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Third Parties Back IBM Notes, Domino, Workplace

By [Barbara Darrow](#), CRN

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An array of third parties showed up in person or via [video](#) at Lotusphere to offer support for IBM/Lotus' current and upcoming offerings.

For example, telecom heavyweights Avaya, Tandberg and Siemens will all support IBM's new "Click to Call" [VoIP](#) capability coming up in [SameTime 7.5](#), Notes 7 and the Workplace Managed Client.

"The voice chat feature uses the same [codec](#) as Skype, is built on Eclipse and is fully extensible," said Mike Rhodin, general manager of Workplace, [Portal](#) and Collaboration products.

In addition, a bevy of smaller ISVs were in Orlando, Fla., with their Notes/SameTime/Domino add-ons in hand.

Perhaps most interestingly, Proposion Software, Salisbury, Mass., was showing off its latest data [driver](#) for enabling the flow of Notes/Domino data to Microsoft [.Net](#) applications.

Last week, [Microsoft put its seal of approval](#) on Proposion, including its tool in a package of Domino migration tools.

Also at the show, Trilog Group showed off Darwino, a visual [data conversion](#) tool for transforming Notes/Domino documents into the new Workplace Designer XML [document](#) repository. Trilog is based in Woburn, Mass.

Ottawa-based Cognos announced the availability of Cognos 8 [Business Intelligence](#) Data Modeler for Domino. The tool offers an easy-to-use Wizard interface to ease access of data from Notes and Domino applications and databases. It also taps into WebSphere Portal and the Workplace Managed Client, the company said.

ZipLip is shipping its updated Unified E-mail Archival Suite for Domino. The software is more tightly integrated with Notes and Domino and eases [compliance](#) with [SEC, NASD and Sarbanes-Oxley regulatory requirements](#), said Steve Chan, vice president of business development at the San Jose, Calif.-based ISV.

At the show, the battle for the hearts of minds of ISVs and partners was fully in evidence. IBM and Microsoft are jockeying for position with this constituency, each claiming to be partners' best friend.

Rhodin characterized IBM/Lotus as the once and future king of collaboration and took several shots at Microsoft, which is pushing its combo of Exchange Server, Live Communications Server and SharePoint as the preferred platform for collaboration.

"Many of our competitors are in the audience and we welcome them. It's quite flattering that you're here to listen and learn," Rhodin quipped.

"We've been the leaders in collaboration for 15 years and have no intention of backing down now," Rhodin said. "The component architecture we're doing interoperates with everything."

One IT administrator for a utility said he was relieved to hear no more talk of "the end of Notes." He, like many others, had taken IBM's past message about Workplace as a sign the company was moving off Notes. IBMers deny that there was ever any intention to scuttle the Notes franchise, although they concede that the company's message was muddled at some points.

Gartner analyst Tom Austin said the mood among partners was more upbeat than in the past and that they welcome IBM's feistiness vis a vis Microsoft.

An integration consultant from the Washington area said he was heartened by the SameTime news. Many customers wrestle with interoperability between secure SameTime IM and outside IM users, he said. Aware of security issues with public IM networks, SameTime 7.5 will not allow file transfer

or multiuser chat with people on the public networks, said David Marshak, senior product manager for Collaboration.

"Workplace is a response to SharePoint, but I think it's still confusing people," said ZipLip's Chan. "On the plus side, IBM's done a lot of good work to solidify its positioning and tell people if they're on Domino, stay on Domino. If you're a smaller company and looking at Workplace, go in that direction," he said.

Chan said Notes' traditional strength is in larger companies with customization needs. Workplace is a good response for smaller companies with smaller budgets.

David Ferris, president of Ferris Networks, said the news that SameTime will interoperate with the public networks is important and the Macintosh client support is likewise key for a critical constituency. SameTime 7.5 will add Macintosh and Linux client support for the first time. "They'll offer strong cross-platform support, which Microsoft is not likely to offer," Ferris noted.

As for IM connectivity, IBM will not charge for interoperability between its SameTime 7.5, due this summer, and public America Online, Yahoo, iChat, and Google Talk networks. Microsoft currently charges \$10 a head for such connectivity.

The company "has not determined final packaging on SameTime 7.5, but the expectation is that the gateway will be part of the SameTime server vs. a separate product," said Ken Bisconti, IBM's vice president of Workplace, Portal and Collaboration products.

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