IBM fosters realtime collaboration and improves responsiveness with IBM Lotus Sametime 3.

Overview

- **Challenge**
  Enhance realtime employee collaboration and productivity; increase responsiveness to customer needs; reduce travel expenses

- **Solution**
  Upgrade enterprisewide collaboration platform to IBM Lotus® Sametime®, Version 3

- **Drivers**
  Reduce costs, streamline communications, boost responsiveness, enhance collaboration functionality and performance

- **Key Business Benefits**
  2% to 5% reduction in business travel; estimated $4 million per month in savings; potential savings in system maintenance costs; greater than 4% reduction in telephone usage; reduced load on e-mail servers; significant reduction in TCO by leveraging existing hardware to support 30% increase in transaction capacity and additional functionality; improved employee productivity and team collaboration; enhanced competitive advantage through heightened responsiveness to market demands and superior quality of enterprise-proven solutions

According to leading industry research, IBM Lotus Sametime is the standard instant message (IM) solution for more than 70 percent of large organizations that have established an official corporate IM platform.[1]

In the high-tech community, the largest and one of the most successful IT companies in the world—IBM (*www.ibm.com*)—has become well known for its collaborative business culture. By providing realtime, dynamic collaboration capabilities to its 300,000 employees, IBM enables them to benefit from each other's insights and share knowledge resources. This, in turn, helps the $86 billion company take maximum advantage of its employees' combined strength and effort.

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>
> *—Craig Garfinkel, Project Manager for Lotus Product Introduction, IBM*

Key Components

Software

- IBM Lotus Sametime, Version 3 (now branded as IBM Lotus Instant Messaging and IBM Lotus Web Conferencing)
- IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Enterprise Edition, Version 7.2

Servers

- IBM @server xSeries™ 340

Services

- IBM Global Services

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—Johnny Barnes, Vice President, Global IT Infrastructure, IBM

According to Matt Broomhall, program manager, collaborative software at IBM, one crucial resource that has facilitated and reinforced the company's global teamwork is its enterprise collaboration infrastructure. A key component of that infrastructure is Lotus Sametime—IBM's market-leading instant messaging and Web conferencing software. Notes Broomhall: "Sametime fits right in with our business processes and strategies. It gives us a competitive advantage, by enabling us to respond quickly to market conditions with an agility that helps us thrive. The robust conferencing functionality that Sametime provides has enabled IBM to reduce business travel by 2 to 5 percent, saving our company more than $4 million per month."

Recently, IBM upgraded its worldwide instant messaging infrastructure to the latest release of Lotus Sametime, Version 3. According to Craig Garfinkel, IBM project manager for Lotus product introduction, "Sametime had brought powerful gains to our enterprise. We wanted to expand on those strengths—and continue to enjoy the results—by further improving the product, based on user feedback from inside and outside our organization. The upgrade to Sametime 3, together with our associated infrastructure enhancements, will further boost employee productivity across our enterprise. It will deliver a 30 percent improvement in transaction capacity and significant gains in availability and response time—with no additional investment in system resources. We expect the increased capacity and better performance of the new release to reduce our equipment and maintenance expenses considerably. What's more, the new version of Sametime reduces our total cost of ownership by enabling our existing hardware infrastructure to support vital new functionality such as instant presence-awareness options and backend support for the DB2 data management platform."

The value-add of proven solutions

Johnny Barnes, vice president, global IT infrastructure at IBM, says the enterprisewide migration has delivered another powerful benefit. "We enhanced Sametime in response to the needs of one of our largest and most demanding customers—our own workforce," Barnes says. "By addressing those needs along with those of our customers worldwide, we have reaffirmed IBM's ability to deliver powerful solutions that have been proven in the uncompromising user environment of a huge global enterprise. This mitigates risk for our customers and spares them from the cost of testing and development."

Broomhall agrees: "Throughout the industry, customers make demands and vendors eventually meet them—all the while perfecting their offerings at the customer's expense. But when IBM implements its own product internally, we become our most demanding customer. That forces us to define the most stringent requirements possible—and to deliver results that consistently surpass them. Our ability to carry out that process in as large and diversified an organization as IBM, is the value-add that goes into every IBM enterprise-proven product and service before it is brought to the table."

As the time approached to upgrade Sametime enterprisewide, IBM's business transformation team—which reports directly to the company's chief information officer—asked the Lotus Product Introduction (LPI) group at IBM to provide stress and functionality testing of the upcoming version prior to the rollout. LPI worked closely with IBM Global Services to test the software, using its own internally developed tools as well as stress-testing utilities created by IBM Lotus Development. To ensure reliability, tests were conducted over the IBM production network using the actual servers that would eventually power the new release of Sametime.

"Thanks to IBM's rigorous implementation approach, this was the most successful technology rollout in our history," Barnes reports. "Our Sametime servers for more than 300,000 users were upgraded in a single weekend. We are currently clocking more than three million instant messages per day, without a hitch. We're confident that if we can create such a transformation in an organization as vast as ours, then we can deliver those kinds of results anywhere," he observes.

Secure realtime collaboration

The Lotus Sametime 3 server infrastructure resides on 16 IBM @server xSeries 340 systems. IBM users worldwide use their Lotus Sametime Connect clients to see which of their colleagues are online so that they can collaborate with them instantly. They can easily see who may be working on the same projects, create personalized lists of team members and colleagues, and control their own online availability through robust user privacy features. Then, using instant messages, they can converse securely with a single person or initiate a chat session involving several people.

Lotus Sametime— extending the reach

As businesses worldwide continue to leverage the power of Lotus Sametime as their enterprisewide messaging and Web collaboration platform, key players in the interactive media and wireless telecom industries are integrating Sametime as part of their service offering.

IBM and AT&T Wireless have recently announced an agreement to enable over-the-air configuration of Lotus Sametime Everyplace and Lotus Domino Everyplace for AT&T Wireless users, through the "AT&T Wireless Business Solutions (ATTWS) for IBM" program.

The Lotus products from IBM will simplify installation for AT&T Wireless's 20.2 million subscribers in thousands of cities across the United States and worldwide. The agreement comes at a time when more companies than ever before are relying on their mobile workforce—and on the collaborative functionality and instant messaging that the Lotus applications provide. AT&T Wireless says ATTWS for IBM will greatly reduce the need for end-user support and training when installing wireless services.

In IBM's implementation, user options such as personalized lists are stored in IBM DB2 Universal Database, Version 7.2, on the Sametime server enabling users to maintain their customized options—regardless of the client from which they access the system. The company is also considering future implementation of the Sametime SIP (session initiation protocol) Gateway, so users can interact with customers, trading partners and suppliers.

The second and final phase of the Sametime 3 rollout, scheduled to begin soon, will involve upgrading IBM's Web-based e-meeting infrastructure to the new release. Using this Web-conferencing functionality, users can initiate whiteboard sessions, make their desktops available to others or share any application. Based on the robust IBM WebSphere® software platform for e-business, the new Web-based conferencing solution delivers improved availability that is expected to increase IBM's number of e-meetings by 25 percent, with potential additional savings in system-maintenance costs.

Applying strengths to benefit the customer

IBM's own product and service groups are finding powerful and innovative uses for Sametime, reinforcing the total solutions they deliver to their customers. For example, as part of IBM's autonomic computing initiative (which infuses systems with self-diagnosing and self-healing capabilities), IBM @server iSeries™ systems are now being designed with autonomic monitoring capabilities that integrate with Sametime to notify administrators of system problems. And IBM technical support groups have begun to integrate Sametime functionality in Web-based solutions that will enable customers to chat online with first-tier support personnel such as customer service agents and technical support staff.

Barnes concludes, "Like every IBM offering in hardware, software and services, Lotus Sametime was designed to help our customers work more effectively to achieve their business objectives. For IBM, implementing this new release will further strengthen our collaborative potential. This, in turn, will help us to better leverage our technological strengths and global market presence to anticipate our customers' needs and dynamically respond to them."

For more information

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