

IBM's Notes and Domino 8 Will Consolidate Lotus Base

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The long wait for Lotus users is over. The impressive new functionality of Notes and Domino 8 will make the faithful happy. But new users still need to be won over.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 21 August 2007, IBM announced that Lotus Notes and Domino 8, its flagship e-mail and collaboration products, were available for download. Initial availability is for the English version. Physical media and additional languages will follow from September 2007 through May 2008.

On 22 August 2007, in a related move, IBM announced that it has acquired WebDialogs, a small Web conferencing provider. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. IBM plans to add WebDialogs' Unyte product to the Lotus Sametime product line as a software as a service (SaaS) offering.

Analysis

IBM has fulfilled its promises made over the past two years by shipping the long-awaited new release of its flagship Notes/Domino franchise (originally code-named "Hannover") on time and with the expected functionality. Highlights include:

- Major improvements in usability, particularly in the Notes client
- Eclipse-based composite application integration with WebSphere
- Integrated office automation tools for word processing, spreadsheets and presentations
- Security, performance and manageability improvements

Gartner gives a generally positive assessment of this new release. Notes/Domino 8 delivers on IBM's Hannover promises, which should significantly improve customer satisfaction in the Lotus customer base. The composite application development improvements potentially open up rich new possibilities for users. However, this base is still concentrated in very large accounts and IBM has not done enough to expand its presence to the larger market of organizations with less than 10,000 people. As with any broad platform, this is a strategic choice. While WebSphere is not required, users who do not wish to go down the WebSphere route will have fewer reasons to adopt Notes/Domino 8. IBM must move quickly to capitalize on the possibilities Notes/Domino 8 introduces, since Microsoft continues to be a formidable competitor and smaller Web 2.0 startups have also aimed at this market.

In another move to enhance the Lotus line, the WebDialogs acquisition fills out IBM's Web conferencing line, which has lacked a SaaS offering in a market that wants one. Integration and differentiation could be issues, however, as Lotus will be selling two different products which serve essentially the same purpose until the two can be integrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Lotus customers:** Evaluate Notes/Domino 8 with an eye to upgrading to raise user satisfaction, exploit composite application capabilities and tie in with Sametime.
- **Non-Lotus users:** If you are re-evaluating your collaboration platform, consider this refreshed product line. If you are happy with your current infrastructure, however, there is little reason to consider moving.

RECOMMENDED READING

- "IBM Lotus/Domino Users on the Road to Hannover" — The first public demonstration of IBM's Hannover product suggested that it offered a great deal of promise for Lotus users and those looking to build Lotus/WebSphere composite applications. **By Jeffrey Mann**
- "IBM Domino and WebSphere: Worlds Collide" — By creating a Notes/Domino-specific license for WebSphere Portal Server, IBM is putting into practice a strategy to combine its Domino franchise with its strategic WebSphere portfolio. **By Matthew Cain**

(You may need to sign in or be a Gartner client to access the documents referenced in this First Take.)

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