

Aragon Research

Author: Jim Lundy

Topic: Collaboration

Issue: Who are the collaboration providers and how will they evolve?

Siemens Makes a Bold Move To People-Centric Collaboration With Project Ansible – But Others Are Following

Summary: *Siemens Enterprise Communications broadens its UCC scope with Project Ansible, and steps up the level of competition in the UCC space.*

Event: On July 16, 2013, Siemens Enterprise Communications officially announced “Project Ansible” as its next generation collaboration platform.

Analysis

Project Ansible is a result of a 2-year effort working with an external design firm, getting specific user data on how people like to work and communicate. Based on WebRTC, Ansible is Siemens’ vision for a contextual, people-centric, social unified communications and collaboration (UCC) platform unified by a single user interface.

WebRTC integrates video, voice and text into browser pages. While its potential for next-generation browser-based communications is promising, Ansible is the first big move by a major vendor to really implement it for the enterprise.

Key Features

Ansible focuses on the conversation, and gives interactions a great deal of persistence. In fact, its meetings never end, but automatically become shared spaces with all the associated files and conversation artifacts such as text, voice and video.

Ansible includes contextual search across all communications and collaborative interactions, including social content, emails, text messages and transcribed voicemails. Expertise search and location is included to find relevant content and experts in real time.

Ansible provides a single unified application view, so users won’t need to switch between different application interfaces for different types of communication across multiple devices.

Ansible will have connectors for out-of-the-box integration with business applications such as salesforce.com as well as Microsoft, Google and other social networking platforms. Siemens will need to build these for all business applications from the likes of SAP and Oracle.

Others Are Moving Fast On Similar Visions

This is a bold move in a proprietary and usually closed market devoid of real interoperability. However, while it’s a refreshing initiative with great innovative features, Siemens has a short window to deliver on it. Ansible will not be available for limited customer trials until the end of 2013, and not generally available until mid to late 2014. Although WebRTC and the unified user interface are good differentiators, Siemens doesn’t yet have a shipping product. Meanwhile, other vendors are moving forward with similar visions of merging social and real-time collaboration with business processes.

In fact, most UCC, business application and social-network vendors are expanding their portfolios to integrate multimode collaboration with business processes and applications. For example, Citrix with Podio now lets users merge

real-time with social in the context of business processes (see Aragon First Cut 2013-FC3, [What Enterprises Should Learn From Citrix Adding Podio](#)). Although Microsoft is further behind in this unified vision, it's betting on Office 365 with Yammer and real-time integration as its bid to realize this vision (paid subscribers see Aragon Research Note 2013-21, [Yammer Becomes The Primary Social Network For Microsoft Office 365](#)). Finally, just this week, Telligent announced it would acquire the Zimbra assets from VMWare. Here we have a social networking company adding email and other collaboration capabilities in a move toward a unified vision of a better user experience.

Collaboration is about people. Building people-centric platforms that get in the flow of how people work and help them get their work done is the next-generation paradigm for this market. Siemens' vision is unique, but others are emerging. Vendors who move slowly will be left behind.

Aragon Advisory

- Siemens customers interested in Project Ansible should request detailed information on the availability and extent of the limited trials later this year.
- Non-Siemens customers should also get detailed information on Ansible and compare it to their incumbent vendor's collaboration vision and roadmap.
- Non-Siemens customers should also evaluate all the social UCC products that are currently available.
- Enterprises should develop people-centric collaboration strategies that include social, UCC and business process integration and get in the flow of how people work and interact.

Bottom Line

Project Ansible is a great move by Siemens. It will light fires in the broader collaboration market. However, given the length of time before this product will actually ship, Siemens needs to educate the market on the advanced benefits and why it will be worth the wait until 2014. Siemens must chart a course of integration with existing platforms and deliver a solution-based message with use cases on where Ansible will make a difference and help people work better.

Related Aragon Research

- [Siemens and The Journey Beyond UC: Social, Real-time and Business Processes Unite](#)
- [What Enterprises Should Learn from Citrix Adding Real-time to Podio](#)
- [Polycom Takes Bold Steps to Transform the Video Era](#)
- [Salesforce buys Rypple, Signals Move into HCM](#)
- [Crowdsourcing Market Forecasting: The Open Forecast Project](#)