



There Should be More to Collaboration than Email

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Sponsored by Groove Networks*

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IDC OPINION

Electronic mail is a great communications tool that benefits from extreme ease-of-use and near ubiquity. Like the telephone, email is used to easily connect people across organizational and geographic boundaries. Individuals from multitudes of organizations use email to work together to create and review content, consider options, make decisions, and coordinate all types of business processes. Email is being used by governments to discuss how to bring about world peace and by scientists searching for a cure for cancer. Yet email is being victimized by its own success. Unmanageable volumes of business- and nonbusiness-related email are hampering worker productivity and increasing email storage and maintenance costs. Despite these findings, research indicates most users are not readily adopting the next-generation collaborative tools provided by IT, which provide a more direct, contextual method of collaborating with others. Instead, users continue to rely mainly on email for day-to-day communication and coordination of business processes and projects, especially those that involve customers, partners, and suppliers.

INTRODUCTION

This IDC white paper explores usage patterns and opinions of both email and other collaborative tools within large enterprises, from both a line of business (LOB) and information technology (IT) perspective. In presenting profiles of Groove Networks, its products and customers, this paper offers a look at how desktop collaboration software can embrace and extend email, helping individuals to save time and organizations to save money. The research results and analysis are products of IDC.

Let's begin by defining our terms. Collaboration involves people (employees, consumers, partners, suppliers, customers, experts) working together by sharing (interacting, communicating, exchanging, discussing, coordinating, approving, coordinating) information (documents and other electronic content, action items, tasks, schedules, workflow) and processes (sales, marketing, customer support, engineering, research and development, product development, accounting).

Methodology

To gain insight into how LOB and IT professionals use and think about collaborative tools, IDC conducted focus groups in Boston and San Francisco in September 2002. Twenty-seven managers at organizations with 5,000 or more employees representing various industries participated in three focus groups. The participants discussed various issues, including current usage, strengths and weaknesses of various collaborative tools, unmet collaboration requirements, and the attributes of an ideal collaborative tool. As part of the focus group process, participants also completed exercises where they rated each collaborative tool on a set of fixed criteria. An IDC team synthesized, averaged, and analyzed the results. Here are the key findings.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Email Dominates

Email is the dominant collaborative tool, which is evident from a comparison of the sheer number of business people who use email versus other collaborative tools. At the end of 2001, there were more than 200 million business users worldwide each of standalone email (corporate and hosted systems) and of integrated collaborative environments (ICEs, also known as groupware), which has email as its core functionality. Contrast this to conferencing applications, instant messaging, and team collaborative applications (TCAs, also known as virtual workspaces), each with fewer than 30 million users worldwide.

IDC focus groups revealed that email is used 90–95% of the time when people engage in collaboration. That leaves a mere 5–10% of collaboration time for all of the other collaborative tools to share.

Looking past the user numbers, the IDC focus groups revealed that email is used 90–95% of the time when people engage in collaboration. That leaves a mere 5–10% of collaboration time for the other collaborative tools to share. Why are people likely to choose email more than 9 times out of 10 to work together with other people inside and outside their organizations?

Let's first take a look at the ratings provided by the IDC focus group participants. There are two different sets of ratings — one for IT and one for LOB participants. These groups represent different perspectives and concerns when considering how technology can solve business problems.

IT Perspective on Email

For the IT participants, email is considered more favorable than other collaborative tools in several key areas: reliability, getting through firewalls, system administration, and security. Only in the areas of cost and storage requirements does email fall behind other tools. IT professionals see email as a proven tool that works as expected to

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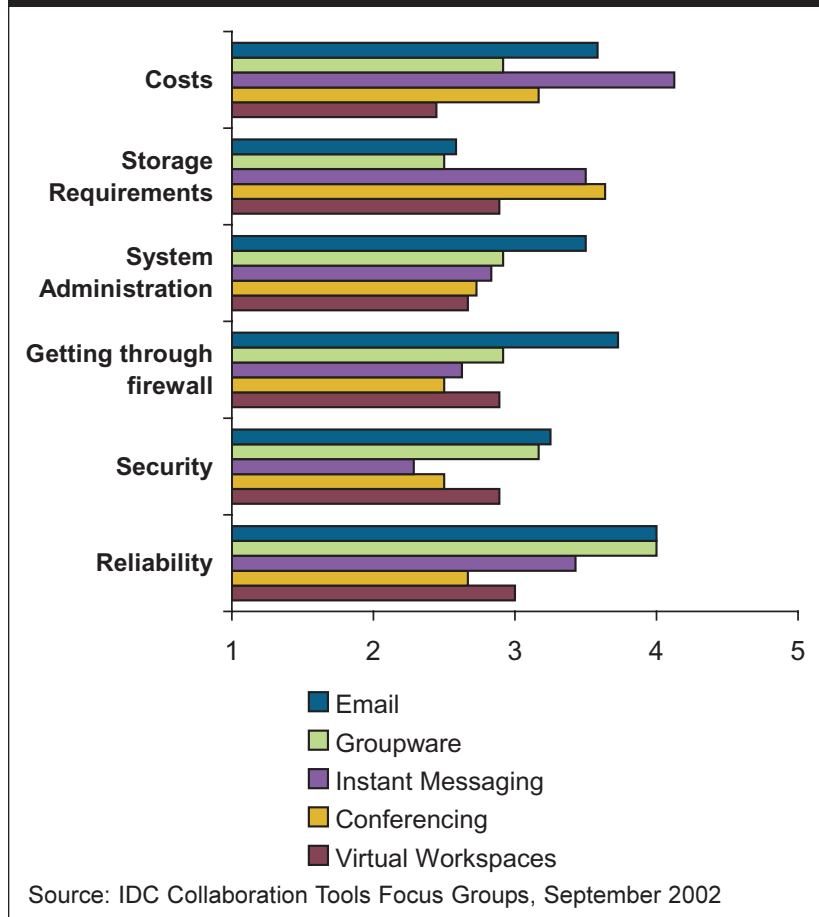
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enable people from multiple organizations to share information. But there is a price to be paid for the success of email. In most organizations, IT groups deploy and maintain an infrastructure of servers, PCs and other access devices, storage devices, and support staff to keep email operating and software versions up to date. IT professionals are intimately aware of the increasing demands that email makes in terms of storage, backup, and recovery (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Collaborative Tools Average Ratings by Type, IT Perspective

Q. How would you rate email and other collaborative tools in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not Favorable and 5 being Very Favorable?



LOB Perspective on Email

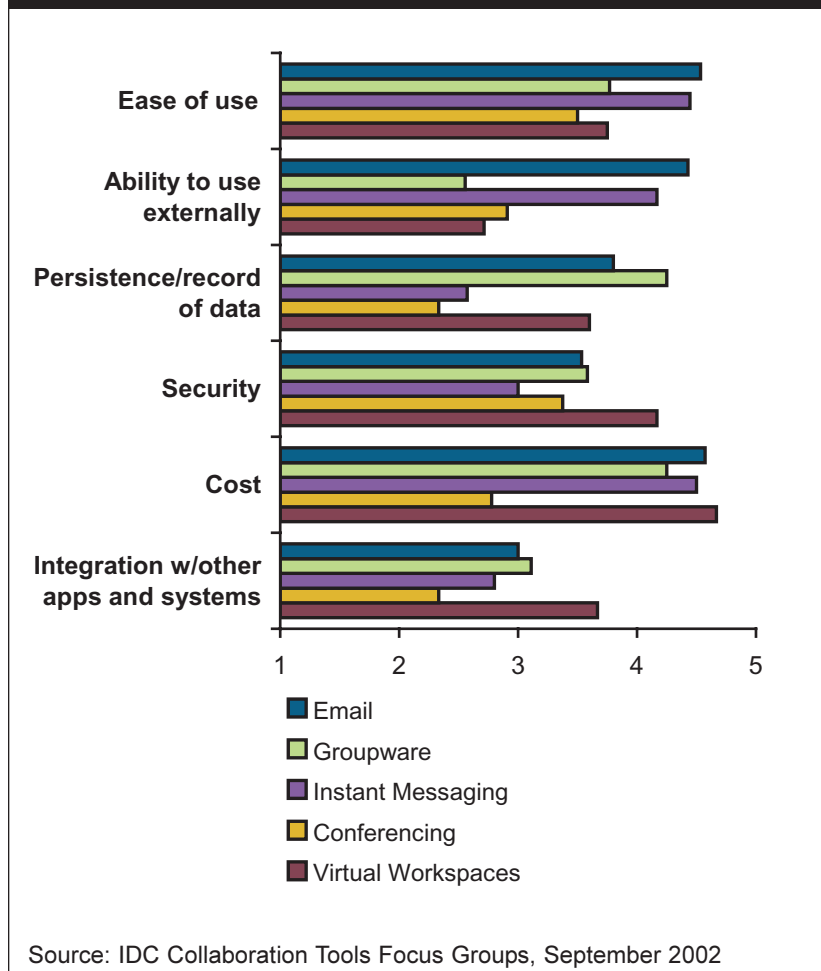
For the LOB participants, email is more favorable than other tools in two key areas: ease of use and ability to use externally, or outside one's organization. Ease of use trumps all other considerations for business managers, a point to be expounded on later in the paper. The favorable rating for the ability to use email externally, especially in contrast to groupware's poor rating, is telling. It indicates that while messaging works effectively through and from outside the firewall, other collaborative aspects of groupware, such as calendaring and

shared folders, do not. IT supported this conclusion, also giving groupware a lower rating for getting through the firewall.

In the area of persistence/record of data or communication, email is given a positive rating, slightly less favorable than groupware, its corporate cousin (see Figure 2). The importance of persistence, which is critical for subsequent access and reference purposes, was also evident. One focus group participant said about email, "You've got a record of it that you can refer to later."

Figure 2: Collaborative Tools Average Ratings by Type, Line of Business Perspective

Q. How would you rate email and other collaborative tools in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not Favorable and 5 being Very Favorable?



Email Has Its Limitations

Though email rated highest in nearly all categories, discussions with focus group participants revealed a number of problems and complaints with email. Email's "sweet spot" in terms of functionality is supporting the exchange of text and attached files between two or

more individuals. When email is used too often, or for interactions that require a richer, communications context, both LOB and IT participants reported problems. The following are ways in which email, while functioning as designed, can actually reduce user productivity and put organizations at risk.

Too Much Like Ping-Pong

Email's asynchronous, store-and-forward operation, supported by mailboxes that are open 24 x 7, is extremely well-suited for enabling people to send text messages with attached files to each other regardless of differences in availability, work hours, or time zones. This model, however, does a poor job of enabling more than two people to share and discuss information and arrive at a decision in a short period of time. Unless everyone involved is ready and waiting for their turn to respond, it can be difficult to compile and keep track of comments or revisions to attachments. Discussions that involve multiple iterations become especially complicated to manage. While requesting return receipts can help determine whether or not a sent email has been opened, an initial "exploratory" email or phone call may be needed to check availability of the recipients required to read the email in a timely manner. The presence and awareness of information provided by instant messaging is one reason why this collaborative tool is growing in popularity among business users.

Too Carefree About Security

As reported earlier, our focus group participants lauded email for its ease of use outside organizational firewalls. In many cases, however, this freedom compromises the security of corporate intellectual property and knowledge assets. Email's ease of use and ubiquity have enticed users into adopting a "don't worry, be happy approach" when it comes to security. Users ignore the fact that most text messages and attachments sent over the Internet can be "sniffed" or deciphered by anyone with a little technical savvy. This is due to the limited availability and relative complexity of secure, end-to-end encryption solutions in the 1990's, the formative years of email development. It is also due to the erroneous belief that email exchanges are just as private as telephone conversations and postal mail. This is how one IT manager described email's security problem: "The users think [emailing] is kind of like sealing it in an envelope, and it's not. It doesn't register that it's a postcard."

Viruses present another security problem. Although most organizations have taken actions to scan for viruses and other malicious code before infected emails reach user mailboxes, the threat remains, and many users are too quick to open email messages coming from addresses that are unknown to them. At the same time, many organizations are willing to let almost any kind of attachment pass through the firewall.

Too Easy to Use and Abuse

The ease at which emails with large attachments can be sent quickly to multiple recipients at no incremental cost often leads to exces-

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sive email content that imposes unnecessary burdens on email recipients. Within enterprises, well-intended individuals sending a business or personal email may without any extra effort copy or "cc" more people than necessary. When the email carries a huge attachment, such as slides or an audio or video file, this action wastes precious time, storage, and network resources. One LOB user described this problem in a remote setting: "If you're traveling, you can tie up your unit for two hours trying to replicate from a hotel. That's extremely frustrating because you're not sure what's out there that you're supposed to be getting. You don't know if it's important or not. "

In the age of the Internet, unsolicited bulk email (aka SPAM) is also affecting email volume. SPAM is the result of legitimate and illegitimate individuals or entities trying to catch a small number of interested parties by using a disproportionately large net. Most focus group participants reported an increase in the amount of SPAM. One IT manager commented: "The biggest complaint I hear from users is the amount of junk mail they get."

Other Collaborative Tools

Looking back at the focus group ratings in Figures 1 and 2, we see that collaborative tools are considered less favorable than email in nearly all areas — by both LOB and IT. One bright spot among the collaborative tools was instant messaging (IM), which LOB participants rated nearly as favorably as email in terms of ease of use and ability to use externally. But an analysis of some of the other positive ratings for collaboration tools reveals confusion and conflicting ratings. For instance:

- IT professionals rated IM and conferencing applications more favorably than email in the area of storage requirements. This reveals a perception — in some cases a reality — that these tools do not enable users to log and store content for future reference or managerial oversight.
- LOB participants rated IM favorably for its ability to use externally. The IT participants disagreed, rating IM poorly in "getting through the firewall." Comments made during the focus groups indicate that, despite IT's discouragement, LOB users are primarily using consumer-grade IM applications, which typically work well through the firewall.
- LOB executives rated virtual workspaces quite positively in terms of security, but poorly in ability to be used externally — an indication that virtual workspaces are seldom used as extranets where security vulnerabilities are highest.

To qualify why most collaborative tools fared poorly when compared with email, the focus group participants were asked to elaborate on their ratings. In analyzing their comments, additional conflicting results were found, specifically between the opinions of LOB and IT. When asked the question, "Why are these tools not more widely used in your organization?" a large percentage of the IT group point-

ed to user unawareness, lack of education, or in some cases, lack of a clear business need. In contrast, many of the LOB participants, when asked the same question, affirmed the business need but cited difficulty of use and unreliability as the key factors preventing widespread adoption. In fact, one of the LOB participants talked about the challenges in getting users to take advantage of new technologies with steep learning curves: "In our case, our IT people are very knowledgeable...they usually are way in advance of the average population. We end up having to force feed some of the tools on people...to [IT] it's all easy and [to us] it's very difficult."

Research Summary

In summary, the central finding of the primary research, both quantitative and qualitative, is that business users gravitate to email to execute 90–95% of their day-to-day business tasks, especially those that involve external constituents. Both IT and LOB participants praise email for its ease of use, persistence of record, and ability to be used externally. At the same time, both groups also freely criticize email for being insecure, inefficient, cluttered with SPAM, and costly to maintain. Yet despite general availability of richer collaborative tools (which have the potential to offset email usage), users are not turning to these tools in large numbers. This is not to say they are not used, but most use cases are intracompany, such as corporate training or expense reporting. Daily usage for interenterprise, business-critical processes is minimal compared with email. Why?

IT and LOB participants offered different perspectives on the answer. While IT claims that lack of education and awareness of the tools is largely to blame, LOB points the finger at the tools themselves, clamoring for more intuitive features and reliable performance. Who is right? Both are, to a certain extent. All enterprise applications require at least some degree of advocacy, education, and training. But, consider the fact that more than 50 million business users use consumer IM services despite IT's discouragement. This shows that users will proactively seek out and use new collaborative tools, if the new tools provide incremental value over existing tools — just as email provided value over phone and fax.

Before we make conclusions and recommendations about these findings, let's take a look at one collaborative solution that is addressing the limitations of email and other collaborative tools. It combines functionality found in email, IM, groupware, conferencing, and virtual workspaces in a single integrated package. Like email, it is easy to use and allows users to work with others inside and outside their organizations, whether they are online or offline. Yet unlike email, this product includes a rich, contextual collaboration experience, is secure by default, and provides cost savings to IT in the areas of storage and maintenance.

Groove Networks

Corporate Overview

Groove Networks is a private company founded in 1997 by Ray Ozzie, who is best known for leading development of Lotus Notes as president of Iris Associates. The company currently has more than 250 employees, primarily in the United States, with a small sales presence in Europe. Its headquarters is in Beverly, MA. To date, Groove has raised \$117 million from Accel Partners, Intel Capital, Microsoft, and private investors led by Ray Ozzie.

Ozzie's decision to leave Iris and form Groove Networks stemmed from his growing frustration with the evolving usage patterns among the Notes customer base. These customers were trying to push Notes in ways for which it hadn't been designed — particularly outside the enterprise. Moreover, simple messaging had become the dominant application of a platform that offered rich collaborative capabilities. This caused Ozzie to question the fundamentals of centralized, application server-based architectures as the basis for dynamic, interenterprise collaboration.

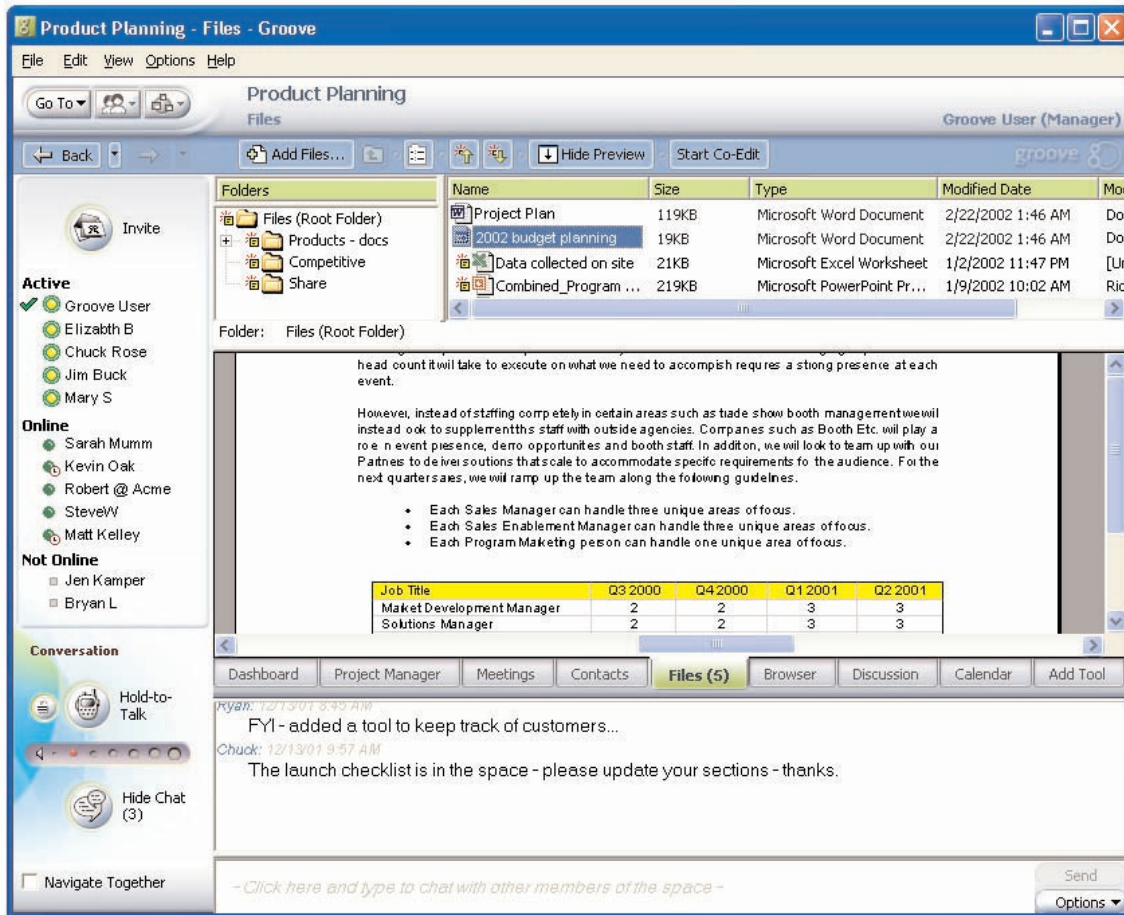
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His response? Groove. Groove's value proposition lies in securely extending rich, end-user driven collaboration beyond the corporate firewall via the public Internet to increase the "return on connection" between knowledge workers and their customers, partners, and suppliers. In today's ROI-centric IT environment, Groove can reduce the "cost of coordination" among groups of people who need to work together.

Groove is both a platform and an application. As a platform, Groove is a set of system-level collaboration services: online/offline data synchronization, end-to-end auto-encryption, dynamic network adaptability and firewall traversal, and LAN/WAN presence awareness. These services can be embedded into existing or new applications to add a collaborative dimension to any business process.

Groove Workspace, the first application of the Groove platform, is a team collaborative application, or virtual workspace, discussed earlier in this paper. Unlike most applications in this market, which store workspace content on a server accessible via a Web browser or dedicated client, Groove content is "decentralized," residing on the hard drive of each user's desktop or laptop computer. Because Groove is decentralized, it provides users persistence of data even while offline and enables them to easily collaborate inside and outside their organizations — two critical attributes according to focus group participants. Furthermore, because all Groove shared spaces, tools, and data are on the desktop, users don't need any IT assistance to initiate a workspace with other users. Creating a Groove shared space is designed to be as easy as creating a new Microsoft Word document. End users can even use email to invite users to Groove "shared spaces" or to start a new space by pulling in text and files from a Microsoft Outlook or IBM Lotus Notes email message (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Groove Shared Space



Source: Groove Networks, 2002

Groove Workspace allows two or more users to share documents and information, communicate, and do things together inside a shared space. On the fly, end users choose from a palette of intuitive collaborative tools (file sharing, discussion, calendar, meetings, project manager, and others) to suit the needs of the interaction, project, or process. Groove Workspace ensures all data inside the shared space is always synchronized and encrypted. It also gives users the flexibility to work in real time, in different times, or even while offline.

Though Groove is decentralized, it offers customers access to centralized management services for controlling client license deployment, policy management, and component provisioning. The company also hosts a relay service, essentially a store-and-forward message router, which facilitates bandwidth allocation, WAN presence detection, continuous cross-firewall connections, and offline usage. Both relay and management services can also be hosted on premise by large enterprises.

In October 2001, Microsoft invested \$51 million in Groove and is relying on Groove to provide Microsoft customers with offline and cross firewall usage for Microsoft SharePoint Team Services sites.

Microsoft Relationship

In a short time, Groove Networks has gathered an impressive group of partners to share its vision. The most significant of these partnerships is with Microsoft, based in large part on Microsoft Office and .Net integration. In October 2001, Microsoft invested \$51 million in Groove and is relying on Groove to provide Microsoft customers with offline and cross-firewall usage for Microsoft SharePoint Team Services team sites. The company has partnerships with other independent software vendors, including Autonomy, Documentum, Intraspect, PTC, and a group of custom and enterprise solution providers.

Sales Model

Groove Networks' direct sales team focuses on sales of Groove client and server software to Fortune 1000 companies and other large organizations. The company relies on its Web site for sales of client software and services to small businesses and individuals and offers a free Preview Edition, giving people the ability to become familiar with the tool before purchasing.

Let's take a look at how a few customers have turned to Groove to improve the way their users collaborate internally and externally.

Pfizer — A Groove Customer

Pfizer Inc. (Pfizer) is a global company founded in 1849 in the pharmaceutical, animal, and consumer healthcare product markets. In 2001, it had \$32.3 billion in revenue. It currently has more than 90,000 employees in over 150 countries, with headquarters in New York City, New York.

Like other firms, Pfizer believes that a collaborative tool or mechanism is key to productivity. To support goals such as reducing the time to market for its pharmaceutical drugs and facilitating the expansion of its consumer and animal health businesses, the company began looking for a new collaborative tool to augment Microsoft Exchange and other tools. With an eye on its existing tools, the company set a goal of finding a new tool that would help people actually work together, rather than merely create file dumping grounds. The tool needed to offer a more natural way to collaborate that would be a good fit with business processes and provide better access for external users without the complexity and time involved in setting up workspaces in a demilitarized zone (DMZ). Pfizer's corporate IT group began a pilot with Groove in early 2002 to support a major project to help create a global IT infrastructure and continues to use Groove for that purpose.

The company decided to make a \$60 billion acquisition of Pharmacia Corp. This created a great opportunity and pressing need for using Groove to enable IT people from both Pfizer and Pharmacia, as well as outside consultants, to work collaboratively on the transaction and the integration of the two organizations.

A funny thing happened to Pfizer on the way to deployment after the pilot. The company decided to make a \$60 billion acquisition of Pharmacia Corp. This created a great opportunity and pressing need for using Groove to enable IT people from both Pfizer and Pharmacia, as well as outside consultants, to work collaboratively on the transaction and the integration of the two organizations. The next step is for the IT group to show other groups within Pfizer, who work with external entities, such as research and advertising firms, how

Groove can be used. It expects to highlight how to easily and quickly create and later tear down workspaces in which content can be developed jointly and securely.

For Pfizer, Groove software's inclusionary approach to security is important. Pfizer considers this to be much better and tighter than traditional server-based security that is based on a policy of exclusion, which requires blocking all possible ways that known and unknown individuals can attempt access. Only those individuals who need to access a Groove workspace are aware that it exists because it is not advertised on the Internet the way traditional server-based tools provide access to their shared workspaces. A combination of encryption on the PC and the network and the fact that Groove only sends changes instead of complete files adds to the security of the Groove content.

In its first year of use, Groove has served the company well by providing a way for people inside and outside of Pfizer to create workspaces and to work both online and offline in a simple, secure fashion. The company has been pleasantly surprised at how quickly uptake among users has happened. People have gotten up and running and established processes using Groove with little training. In the future, Pfizer is looking at providing users with help in defining a use case that looks at what problems the people are looking to solve, what people are to be included, and what processes should be established. This will be done in part through super users within groups that are beginning to use Groove. Translating the business process vision into how the tool can support that vision is key to how Pfizer will maximize the value of Groove.

HP — A Groove Customer

Hewlett-Packard (HP) is a global company found in 1939 in the consumer and business technology solutions and services markets. In 2002, HP merged with Compaq. In 2001 it had \$81.1 billion in revenue (HP and Compaq combined). It currently has more than 120,000 employees in 160 countries, with headquarters in Palo Alto, California.

Like other large multinationals, HP is increasingly dependent on communication and collaboration both internally and with partners. The problem of information overload is compounded by the decrease in time available to make and execute decisions. The challenge is to overcome silos and other barriers to effective communication and interactions with people in other time zones and geographic locations. Becoming a trusted advisor to customers requires improved relationships and even more reliance on the partner value chain.

Before HP can attain the next level of operational excellence and financial success, it recognizes that it must address this problem: finding and accessing valuable knowledge held by individuals or groups within the organization. The solution: create a knowledge culture that fosters and rewards those who generate and share knowledge.

In totally rethinking its knowledge architecture, HP's Services groups realized early on that decentralized, or "edge-based" computing will be increasingly important. The only product on the market that met HP's core fundamental criteria for a dedicated collaboration tool was Groove. In 2001, HP began using Groove and it is now in use within HP Services by marketing, sales, project management, consultants, technologists, solution architects, as well as clusters within corporate and other groups.

Groove is enabling ad-hoc, self-organizing geographically dispersed HP teams to take advantage of secure cross-domain collaboration. The result is 60% less time coordinating and more time producing quality work in responding to RFPs.

An example of how Groove is used within HP is the way its Consulting & Integration Services group is better able to respond to request for proposals (RFPs) and manage client projects. Groove is enabling ad-hoc, self-organizing, geographically dispersed HP teams to take advantage of secure cross-domain collaboration. The result is 60% less time coordinating and more time producing quality work in responding to RFPs. It also gives the teams the ability to handle more deals by providing tools for more efficient management of client projects.

Another area where Groove is expected to shine is in adding collaboration services to other platforms. As a major user of Microsoft SharePoint Team Services and Portal Server, HP sees in Groove a way to enable users of these products to work offline and then synchronize when they reconnect to the network. HP expects that its internal users as well as clients will benefit from Groove's ability to distribute information from central repositories, such as SharePoint, to the edge of the network where users can collaborate on the content.

Neutrogena — a Groove Customer

Neutrogena is a company founded in 1930 in the skin and hair care product markets. It was acquired in 1994 by Johnson & Johnson (J&J) and had \$600 million in revenue in 2001. It currently has approximately 800 employees worldwide, with headquarters in Los Angeles, California.

In its efforts to become a billion-dollar company and to increase collaboration, Neutrogena began to incur significant corporate charge-backs for networking and computing services due to skyrocketing costs caused by large file sizes and increased storage needs. The company looked to IT for a solution that could support its mission of increasing collaboration while reducing travel and network services charges.

Fortunately, one of the integrators that was helping to roll out SAP software within the company introduced the IT group to Groove. After researching Groove and other options, Neutrogena chose Groove because it provided a solution with support for online and offline access to integrated messaging and collaboration — group calendaring/scheduling, project management, file transfer and access, instant messaging, and online meetings. The company had been accustomed to sending its users to two to three places for this functionality and content. Groove integration with Microsoft Outlook was also a plus, as was the option of running Groove as a hosted service, enabling the company to test it without getting involved with a lengthy infrastructure process.

The initial business areas in which Groove was deployed included marketing, public relations, Web development and management, and project management. In the future, IT plans to champion Groove to additional internal departments, including sales.

Neutrogena finds that its employees can quickly learn to use and get up and running with Groove. Due to the differences between Groove and other tools, such as email, the company is providing training and encouraging changes in work behavior so employees "go to Groove, put information in Groove, and look at Groove."

The company believes the use of Groove has led to greater efficiency, fewer phone calls, and fewer emails with attachments, which has meant lower network chargebacks.

The company believes the use of Groove has led to greater efficiency, fewer phone calls, and fewer emails with attachments, which has reduced network chargebacks. Unlike in the past when people missed meetings and other events, with Groove everybody — internal users and external partners alike — is on the same page in terms of keeping up to date with project and other information.

EDS — a Groove Customer

EDS is a global company founded in 1962 in the IT services market. In 2001, it had \$21.5 billion in revenue. It currently has more than 140,000 employees in 60 countries, with headquarters in Plano, Texas.

EDS is in the IT business and is always investigating new products. As part of its knowledge worker initiative, EDS specifically seeks tools for capturing and using intellectual capital and managing content in internal projects such as customer migrations and in external projects to help customers maximize existing IT investments. Starting in 2001, EDS Solutions Consulting began looking at Groove and running informal pilots. When Groove released version 2.0 in mid 2002, EDS began to work with Groove to develop connectors to document management systems. This would enable EDS and its customers to back up and restore knowledge management content generated through collaboration and to populate Groove workspaces with project-based work templates

With Groove, EDS individuals can work effectively off-line and teams are able to turn around proposals with multiple iterations within 1–2 days.

Some of the initial groups to use Groove at EDS are the messaging and collaboration consultants and a few project teams that deal with customers. These teams consist of engineers and salespeople who need to respond to RFPs and to manage and implement new solutions offerings for customers. Faster than expected, these teams have adopted Groove and adapted their work habits to fit the tool. For example, the teams used to rely on email and fax for group reviews of proposals and alliance agreements, which could take several days. This process made it difficult to integrate changes in response to feedback and resulted in limiting review to one time of one version of the document. With Groove, EDS individuals can work effectively offline, and teams are able to turn around proposals with multiple iterations within 1–2 days.

Groove's approach to security is a key reason behind EDS's decision to pilot the product. For EDS, Groove provides the ability to use the same Groove shared space to collaborate internally and with cus-

tomers and do so securely with the help of an encryption scheme that can go through firewalls while maintaining high levels of security.

Groove keeps EDS users focused on the tasks at hand by having all of the content and tools in one place. By contrast, email can distract users with the frequent arrival of new mails relating to many different projects or business areas. The effectiveness of email as a business tool at EDS has been affected by EDS limiting the size of attachments to emails relayed between EDS employees and external clients due to bandwidth and delivery time concerns.

EDS recognizes that the rapid success of Groove to date is due largely to its many engineers and developers who are good at understanding the use cases that deliver the greatest value. More sophisticated than the general population, these users quickly adopted the straightforward Groove user interface and began sharing information and suggesting new ways to do things. In rolling out Groove to other internal groups or to clients, EDS expects that it would provide guidance and training on using Groove.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Predictions and Challenges

In 2006, more than 60 billion emails are expected to be sent daily worldwide. Although more than half will be person-to-person emails, the remainder will consist of SPAM, email alerts, and notifications. This potpourri of email messages will challenge people's abilities to use email as an effective and efficient tool for communication and collaboration.

In 2006, more than 60 billion emails are expected to be sent daily worldwide. Although more than half will be person-to-person emails, the remainder will consist of SPAM, email alerts, and notifications. This potpourri of email messages will challenge people's abilities to use email as an effective and efficient tool for communication and collaboration. As a result, we expect to see a significant increase in the use of collaboration tools, such as virtual workspaces and real-time conferencing tools. These tools will be where teams come together to get work done rather than relying solely on the increasingly cluttered and context-free email inbox. For this to happen, these virtual workspaces will have to continue to focus on ease of use and the ability to be used inside and outside the organization — the key reasons why email remains the collaboration tool of choice today.

The rise of other collaboration tools does not mean that email is dropping from sight. Email will provide a place where people who are not currently logged into a workspace receive information, such as notifications of changes in their workspaces or of task assignments that are overdue. For users of Groove, notifications appear in the system tray to avoid the need to sift through email.

There is a growing need to support effective external collaboration as more work gets done across company and organization boundaries, and as more employees work remotely. Telecommuting and travel between worksites and to customer locations is increasing to the point where knowing how to access corporate systems from outside one's own company firewall is becoming a basic skill that most workers will need to be effective in their jobs. According to an IT manager in the focus groups, "80% of our staff's on laptops because

everybody travels." Unlike in the past when the pockets of mobile professionals could be identified and supported with limited resources, effective and secure offline and mobile access to collaborative content and functionality will need to be available to and capable of supporting almost every worker.

ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

When the IDC focus group participants were asked to describe a dream collaboration tool, the most common responses were as follows:

- Easy to use
- Reliable
- Secure
- Integrated with email

To maximize the chances that a collaborative tool will actually be used, it must have these four key characteristics.

Easy to Use

A collaborative tool intended for a broad audience must be intuitive enough for people of all skill levels to quickly and easily start using with little to no training. Otherwise, it will not be used by enough people to generate the critical mass of users needed for individuals to rely on it as a way to get work done. A key to this is to minimize the need for IT group involvement once the tool is deployed. Otherwise, there is a risk that users who were initially attracted to the tool will stop using it because of the efforts needed to address new projects and other requirements.

Reliable

When dealing with actions that are done more than once or twice, people prefer to use reliable tools that can be trusted to work each time the action is repeated. Each time a tool works as expected, the users are reassured that their trust in the tool, as well as in the IT departments and suppliers that provided it, is justified and should continue. Each time a tool does not work as expected, the opposite happens and after a while, the tool is labeled as unreliable. This label can mean the end of a promising tool.

Secure

There is no such thing as absolute security, and the laws of diminishing returns seeking the highest possible levels of security are inefficient. Accordingly, instead of asking whether something is secure, the better question is whether it is secure enough. This requires a careful balancing act of the realistic chances and potential harm from a breach of security on one side and the incremental financial and complexity costs involved in making it more secure on the other side.

Any collaborative tool that is looking to build a customer base, even if someday it will surpass email in usage, will need to start by acting as an extension to email.

Integrated with Email

Email is currently and will likely remain the dominant collaboration tool for the foreseeable future. The email or groupware inbox is where most of the collaborative communications, contacts, and other content are located. Any collaborative tool that is looking to build a customer base, even if someday it will surpass email in usage, will need to start by acting as an extension to email.

CONCLUSION

Organizations should recognize that email is the beginning but not the end of collaboration. Collaborative tools such as Groove that are easy to use, reliable, secure, and integrated with email represent the future of how work will be done effectively online. These tools provide an integrated environment supporting communication in context, thereby reducing the overall "cost of coordination," and should be considered for deployment as IT groups and LOBs seek to increase productivity and decrease costs.

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