

Aragon Research

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Topics: Social Software, Collaboration

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

Cisco Partners with Jive for ESN, Drops WebEx Social

Summary: Cisco announced that it would partner with and resell Jive Software. It also announced the end-of-life of WebEx Social, its internally developed ESN.

Event: On May 1, 2014, Cisco and Jive Software jointly announced the new relationship via separate blog posts.

Analysis

Instead of leaving the social software market altogether, Cisco made a shrewd move to partner with market leader Jive Software to enable its customers and partners to leverage Cisco UCC offerings with Jive. The Jive offering will be resold with Cisco Services. This change marks the end of Cisco's WebEx Social offering, which had some significant enterprises using it, but faced challenges internally.

The Cisco-Jive relationship helps both companies on several fronts. First, it helps anchor Cisco's collaboration portfolio with a market-leading ESN offering, Jive. This is critical since the trend is toward the contextual integration of collaboration products.

Jive had previously acquired Meetings.io, which had real-time and UCC-type capabilities. This partnership with Cisco brings into question the future integration of those capabilities, as they will overlap.

Jive does benefit from Cisco's vast ecosystem of partners, which will enable further penetration into enterprises. Cisco UC products are strategic infrastructure investments for enterprises, and

this relationship with Cisco will bring Jive into more long-term strategic enterprise relationships.

Countering Microsoft

The plan's biggest benefit to both firms is that it establishes a formidable alternative to the Microsoft Yammer/Office 365/Lync bundle. While Jive and Cisco were each doing well in their respective parts of the collaboration market, combining their forces makes for a much higher and more impactful story.

Video and Social – Better Together

One potential benefit of the partnership is the integration of more video into the Jive ESN. Two years ago Aragon Research declared this the Pervasive Video Era, and while business users have clamored for more video, the industry has been slow to offer capabilities outside of pure video content management (VCM).

The End of Cisco WebEx Social

WebEx Social faced issues, both as a product and also with regard to culture at Cisco. While some very big customers had purchased and deployed WebEx Social, the Cisco salesforce struggled to embrace it. Jive and Cisco have indicated that many current Cisco WebEx Social customers would be transitioned to Jive, which makes sense.

For Cisco, even having Jive on the Cisco Services price list will not remove the challenge of selling software-based solutions, which takes a consultative approach versus selling millions of dollars of network or wireless infrastructure. Cisco has proven that it can do this, but it needs to do so on a consistent basis.

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprises that have WebEx Social need to develop an exit strategy.
- Enterprises should look at the benefits of the combined offering from Cisco and Jive Software.
- Enterprises should also look at how others offering UCC or real-time collaboration products and services can integrate them with other related offerings, such as social networks.

Bottom Line

This is the era of contextual collaboration, and the need to buy every collaboration product from the same vendor is over. The partnership between Jive and Cisco will give enterprises a strong set of options when evaluating solutions for social collaboration.