New Solution Extends E-Business

Novell's DirXML Links Business Data Across the Enterprise

Thanks to a new directory solution from Novell, organizations will soon be able to link together all of their critical business data throughout the enterprise for easy use in electronic business applications.

This week at the Catalyst Conference, Novell demonstrated, for the first time, a new software solution called DirXML that extends the capabilities of Novell Directory Services® (NDS[tm]) 8. This new solution seamlessly links and manages all the places where business and network information is stored, including software applications, network operating systems, databases, and network devices.

FIRST OF ITS KIND

This is the first solution based on a directory that not only brings all data together, but also keeps control of the information with the individual departments that own the data. DirXML will connect all data without the need to modify existing software, allowing companies to build on their existing technology investments.

"DirXML is more than a standard meta-directory-it eliminates the barrier between e-business and enterprise directories," said Christopher Stone, senior vice president of strategy and corporate development for Novell. "As opposed to existing offerings, Novell's DirXML uses XML to make it easy to support all data sources including ERP systems and meta-directory solutions from other vendors. Our goal is to connect all the data on the network to enable enterprise companies to expand their electronic business opportunities."

Partner companies are already lending support to this new solution. So far, the list of supporters includes Bowstreet, Bulletproof Corporation, Compaq Computer Corporation, enCommerce Inc., Entrust Technologies Inc., HAHT Software, Intracus, ISOCOR, Netegrity, NetPro, Oblix Inc., Unimax Systems Corporation. Read the statements of support from these partners.

WHAT DirXML DOES AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A directory stores and manages user identity, network, and application information on a computer

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network, and application information on a computer network. According to the industry analyst firm The Burton Group, most large corporations have at least 100 directories and software applications where data is stored, including human resources databases, corporate e-mail address books, computer account databases, and phone extension listings.

Many of these applications contain the same information, causing administrators to duplicate efforts as they maintain the data integrity, consistency, and accuracy of the various directories. DirXML will allow companies to automate business processes by sharing and reusing the common data between various application directories, saving time and money.

"Novell has taken a unique and innovative approach with its meta-directory solution," said Jamie Lewis, president of the Burton Group. "DirXML increases the number of roles NDS can play in an enterprise directory infrastructure by giving customers more flexibility when it comes to deployment. And because Novell used XML as a foundation element in its meta-directory architecture, customers and developers can also integrate directories and applications in important ways, leveraging NDS as a part of directory-enabled and e-business solutions."

HOW IT WORKS AND HOW IT'S DIFFERENT

With DirXML, companies will be able to automate current business processes by storing their business data in the directory and allowing customers, partners, and suppliers to access certain existing data based on security rights defined in the directory. DirXML makes it easy for companies to define which business data in their enterprise can be accessed by electronic business applications.

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Support from Partners

Intracus:
"Novell's DirXML brings forward the next tier of directory benefits, bringing business critical information more readily to the desktop."

NetPro:
"We are very happy to see the value of NDS increasing so rapidly with the introduction of powerful solutions like this, as it allows us to expand the use of our technology."

enCommerce, Inc.:
"We applaud Novell's continued commitment to providing technologies that fully leverage varied enterprise information resources and by doing so, extend e-business application capabilities."

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Most importantly, DirXML gives e-business applications access to a rich set of business data and paves the way for a new generation of directory-based electronic business applications.

DirXML will go beyond connecting systems, which is what typical meta-directories aim to do. "Existing meta-directory products are immature, difficult to implement, and often use proprietary connector technology," explained Paul Corriveau, product marketing manager for Novell. "NDS integrates so many systems, directories, and applications that we can now take directory services to the next level: we can integrate application data, while most directories integrate only user account information."

DirXML eliminates barriers between directories so companies can rely on NDS to manage relationships between all the information in the directory and electronic business applications. Customers and application developers will not be required to learn proprietary software programming languages to implement DirXML.

Novell's solution allows each database owner, such as a human resources department or accounting division, to maintain their database and keep the information secure and accurate.

"DirXML makes a organization's application data more valuable," said Corriveau. "Companies can define a rich subset of data to expose to e-business supply chain partners and applications."

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BASED ON XML

DirXML is based on the widely adopted open industry standard eXtensible Markup Language (XML). XML is widely used as an Internet programming language for developing Web pages, and can also serve as a common language for network data, providing diverse applications with a common frame of reference.

"Because it's based on XML, DirXML will enable companies to connect multiple databases and applications without the need to modify their existing software-thereby getting the most out of their technology investments," said Corriveau. "DirXML will be simple to implement, inexpensive to deploy, and easy to integrate for application developers."

WHEN IT WILL BE AVAILABLE

A beta testing version of DirXML will be available for customers to evaluate in the fourth calendar quarter of 1999. The final product is expected to ship in 2000 and pricing will be announced at that time. The first version of DirXML will support Novell's NetWare® 5 and Microsoft NT operating system environments, with support for Sun Solaris and Linux platforms to follow soon after the initial release.

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Instant Navigator GO

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