade service platform, used more and more as a back-end service platform in often critical, fault tolerant environments. Although the adoption of Linux as a desktop platform is still in its early phases, the many enhancements Novell has added makes the SUSE Linux Desktop a perfectly acceptable alternative to any Windows desktop. It will be a matter of time before more organisations realise they can save money and gain stability and performance.

So what is the next ace that Novell has up its sleeve, that would validate my "quantum leap" statement? Well, think about this: more and more people are experiencing difficulties in staying on top of all the information

streams in which they are involved. Have I updated my Facebook entry? Followed my friends and co-workers via Twitter and managed my LinkedIn account? Did I read all my emails today and responded quickly to the IM (instant message) from my co-workers or manager?

A question could be: Can you make new business using (new) services like Facebook, Twitter and so on? Well, of course we can, just have a look at the past. Many years ago, in the days of big and beautiful fax machines, many people did not really expect that email would take over business. A paper contract sent as a fax was needed to "seal the deal". While in those days organisations questioned if each employee really needed their own mailbox, these days creating a mailbox for a new hire on the first working day is common practice.

So how will Novell help us to make new business and take a quantum leap? Well, within the Novell **Open Collaboration** key elements such as Novell DataSync will collect information from various sources, which can then be filtered and validated to your needs and then synchronised to other solutions. Imagine your CRM data being pushed into your GroupWise, Outlook or Notes contacts, then synchronised to your ActiveSync device as well. Or imagine your Documentum records made available in your Novell Teaming or Sharepoint environment. Co-editing documents across the web, while chatting with others in your team. Facebook data streams combined with Twitter and Youtube. Novell is bringing these modern, web 2.0 paradigms from the social world into the enterprise and bringing with them enterprise

level controls and compliance.

Using the DataSync engine you can access this data in applications like GroupWise, Teaming, MS-Exchange and so on or through a brand new interface "**Pulse**" (formerly codenamed "**Cockpit**"). This unique single interface sits on top of all the services mentioned above and enables individuals to be more productive. Team collaboration allows teams to work together as if they were in the same meeting room. The best news of all is that all this will be secured, managed and monitored by Novell running on top of Novell's back-end solutions (amongst others).

In the past few months Novell has been talking a lot about **Open Collaboration** to numerous analysts at the leading firms. They are unanimously positive about Novell's vision for **Open Collaboration** and the ability to innovate and create a new market in the area of enterprise grade unified, real-time, Web 2.0 social and document collaboration. They also agree, that while other vendors might be working on certain elements which would fit into this strategy, none of them come even close to this **Open Collaboration** vision nor have they the power to execute. It is not for nothing that organisations like Google are so interested in what is cooking at Novell. This could indeed be a quantum leap and personally I am very much looking forward to playing a small part in this project. Make sure to investigate and learn more about it all by reading, for example, the articles in the Special Edition of the Open Horizons Magazine about Open Collaboration, available online at www.open-horizons.net/novell-open-collaboration. Enjoy!