

Title: Lotus Sametime for Developers Podcast Series

Podcast: #3

Abstract: Listen to these three podcasts and learn from two technical experts about how you, as a developer, can use Lotus Sametime in your organization. Dan Kehn from the ISV Technical Enablement organization and Dave Schlesinger from the Sametime Development team answer questions for those of you who are current Lotus Sametime users, as well as those who aren't very familiar with the benefits of Sametime from a development perspective.

Some of the questions that will be answered include:

- What is new in Lotus Sametime 7.5.1 particularly interesting to Developers?
- How you can extend Lotus Sametime Connect?
- What types of helpful information can be found in the SDKs IBM provides?
- What kind of background a developer needs in order to take advantage of the ability to extend Lotus Sametime Connect?
- What resources are available for developers to learn more about Lotus Sametime?
- What are the relationships between Lotus Sametime Connect and other Lotus products like Lotus Notes and Lotus Expeditor?
- How are partners taking advantage of the ability to extend Lotus Sametime Connect?
- How can I access Lotus Sametime Connect plug-ins that have already been built?
- How can plug-ins be rolled out to user communities?
- And many more!!

Be sure to listen to all three parts, to get the most up to date information about how you and your organization can get the most out of Lotus Sametime.

VEILLEUX: Hi, I'm Susie Vaer from the Lotus Marketing Team. Thank you for joining another podcast geared at developers who want to learn more about Lotus Sametime.

We've got Dan Keen from the Lotus Technical Enablement Team and Dave Schlessinger from the Sametime Architecture Team here with me to answer some questions we think you probably have about using Sametime in your development organization.

Our first question goes to you, Dan. What about Sametime as a platform can help an organization improve its ability to collaborate?

KEHN: That's a good question, Susie. Thanks for asking. It's funny because I'm working with some recent co-ops in our department and they made a comment the other day that e-mail is for my parents; it's really it's IM is what it's all about.

And in all seriousness now, instant messaging is business critical because we need to react faster. We have a workforce that's spread out. So that's really helped with collaboration. And built in with that is Web conferencing abilities. It reduces the need for traveling or face-to-face meetings.

But, you know, there's nothing really surprising there; that's what you'd see in just about any IM product. What's unique about Sametime is, is it's design from the ground up to be extensible. That means you have the ability to build plug-ins which can then access business functionality but within the context of a collaborative environment.

On top of this is it can integrate with the applications that you work with every day. You know, the obviously example is Notes 8, which is coming out very soon. But it also can integrate with applications that you might not traditionally consider for collaboration. For example, in the upcoming release, it integrates with Microsoft Office via smart tags or Outlook extensions.

Finally, there's others, the ways that it integrates. So like IM communities that you can access via the Sametime gateway -- again, another way that we can collaborate that's more effective in today's business environment.

One last point I should point out is that new with the 7.5.1 is built-in voice over IP, a click to call capability. You can reduce your reliance on the traditional phone but still have access to conferencing facilities that it's had in previous releases.

VEILLEUX: Great, Dan. So you just took us through some of the value you can get from Sametime as a platform. What about those people who are currently Sametime users? Can you talk a little bit about why they would want to upgrade to Sametime 7.5.1?

KEHN: Yes, I mentioned just a moment ago about the voice over IP, the click to chat capability. But there's also a click to see where you can do voice, I'm sorry, video, video between two people right out of the box.

In addition to that, with Notes 8 you're going to see that same capability within the side shelf that you can use. We've added some platform support on the client: Macintosh is now supported, Microsoft Office integration via smart tags.

And to make the usability of the product to enhance that with each release, we've added a new view called Primary Buddy, which instead of showing the contact list as traditional hierarchical view allows you to organize the people you work with most frequently in a more natural fashion.

And following the trend in browsers today, the chat history, I'm sorry, the chat UI, has a way of tapping together the different people that you're working with rather than having an explosion of windows.

On the server side, we've added a silent install and also there's a one-click install for plug-ins so if you want to distribute your plug ins to users, you can provide them with a URL that will handle all the steps to install plug-ins.

We've added server side support for Linux, and one thing that's important to our compliance third party vendors is enhanced chat logging. So for example you can log not just text, but also binary data that might pass through the Sametime server.

VEILLEUX: Great, thanks Dan. Dave, I'm going to turn to you now. Can you talk a little bit about the significance of Sametime being based on Lotus Expeditor and how it relates to Eclipse.

SCHLESINGER: Sure, Susie. So Lotus Expeditor is IBM's platform for rich client applications. The Lotus Expeditor name was new last year, but Expeditor is actually based on existing technology, and it's really an evolution of the WebSphere Everyplace deployment platform and the Workplace Manage Client platforms.

What Lotus Expeditor provides is a subset of the Eclipse rich client platform. It adds a number of services on top of that and it also adds a custom run time environment to run

Java.

There's also an Expeditor version for mobile platforms, but Sametime today doesn't make use of that. Sametime 7.5 and subsequent releases and Notes 8 are both based on the Lotus Expeditor platform.

Sametime 7.5 includes a subset of the Expeditor platform that includes only the services that Sametime uses to help keep the footprint of Sametime Connect manageable.

The same components that are available in the Sametime 7.5.1 Connect client are also included with Notes 8 and Expeditor 6.1.1 so that as you write plug-ins for Sametime 7.5.1 those plug-ins will also run in Notes 8 and Expeditor 6.1.1.

And the relationship to Eclipse is that Eclipse is a very widely used, open source development platform. A lot of people are familiar with Eclipse, there's a lot of information out there on Eclipse.

People can leverage their Eclipse programming experience to build Sametime plug-ins and take advantage of all of the information that's available online. And, in many books on the subject, and including one that my colleague here Dan wrote.

KEHN: Thanks a lot for the plug, Dave. Appreciate it.

VEILLEUX: All right. I've got a related follow up question for Dave. Sametime uses Expeditor's JCL desktop as its runtime environment. Why doesn't it use a standard Java runtime environment?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, Susie, well JCL desktop is, provides most of the capability of a standard Java J2SE 142 runtime environment, but it has a much smaller footprint than the standard runtime environment. It's almost like 30 megabytes smaller than the standard runtime.

JCL desktop is also highly optimized so it offers better performance than the standard Java 142 run time. For Sametime Connect both performance and footprint were very important to us.

You know, previous releases of Sametime Connect prior to 7.5 were fairly small, C++ applications and in adding Java and Eclipse and the entire Expeditor platform we wanted to make sure that we kept the size of the client down to a minimum.

The JCL desktop is the preferred runtime environment for Expeditor applications but some Expeditor applications do use other Java runtime environments. For example, Notes 8, which is based on Lotus Expeditor, also uses a standard IBM Java, or 1.5 Java runtime environment.

VEILLEUX: Thanks, Dave for that detail. Dan, I've got another question for you. Lotus Notes 8 has Sametime functionality included with it. How is that functionality different from what a user gets in the standalone Sametime client?

KEHN: Actually, the good news is that there's no code difference at all. If you're running the Sametime Connect client, the standalone version, it's the same code that is integrated into Notes 8. However, there are differences in licensing.

In the Notes 8 license that comes out of the box, you have just basic IM features of the client. But with the purchase of additional Sametime licenses the administrator can

enable these advanced features that we were talking about just a moment ago.

But the base code though remains the same, and that's good for developers because if they develop a plug-in for the Sametime Connect client standalone product, it will work just as well in the Notes 8 client.

VEILLEUX: Dan, that was great, thanks for that clarification there. I've got a different for you Dave. It's a little bit changing gears. There's a lot of resources out there, one of them being the Sametime SDK download. There's a whole bunch of toolkits that are included in that download. Can you tell me what's inside of some of those toolkits?

SCHLESINGER: Oh, sure Susie. So the Sametime SDK is a collection of all of the different client and server toolkits that are available for the Sametime platform.

Prior to the 7.5 release of Sametime, all of those toolkits were available as independent, separate toolkits. There was no single package that contained everything. And you'd go and you'd get the ones that you needed.

For 7.5 we thought it would be better to sort of combine everything into one package partly because we were adding some new toolkits and the number of toolkits was increasing and we wanted it to be easy for people to find everything in one place.

But we also wanted people to be exposed to all of the different toolkits so that even though you might be interested in producing plug-ins for Sametime Connect, you might see these other toolkits in the SVK that might lead you to try other things that you hadn't originally considered and build different kinds of solutions.

So just to summarize what's in there. So we have first the client toolkits which include the Sametime Connect toolkit, and this is the one that provides you with all of the information, documentation and samples that you need to build plug-ins for the Sametime Connect client.

There's a Sametime Java toolkit which has been around for pretty much as long as Sametime as been around. This allows you to build Java applications that access Sametime services.

These Java applications don't have to be Eclipse applications; it can be any standalone Java application or anything, anywhere where Java can run. And you don't have to have the Sametime Connect client installed on your desktop in order to run a Java toolkit application.

Then there's the Sametime Links toolkit, or ST Links, which allows you to access Sametime services from a Web page and it's all based on HTML and JavaScript.

Then we have a number of server toolkits. The Community Server Toolkit allows you to build extensions to the Sametime server itself, Java components that you can run on the Sametime server. And that's really an extension of the Sametime Java toolkit that has additional APIs that are specific to server applications.

We have the Sametime gateway toolkit which similarly allows you to build extensions to the Sametime Gateway Server that was introduced with Sametime 7.5.

There's a Directory and Database Access Toolkit which is similar to the Community Server Toolkit except that it allows you to build sort of a lower level integration but the

Sametime server in both C++ and Java. And that allows you to do things like directory integration, virus scanning for file transfers, chat logging and things of that nature.

We have also an online meeting toolkit which allows you to manage online meetings or Web conferences, and that's an HTTP based API, it's a ReST based API and we also have a monitoring and statistics toolkit which allows you to get information about Sametime service statistics in XML format also if you're HTTP.

And then finally, we have a telephony toolkit which allows you to both access and integrate client and server video and telephony capabilities with Sametime.

VEILLEUX: Great, that was a lot of information, Dave, thanks for all of that. That was good stuff. All right, Dan, I've got a kind of a related question to something Dave was just talking about or mentioned.

A question about integrating applications into Sametime. Can you talk a little bit how, about how a developer who has written a Java based business application can integrate that functionality into Lotus Sametime?

KEHN: Sure, Susie. We have a lot of documentation, examples and articles that are written on developerWorks that introduce you to how that's done. And the good news is that you can kind of enter into it slowly by doing something really simple or you can scale up to something that's more complex.

An example of something really simple is adding a menu choice to either to one of the windows that comes with Sametime or extending a contact or person there to add some custom menu choices that apply to your application.

And that's certainly simple, but to make it more interesting you should try as a developer to think about, how can my users make use of the factor in a collaborative context, like who's selected or something like that, something that's related to instant messaging...

Because with all these extension capabilities it's really tempting to just kind of add things in. And you know, I always joke about, if you're going to create something like, you know, the Soduko death match you might want to think about, what's the business purpose of this, what's the value to my end users, so you should choose carefully.

That said, if you have a Java application that's purely logic, you can run it just like any other, under any other Java application and access your back end data from the Sametime client and then visualize that as necessary within the Sametime client.

In that case, though, you have to think about if you're porting code that has a native Java UI, the same issues you have to deal with as if you're porting to Eclipse. For example, if it's a swing based application, the controls will need to be ported to Eclipse's graphic package and called SDDT.

Also you should be aware as a developer as Dave mentioned just a moment ago, because Sametime uses JCL desktop it's a lighter, faster JRE that doesn't have all the same capabilities that are in JSD 1.5. So if your code was written to take advantage of those features, you might have some extra migration work.

VEILLEUX: Okay, Dan, I've actually got a somewhat related question for you. There's some cool plug-ins available out there. Can you talk about a few of them and tell people how they might access those?

KEHN: I would love to give you a quick plug for the samples that we worked on. They're really not products, they're just samples but they're really popular within IBM and they're available free as a download part of the SDK and also in the code exchange on developerWorks.

One called Recent buddies; another one called Quick Response, are especially popular. But the one that really draws most of our attention is what our partners have created. And we have a Web page dedicated to their offering, it's called the IBM Business Partner Showcase for Lotus Sametime.

And there you can find a lot of cool partner plug-ins. A lot of the ones you'll see will revolve around telephony and video. That's a really growing area for collaboration.

What's nice about it is these products seamlessly integrate into the Sametime environment so you can go from a text to voice to video exchanges really just by clicking a button.

Some of our partners like Avaya, Polycom, and Radvision are offering products in the showcase. And I would like to mention is that while, you know, it wasn't that long ago that IM was text was considered novel. And so the capabilities of voice over IP is still new to some businesses.

Realistically, I think the sort of thing that we're thinking is cool today are going to become standard just like IM using text was considered novel not so long ago.

Closer to my area, I work with a number of partners, and one I just finished up with was Cisco and their development of their voice mail client, as the Sametime extension enabled Cisco IP communicator to directly access their voice mail from Sametime without having to go to another application. And there are other examples that you can find in the business partner showcase.

VEILLEUX: Great, thanks for that Dan. I'm going to now point, another related plug-in question to you, Dave. Let's say I've built a plug-in and completed it. How do I actually roll that out to my company Sametime user community?

SCHLESINGER: Well that's a good question, Susie. We've actually made it very easy for people to get their plug-ins into the hands of end users and that's one of the things people really like about using Sametime Connect client as an application platform. They don't have to install another application on the desktop.

So plug-ins can be deployed either automatically from the server or they can be installed by end users directly. So typically what happens is the Sametime administrator will install plug-ins on an Eclipse update site server. And an Eclipse update site is just a standard Eclipse mechanism, it's just an HTTP server that had files laid out in a particular format.

So for the server managed deployment, administrators can cause plug-ins to get pushed automatically to the client whenever the client launches. So the client will go and look on the update site for new plug-ins or updates to existing plug-ins.

And if it finds anything it will download them automatically and then it'll just pop up a message telling the end user that hey, I've got some new plug-ins here, you need to restart your client, push this button to restart your client now. And that's all that the end

user has to do. The new plug-ins are there installed and ready to go. There's no install program that has to be run.

In addition to that mechanism, end users can also use the standard Eclipse update manager UI, which is available through the connect client user interface and go and proactively go to update sites and download plug-ins that they might be interested in.

So that would be appropriate maybe for some prototype plug-ins or sort of recreational plug-ins or what have you that the administrator doesn't really want to deploy out to their entire organization.

And these two methods can be used together. Using the automatic server deployed plug-in doesn't preclude you from allowing users to go and get additional plug-ins manually.

Now in some environments, administrators don't want end users to install their own plug-ins. They want to kind of lock down the desktop and have total control over everything that's there.

So the administrator can actually disable the end users ability to install their own plug-ins. And this is controlled via user policy on the Sametime server so it can be applied to some users and groups but not others. So the administrator can decide who should be able to install their own plug-ins if anyone.

And for users that have this policy disabled they don't get access to the update manager UI in the Sametime Connect client. So that UI is completely missing and not accessible.

Now the good news is if you're a developer and you're working on plug-ins and debugging and testing your plug-ins, you can still launch your plug-ins in the Eclipse IDE. So these policies don't have any impact on your ability to do your development work, but when the times comes for you to actually deploy your plug-ins to end users that's when you're going to have to get together with the Sametime administrator and decide the best way to get them out there.

VEILLEUX: Great, Dave, that was really helpful. Thanks. I'm going to go ahead and wrap this podcast up with one last question and that's for you, Dan. Can you give our listeners some examples of customers and partners who have successful built and deployed plug-ins for Lotus Sametime?

KEHN: Yes, I'm a little biased because we work in ISV partner enablement. We like to think of all of our partner enablements are examples of success stories. But the telephony partners like Avaya and Cisco that I mentioned earlier are just a couple of examples that you can point to in the partner showcase gives you a long list of partner success stories we like to refer to.

Our marketing people though, I went to them and asked for reference accounts and they brought my attention to [Norris Kidro]. They're a Fortune 500 energy and aluminum supplier, a company of about 36,000 employees in 40 different countries. And you can see how it would be important to them to be able to communicate across different time zones and different locations.

So they adopted Sametime for their employees so they could more effectively, what ever location they happen to be able to make decisions more quickly, with the right people. And ironically this experience with our customers, really, these success stories mirror

our own usage within IBM.

Sametime not so long ago was what I would call a business helpful sort of tool. But with now our corporation it's gone from simply helpful to critical. It's key to our success and our ability to work as a team effectively responding to customer inquiries, product development.

e-mail is certainly a good tool to have, but it's more and more becoming a secondary tool of choice and preference to either instant messaging or a product that we've been working on also called Connection.

So, point is that we have our success stories for our partners that you can look forward to, and I think in the coming months you're going to be hearing even more success stories from our customers who are adopting Sametime.

VEILLEUX: Great, thanks Dan for giving us a little bit of those examples. So that's going to be our last question for today's podcast.

For those listening in, be sure to check out the other two podcasts available that are focused on developers that would be interested in learning more about Lotus Sametime as a platform for collaboration.

And just want to say thanks one more time to Dave and Dan for answering all of our questions.

KEHN: My pleasure, Susie.

SCHLESINGER: Thanks, Susie.

[END OF SEGMENT]