

Notes 4.6 Client Overview

[Editor's note: This article resides in "Iris Today", the technical Webzine located on the <http://www.notes.net> Web site produced by Iris Associates, the developers of Domino/Notes.]

What is the Notes 4.6 Client?

The Notes 4.6 client demonstrates the evolution of the Notes client as a standalone application for managing your messaging, calendaring, Internet and personal information needs. New features include a Portfolio database, enhanced Web browsing, POP3 mail support and a variety of desktop integration enhancements. This release is available for a free trial download from the Notes.Net Web site.

Taking a closer look at 4.6

Much of Notes 4.6 is aimed at making Notes easier to use and providing a greater selection of integration options. In tune with the Notes improved usability theme, Notes 4.6 strengthens Notes' existing ability to store and access classic Notes rich-text documents as well as Web pages, by tapping into the best of other Lotus and third-party desktop products and blending them into the Notes client.

The point is that the client will continue to evolve, at times in sync with the Domino server and at other times as an independent release. We think that this will let us deliver revised clients that keep up with the changing technology landscape in a more timely manner. At the same time, Lotus and Iris will continue to improve on the Notes client interface, making it easier and more productive to use. "Our focus is to remove usability barriers," said Robby Shaver, Notes 4.6 design engineer at Iris. "Notes 4.6 is one step in that direction. It's a harbinger of things to come."

Specific Notes 4.6 client features include:

- **Internet client integration**
 - use Microsoft's Internet Explorer as your in-place Web browser
 - access your POP3 Internet mail directly from Notes
- **Desktop integration**
 - use Lotus WordPro or Microsoft Word for Windows as your alternate Notes mail editor
 - take advantage of OLE enhancements in the Microsoft Office document library templates
- **Notes as a Personal Information Manager**
 - use the new Personal Portfolios to access and search several databases from one central database
 - manage and view all your personal contacts using improved features in the Personal Address Book
 - share information seamlessly among mail memos, calendar entries, and your to-do list
 - print your Calendar schedule in a number of different ways

Internet client features

The whole Notes 4.6 development team has kept a keen eye on the Internet and 4.6 is the result of this attention. Keeping with the theme of tight integration between Notes and the Internet, the team has added a series of Internet features that gives you even greater access to Internet services while taking advantage of Notes powerful client interface.

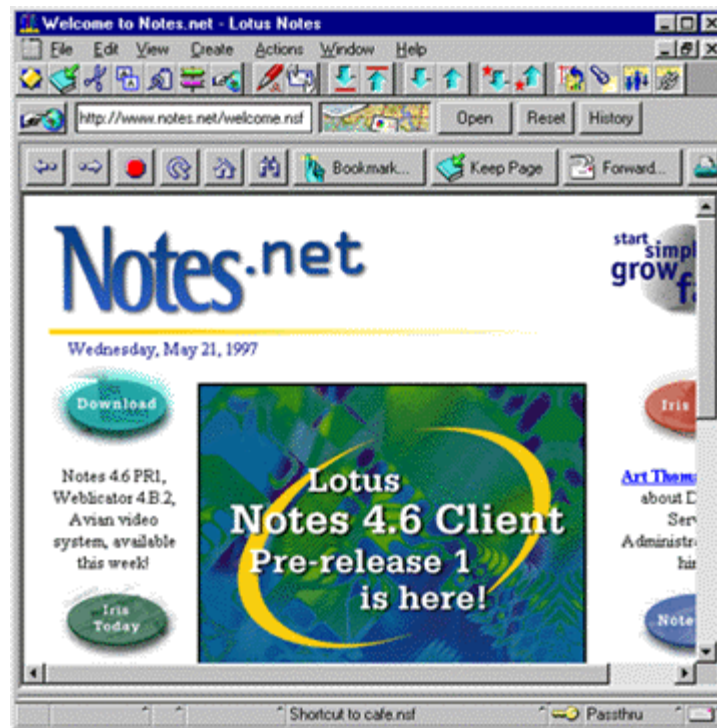
Internet Explorer integration

Take the Web Navigator, which is the built-in Notes Web browser. Starting in Notes 4, we supplied a Server Web Navigator that let you connect to Web servers and display HTML pages as Notes documents, all from within a shared, server database. In Notes 4.5, we provided a Personal Web Navigator that allowed you to browse and save HTML documents in your own personal Notes database. Both of these products allowed you to browse Web sites while disconnected from the Internet.

However, many of you were already familiar with other third-party browsers. While in Release 4.5 we let you call up an alternative browser such as Netscape's Navigator (and even supplied it and Microsoft's Internet

Explorer free with Notes 4.5), you couldn't use IE or Navigator and still save these pages automatically to Notes databases.

That's changed. With Notes 4.6, you can run Internet Explorer as an ActiveX component, giving you the best of both worlds. Browse with the powerful IE and save IE pages as Notes documents. "The motivation behind our ActiveX approach is to show how browser agnostic we are," says Jack Ozzie, Notes 4.6 project leader at Iris. "We're currently working with IE since Microsoft happens to have shipped the first browser to come up with an easy-to-use, componentized architecture for various clients. Our ActiveX strategy will let the user have the most possible choices."



POP3/SMTP

Notes 4.6 is far more independent of the Domino server than any previous client release. This is the first client to be released without a parallel server upgrade. You don't even need a Notes server to be able to access your Internet mail and the Web. You can now use Notes as a POP3 client to access any Internet mail server (including the Domino server). Even with an alternative back-end mail server, however, you still use the same mail interface and store your POP3 mail to the same local Notes database as you would with regular Notes mail. "One of our strengths is the mail interface," says Iris' Jack Ozzie. "Users want to work with the same interface whether accessing POP3 mail through their ISP at home or regular Notes mail from their organization's Notes mail. As a user, I'd like to have the same continuity between work and home with a consistent, unified, high-quality interface. That's what Notes 4.6 brings to e-mail picture."

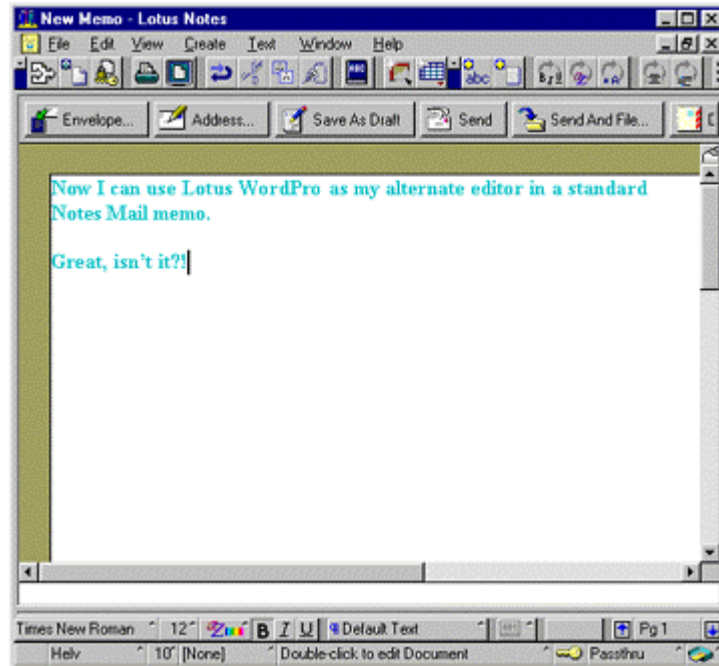
The POP3/SMTP mail support also highlights another Iris and Lotus dedication to independent client and server development. 4.6 is the first client to be released by Lotus that does not have a corresponding server release. "Separating client and server development has let us more quickly bring new technology to market without being tied to a new Domino server release," said Blair Hankins, development manager at Iris. "This makes it possible for our development teams to more quickly respond to changes in client technology and introduce client versions."

Desktop integration

Making it simpler to integrate work with the Notes client was another key area of focus for the Notes 4.6 developers. This includes giving you alternatives to the Notes built-in, rich-text editor as well as making it easier to do basic tasks such as creating personal groups.

WordPro and Word integration

Jack Ozzie and his team extended Notes' Active Doc support to work with alternative editors. With Notes 4.6, you have the choice of using Lotus WordPro or Microsoft's Word for Windows as your Notes e-mail editor or rich-text editor. 4.6 mail and other templates are even included as menu options for automatically using one of these other editors when creating a new document.



Automated Personal Group Creation

We've made it simpler to create personal groups from existing documents in your mail file. By just selecting one or more messages or tasks or appointments, you can automatically create a group. The group's members will come from the names listed in the To:, From: and CC: fields for your mail documents. According to Ryan Jansen, application design engineer for Iris, "This makes it a lot easier to create groups by just selecting documents and creating groups with just a few keystrokes."

Updated Microsoft Office 97 Document Library Templates

Ryan also worked on the new MS Office 97 templates that now let you work with Office's Active Doc applications. Similar to using Internet Explorer as your Notes browser, when you launch Excel or Word for Windows or other MS Office applications, you can do in-place editing. This makes it easier to navigate between Notes and Office applications since the Notes menu bar becomes integrated with the MS Office application. "You stay in the Notes environment but work seamlessly with your MS Office application," said Ryan.

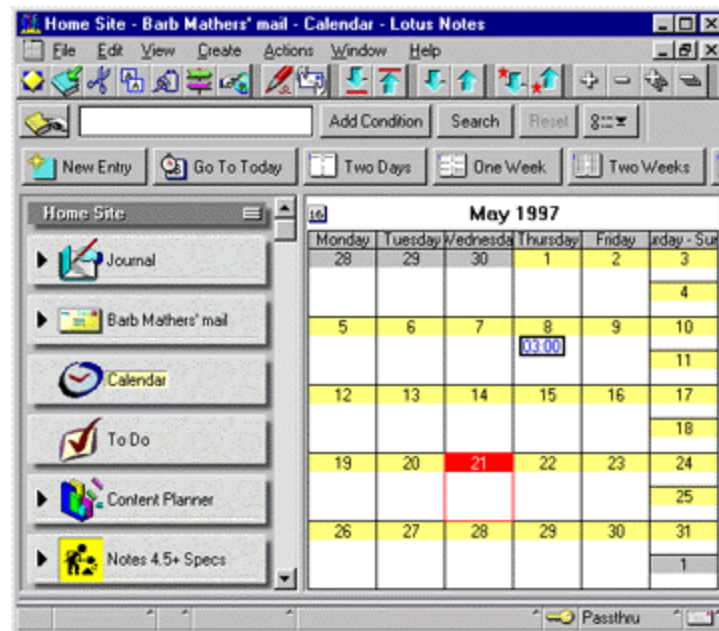
Notes as a Personal Information Manager

We have spent a lot of time making Notes the premier groupware product that it is. In Notes 4.6, we have added more features to make Notes more useful for managing your information.

Personal Portfolios

Using the Personal Portfolios, you can consolidate several of your most frequently used databases and work with them as if they were a single database. You work with the databases using a new graphical Portfolio navigator. Besides visually organizing your most frequently used databases, Notes also lets you perform cross-database actions such as full-text searches. Rather than opening each database and performing a search, Notes will automatically search your entire Portfolio if you like.

"Most people using Notes work with a number of groups of data everyday," said Robby Shaver. "So we thought, 'Let's make it real simple to say this is my collection of stuff and I can access this collection a click away without it mattering where I am.'" Portfolios can incorporate classic notes documents, address book, Web sites and discussions to name but a few.



Contact management

You can now use the personal Address Book as a true contact management system. We've totally revamped the Person document to make it easier to enter, store, categorize, and display your contacts. We've added support for "auto-parsing" of names, phone numbers, and addresses, meaning that you enter the information in one field and Notes automatically figures out how to break apart the individual elements and store them in the appropriate fields (for example, entering John B. Smith places John in the first name field, B. in the middle name field, and Smith in the last name field.) We've also added a new Business Card view to allow you to categorize and display your contacts for easier lookup. And, we're providing Action buttons that directly correspond to common actions you'd perform, such as selecting a person in the View and clicking the "Write Mail message" to have Notes automatically create a message with the correct address filled in. Or, you can select one or more people and click "Schedule meeting" to create a meeting invitation with the invitees filled in.

Finally, we've added full printing support to the Calendar view in any document, so that you can print out your calendar to take along with you. You can print the Calendar in any of the time ranges that you want, such as daily, weekly, monthly, etc.