



Colligo Extends Microsoft Collaboration Technologies Offline

Going mobile? By 2009, industry analysts estimate that mobile workers will make up 70 percent of the workforce in the U.S. alone. Already, U.S. retail sales of laptops have surpassed PC sales (comprising 50.9 percent in 2005) with no let up in sight. This mobility trend poses a key challenge to IT departments — they must now increasingly support an occasionally connected workforce. Further, with more and more applications moving exclusively online and collaborative portals, such as Microsoft® SharePoint® requiring a constant connection to the server for online access, mobile users who are traveling and working offline, are finding they are simply cut out of the collaborative loop. Colligo Networks set out to change this situation and enable laptop users to be as productive away from the Internet as they are when connected.

Colligo Networks | At a Glance

Business: A leader in offline collaborative solutions for mobile workers.

Challenge: To enable laptop users to be as productive offline as they are online.

Solution: Working closely with Microsoft, its software extends the value of existing enterprise collaboration platforms to users who need to work offline.

Key Benefits: Its products unlock the power of collaborative applications offline.

Addressing Collaboration Challenges Faced by Mobile Teams

According to market research firm Gartner, collaborative tools are becoming a top priority for CIOs because of the increasing need for teamwork in today's high performance organizations. Yet many of today's highest value employees are finding it hard to take advantage of these tools because they are spending more and more time working on laptops offline, disconnected from the collaboration server for part of their workweek. As a result, their productivity suffers, their frustration increases, and their company does not gain the benefits it had expected in the first place.

"We constantly hear complaints from mobile workers who feel they are less productive on the road than they are in the office because of the limitations of 'online-only' tools," explained Barry Jinks, President, CEO and Co-Founder of Colligo, adding that "Our core belief, and the consistent thread through all our products, is that to increase mobile worker productivity you need to make products that work reliably with or without an Internet connection."

Colligo Networks — the brainchild of Barry Jinks and Brent Bolleman — was formed in April 2000 to address the collaboration challenges faced by mobile teams and to create offline extensions of online collaborative applications. Early in the company's history, the founders were joined by senior architect and product visionary, Nick Sawadsky who now heads up the technical development. In response to a significant customer problem, the Colligo team developed technology to enable users of IBM Lotus Notes to replicate their databases directly between laptops without the need to connect to the Domino server.

Adding a New Offline Productivity Dimension to Microsoft Windows Users

The team subsequently set their sights on the huge Microsoft user base by developing a product that

enables Microsoft Windows® laptop users to connect over ad hoc wireless links to share messages, files, folders, and resources. Colligo Workgroup Edition enables mobile teams equipped with WiFi-enabled laptops to instantly and securely create server-free, peer-to-peer wireless networks — so they can work together electronically without cables and remote servers at client sites or on the road. Once connected, users can share files, an Internet connection, and a printer, and collaborate on a document, chat, compare calendars, and much more. This capability is critical for mobile teams — professional services, sales professionals, and government agencies (emergency response teams, military, and other agencies) — that need to instantly and securely share information with their team members, but don't have access to an Internet connection or online collaborative portal.

Since its launch in 2001, the Colligo Workgroup Edition product line has attracted a user base of more than 125,000 and earned numerous industry awards — including a 2006 Technology Week Editor's Choice Award for product functionality and value.

Taking the Microsoft SharePoint Opportunity — Offline

Early on, Colligo saw the collaborative advantages of Microsoft SharePoint. Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services is a versatile technology that organizations and business units of all sizes can use to increase the efficiency of business processes and improve team productivity. With tools for collaboration that help people stay connected across organizational and geographic boundaries, Windows SharePoint Services gives people access to the information they need. This rich collaboration platform allows a variety of content types to be shared in document libraries, standard lists, and custom lists, then organized using elements such as metadata and views. SharePoint Workspaces can act as a hub for project activities of geographically dispersed teams from one company or different

companies since they can be accessed through a corporate network or over the Internet.

Until recently, the rich features of SharePoint have only been accessible through a browser. Colligo was determined to change that.

It all started in late 2004 when Colligo identified a large untapped market for offline SharePoint products after completing a detailed market analysis study. While it recognized that it had limited experience with Microsoft server technology, as a Microsoft Certified partner at the time, Colligo received invaluable help from Microsoft Canada. The Microsoft Canada team provided high level architectural support and even the funding for subcontractors to assist in the development of the initial proof of concept.

According to Colligo Product Architect Nick Sawadsky, "When we started to look at the underlying technical issues, it was apparent there was a lot of work to do. We were pleasantly surprised when Microsoft offered to help out."

Jinks, President and CEO added, "The feedback gained from customers and partners that tested the prototype confirmed our early beliefs and gave us the confidence to proceed."

According to Jinks, "Our first relationship with Microsoft started in late 2002 when, because we were an early adopter of ink technology, Bill Gates demonstrated Colligo Workgroup Edition on stage at the launch of the TabletPC in New York City. Shortly thereafter, in 2003, we became a Microsoft TabletPC Premier Partner." The company then became a certified partner in 2004 and a Gold Certified Partner in late 2005. In early 2006, Colligo was invited to join the Office 2007 Technology Adopters Program (TAP). Also in 2006, it became a "High Potential ISV" Managed Partner.

By 2006, the Colligo team was ready to take on

its latest challenge — making collaborative portals based on Microsoft SharePoint accessible to mobile workers offline.

Its products, Colligo Reader for SharePoint and Colligo Contributor for SharePoint, extend the productivity gains that SharePoint provides by directly synchronizing most of the online workspace elements to a rich client on a user's laptop. These products enable information to be organized, presented, edited, and saved in an offline workspace just as it is online.

In fact, Colligo changes the way project teams use SharePoint. Rather than having to work online or copy files one-by-one to their laptops to work offline, Colligo automatically synchronizes SharePoint content in the background to mobile team members' laptops when they are online — so when they disconnect it is always available for them to edit and access through a rich client offline. Once re-connected, Colligo for SharePoint automatically and securely synchronizes changes made on the laptop and server while ensuring that conflicting versions are handled correctly. Colligo enables mobile workers to continue to enjoy many of the features and productivity benefits of SharePoint when they are working online or offline — anywhere.

In February 2006, Colligo released Version 2.0 of the Colligo for SharePoint product family to support 2007 Microsoft Office System and Windows Vista™. In addition to enhanced SharePoint compatibility and an improved user experience, Colligo Contributor 2.0 contains a new capability to drag and drop Microsoft Outlook® emails into SharePoint document libraries, automatically capturing important metadata (e.g. To, From, Subject, Date, etc.) and attachments.

According to Rob Bernard, General Manager, Worldwide ISV Group, Microsoft, "Our partners

play a vital role in the early adoption, development, and delivery of Microsoft technologies. By working closely with partners like Colligo Networks we are helping to provide our mutual customers with a high quality product, seamless technology integration, and improved user experiences."

The Microsoft Advantage: Creating a Market for Offline SharePoint Products

For any start-up with limited resources, launching a new product family can be a daunting task. Co-Founder Brent Bolleman understood early on that a targeted campaign was needed to bring visibility, credibility, market presence, and subsequent sales of Colligo's SharePoint product family. For this campaign to succeed, Microsoft would have to play a role.

Said Bolleman, who heads up Strategic Marketing for Colligo, "We needed to get close to the right people at Microsoft and their partner community to help us understand the product roadmap and to gain access to the SharePoint customer base. The Microsoft Emerging Business Team (EBT) was a catalyst for us. They introduced us to the appropriate contacts within the Office product team and recommended us for a number of marketing programs. These activities jump started our product launch."

Microsoft EBT also helped to spread the word about Colligo. The company was one of 33 startups profiled in the Microsoft's Innovation Starts Here, Volume 3 brochure. During the extensive beta program for the SharePoint product line, blogs written by Cliff Reeves, General Manager, .NET Platform Strategy and Microsoft Emerging Business Team, and Dan'l Lewin, Corporate Vice President, Strategic and Emerging Business Development, not only drove traffic to Colligo's web site and blog (www.offlinesharepoint.com), but also garnered validation and credibility. This contributed to the success of Colligo's six-month beta program, which involved more than 250 companies that pro-

vided valuable customer requirements and feedback during the product development process.

"Our beta program put us on the right track to launch a great product line and enabled us to develop a strong sales funnel," said Jinks. "In large part we have Microsoft to thank for creating the spark that has triggered our success with this program so far."

Value of Partnering with Microsoft

Colligo is a Microsoft Gold Certified partner and has participated in a number of programs focused on the Office 2007 release. The company says that Microsoft's partner programs have provided it with unparalleled value as it continues to develop its SharePoint product family with capabilities in Office 2007. "Being part of the partner program is very important to us as it helps us continue to innovate in line with Microsoft's developments," commented Jinks. "We're currently working on new features that will enhance our support for SharePoint 2007 and Microsoft Office 2007 to take our products to the next level."

Today, Colligo's solutions are deployed in more than 50 countries and in many large enterprises, such as Grant Thornton and PricewaterhouseCoopers in North America, Europe and Asia.

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