



**Level:** All

**Works with:** Lotus Workplace, Notes/Domino

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The Lotus Workplace product announcement on November 5, 2003 in Boston started with breakfast, but even if you got there while the scrambled eggs and bacon were still hot, Workplace wasn't exactly new news. The story began at Lotusphere last January with the announcement of Lotus Workplace Messaging.

Before your coffee could cool off, Lotus Software General Manager Ambuj Goyal had announced updates to Lotus Workplace Messaging and another product introduced over the summer, Lotus Workplace Web Content Management. And he added two new ones to the list—Lotus Workplace Team Collaboration and Lotus Workplace Collaborative Learning.

By lunchtime, if you were a Domino/WebSphere developer or administrator who had been thinking maybe you'd skip Lotusphere next January, it was becoming obvious that maybe you should think again—Lotus Workplace is bigger than just email; there's a lot to know about it, it's important to Lotus, and it's going to be important to you.

If your reaction to all this was, "Back up a minute, what's Workplace?" you weren't alone, and you were in the right place.

The morning's program was designed to bring you up to speed. Goyal laid out the roadmap for Workplace and Domino. Larry Bowden, vice president of Lotus Workplace products, went into the product details. Roy Bowen, stalwart Lotusphere presenter who's now on the Workplace team, did the demo, and Cees van der Woude, Lotus Workflow guru who's also moved over to Workplace, led a Q&A session that went more deeply into product capabilities.

## Goyal: Moving the installed base into the future

Goyal tackled the issue of what all this meant for Notes/Domino head-on. One of his first slides included the heading "Domino 8" (prompting the inevitable question later on, "What happened to Domino 7?" Answer: It's coming in Q4 2004, and Domino 8 in 2005). His point was that IBM Lotus is committed to Domino for the long term, and he delivered a vision statement that spoke at length about IBM's historic focus on its installed base. Workplace isn't about leaving the Notes/Domino base behind, he said, but about leveraging open standards to move that base of users into the future.



That future, as he laid it out, will deliver collaborative computing built on:

- A choice of clients from mobile devices to browsers to Notes to a new Eclipse-based rich client (read "Linux")
- Portal-oriented UI that provides single sign-on ease of use with a high degree of security
- Development that goes beyond hand coding to drag-and-drop "programming by assembly"

Beyond the four Workplace products that were belles of the morning's ball, Goyal polished up the Lotus crystal ball to give glimpses of 2004's coming attractions. These included the rich client (actually "a rich open client platform for connected and disconnected access" which will also be delivered as part of Notes 8); mobile device support; a new product called Workplace Collaborative Document Management; and, of special interest to developers, Workplace Assembly Tools, also referred to as Builders. More on all this will doubtless fill the air at Lotusphere.

#### **The products, the platform, the plan**

Larry Bowden followed up with more details on the Workplace products (see the [press release](#)) and the value proposition for portal-based collaboration, which stresses what WebSphere Portal provides: A roles-based single point of interaction that simplifies administration, provides a common user interface, serves a variety of clients, and builds on companies' investments in open standards—J2EE, LDAP, SQL, Web Services—and, of course, Domino. He described Lotus Workplace as a collaborative platform and assembly tools.

Roy Bowen's demo of the products showed off the collaborative platform (if not the assembly tools, which maybe we'll see more of at Lotusphere). Some highlights:

- Lotus Workplace Messaging 1.1 has been upgraded beyond the simple browser-based email of 1.0 to include "awareness" features that let you see who is online, calendar and scheduling functionality, an enhanced address book, and, very important for many of us, a spellchecker.
- Lotus Workplace Team Collaboration 1.1 provides instant messaging, multi-user chat, and Web conferencing that lets a presenter give a Powerpoint presentation without any special client-side software. Team spaces provide awareness, threaded discussions, and controlled document sharing.
- Lotus Workplace Web Content Management 1.1 adds an integrated way to share the creation and management of Web content within the Lotus Workplace secure, roles-based environment.
- Lotus Workplace Collaborative Learning 1.1 is the next release of IBM Lotus Learning Management System (which is the J2EE version of Lotus LearningSpace). It supports the management of both an organization's classroom-based and e-learning programs, resources, and course materials.



On top of this platform of applications, Lotus is already building some specific business solutions with more in the works: Lotus Workplace for Retail Operations and Lotus Workplace for Business Controls and Reporting were announced this summer. One of the slides in the presentation added a third: Lotus Workplace for Collaborative Case Management. These bring together collaboration features of the Workplace applications with products from other vendors, like the Crystal Decisions portlet and Thomson-Dialog portlet, within the WebSphere Portal environment.

#### **Getting from here to there**

After the obligatory coffee break, Cees (say "Case") van der Woude ran a session for Business Partners to go a little deeper into the products and features and to handle questions. Because Domino will be around for the long term, he observed, the long-term challenge will be to weave together Domino and Lotus Workplace. Already, he said, there are some indications of how this will happen. He put up a slide headed "Ways to include Domino applications in Lotus Workplace." His list includes:

- Out-of-the-box Domino portlets
- Portlet Builder for Domino
- XML access to Domino view data
- Lotus Collaboration components in WebSphere Portal Extend
- Domino JSP tags
- Domino Java API
- Partner products like Bowstreet's Portlet Factory
- Domino Web Application Portlet

(This last item is something new, due in the first quarter of 2004, said van der Woude. It will be a reverse proxy portlet that will work with any Domino application developed for the Web, intelligently managing problematic things like framesets.)

This list also furnishes the table of contents for a new Red Book van der Woude recommended to the crowd, "[Portalizing Domino Applications for WebSphere Portal](#)." (While I'm throwing out URLs, here are a couple more

[www.lotus.com/ldd/today.nsf](http://www.lotus.com/ldd/today.nsf)

very useful Workplace links for developers: an LDD Interview, "[The Lotus Workplace preview with Jeff Calow](#)", and an IBM Software News article, "[The front end of e-business on demand—Lotus Workplace](#)".)

## **Back to the future**

The product announcement underscores the importance of Workplace to the Lotus community. Last year at Lotusphere speakers stressed how being part of IBM was giving Lotus access to a much larger code base as the company encouraged the horizontal migration of functionality across its software divisions. But last year that was just talk: Last year Workplace was just Workplace Messaging, a product described as "kiosk-based access to email for factory-floor workers," which didn't make it sound very strategic. This year Lotus Workplace Team Collaboration and Lotus Workplace Collaborative Learning move core Domino functionality into the Portal environment. That sounds very strategic indeed. Cees van der Woude's list gave the crowd something to chew on in addition to the traditional press-conference pasta salad and turkey croissants at the post-announcement lunch—and it will probably turn up again soon on the program for Lotusphere 2004. See you there.