

Enterprise 2.0

Managing Knowledge in Your Organization

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Enterprise 2.0 Vendors: How Do They Differ and Compare?

With this issue we begin a multi-part series to assist you in getting a better understanding of the Enterprise 2.0 vendor space. Because Enterprise 2.0 has become a buzzword and its definition is still somewhat open to interpretation, there are different types of vendors that offer a wide range of features and functions that promote themselves as providing Enterprise 2.0 solutions.

We think a good way to help you begin distinguishing the various vendors and solutions is to group them into logical and useful categories. While this grouping only represents our own take on how to categorize vendors, and there is inevitable overlap between categories, from our survey of the Enterprise 2.0 landscape, we currently see the following as the major focus areas that distinguish the various vendors and their solutions:

- Collaboration
- Social Network Mapping
- Surfacing of Experts and Knowledge

- Enterprise Wikis
- Blogging Software
- Enterprise Microblogging
- Social Bookmarking
- Mashups
- Community Building/Platforms
- Organizing Meetings
- Broad, Multifaced Social Media 2.0 Solutions

For the next several supplements, we will select one of these focus areas and surface, compare, and evaluate a few of what we have determined to be the leading and noteworthy vendors for that category. Note that because so much of the value of an Enterprise 2.0 solution is determined from a “proof is in the pudding,” hands-on usage, we highly recommend taking these systems for your own test-drive, as many of these vendors do offer a free trial.

In this month’s issue we have found three leaders that strongly focus on the top category: Collaboration. These are Cynapse’s cyn.in, Jive’s Social Business

Software, and Socialtext. For each we tried to identify and test those features we felt were of particular value for surfacing and sharing knowledge within the organization.

Cynapse: cyn.in
www.cynapse.com/products/cynin

Cynapse is not as well-known as many other Enterprise 2.0 firms, but it’s been doing some aggressive marketing, including commenting on blogs and 2.0 forums, and the firm caught our attention. We were impressed enough with our demo, its features, and the expertise of our contact at the firm that we felt it deserved to be included in this review.

Company Background

cyn.in is a product of Cynapse, a firm based in India that was founded in 2001 by Apurva Roy Choudhury and Dhiraj Gupta. The company, which currently claims more than 200 enterprise clients, first launched cyn.in in 2006. Its most recent version, of which we had a demonstration and a trial, is scheduled to be launched in June 2009.

Philosophy and Goals

Romasha Roy Choudhury, business director of Cynapse, told us that the philosophy behind her firm’s product was to design a collaboration portal that would be as easy as possible for employees to use and that would require as little learning as necessary. She said that the firm was inspired by the simplicity of Facebook and blogs, and it



Source: Hutch Carpenter, <http://socialcomputingjournal.com/viewcolumn.cfm?colid=586>

had focused on creating an equivalent type of sharing environment.

Ease of Use and Intuitiveness

From our experience in trying cyn.in, we found that the firm has, in fact, succeeded quite well in achieving that goal. The interface is extremely friendly (see Figure 2), the layout is clear, viewing content streams is a pleasant experience, and the instructions and elements for creating and sharing content were simple. Everything flowed quite smoothly and did, in fact, have the feel of a Facebook portal. It was also simple to add new content (e.g., a blog, wiki, or discussion) and choose where to “place” it, as cyn.in creates “spaces” for organizing and categorizing one’s content: for example, a folder for “marketing collaboration” or “customer service.”

2.0 Elements and Features

cyn.in offers these 2.0 elements:

2.0 Content

- Status Messages (like Facebook)
- Wikis
- Blogs
- File Sharing
- Images
- Events
- Links/Bookmarks
- Videos
- Discussions
 - Forums (pure discussions)
 - Contextual Discussions (surrounding a document)
- Audios
- Messages

2.0 Features and Actions

- Commenting (on any content area)
- Rate Content (“like”)
- Tag

Search Capabilities

There is a search box and an advanced search link for Boolean and advanced search options to search by

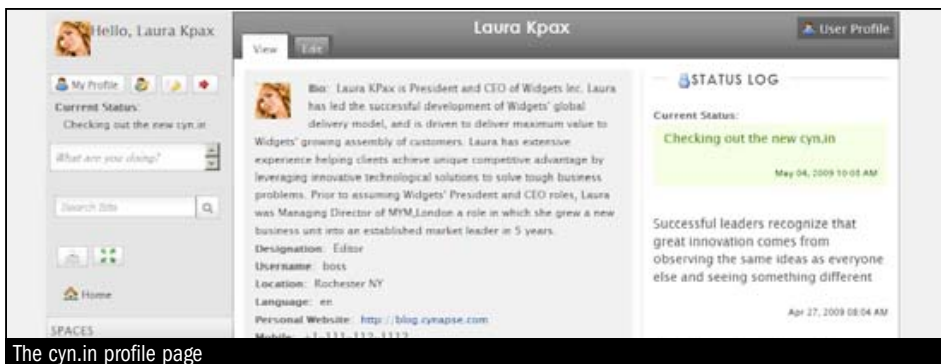


Figure 3

category, title, description, author, and item type.

User Profiles

Clicking on a user profile (see Figure 3) provides useful information such as that person’s current status, bio, location, contact information, recent activities (in blogs, wiki, discussions, etc.), presence in particular spaces, top user tags, top-rated items, and recent comments.

Other Key Features and Elements

- Statistical graphs (for content and people)
- Filter content activity stream by tags, content type, date, contributor, search phrase
- Desktop client option for persistent viewing of staff status updates
- WebDev: puts an extra drive on one’s PC for more efficient uploading and downloading

Administrative Controls:

Rules, Rights, Privacy

The administrator can assign specific rules and rights for each individual user and group. For each one, the administrator can choose to allow adding content, editing content, viewing content, and/or revising content.

Support

In addition to community documentation and support, clients of Cynapse can link to a customer care portal to create support tickets or go to live assistance.

Pricing

cyn.in is available in three editions. All editions and plans are for an unlimited number of users:

- Open Source: Free
- On-Demand: three packages at \$99, \$349, or \$899 per month
- Enterprise: \$6,250 per year

A free trial is available on Cynapse’s website.

Jive: Social Business Software

www.jivesoftware.com

Jive is well-known in the Enterprise 2.0 space, as the firm was founded in 2001 and launched its Clearspace knowledge management portal back in 2004. In March 2009, it relaunched its product with the new name Social Business Software. Jive’s product marketing manager Cameron Deatsch told us that his firm was the largest and fastest growing social business software company in the world, employing 150 persons with 2,500 customers including big names such as Nike, Intel, Sony, General Electric Co., and Honda, among others.

Philosophy and Goals

Like other Enterprise 2.0 firms, Jive likes to think of its product as a Facebook for the Enterprise. Its key mission has been to assist firms to “do more with less,” particularly during this current recession, and to do so by providing low-cost 2.0 solutions for workplace collaboration and productivity.

Deatsch told us that while Jive’s Social Business Software product can’t do the kind of heavy content management/forms creation type of functions that a large expensive knowledge management program can do, it will provide seamless connection between employees inside the enterprise. Jive focuses on offering this capability for four key areas: employee engagement, marketing and sales, innovation, and support.



Figure 2

We found cyn.in’s interface friendly and like Facebook.

Ease of Use and Intuitiveness

While we found Jive's portal to be a little less familiar and a bit more complex than cyn.in's, it was still friendly, well-designed, and easy to navigate. The homepage/dashboard (see Figure 4) was broken up into logical sections such as a my profile box, my popular tags, a "take me to" section, "I want to" (x, y, z), a listing of "my colleagues" and "my groups," "colleagues I may know," and a "what's new" activity stream.

2.0 Elements and Features

Jive offers the following 2.0 elements:

2.0 Content

- Status Update (like Facebook)
- Blogs (personal, team group)
- Document (wikis)
- Images
- Events (via calendaring within "projects")
- Bookmarks
- Videos
- Discussions
- Audios
- Tasks (for projects)

2.0 Features and Actions

- Comment (on any content area)
- Rate content (1–5 stars)
- Tag
- Follow a colleague

Search Capabilities

Jive has an excellent and advanced search function, particularly for "people searching." Users can filter people by name, title, department, expertise, location, or tags. Users can also search for projects and groups, along with date. There is an option to use advanced and Boolean search operators as well.

User Profiles

Clicking on a profile (see Figure 5) provides useful information to anyone who clicks on that person's profile: contact data, when last logged in, bio, stated expertise, groups (hotlinked), tags, recent activity, commonly used tags, manager, colleagues, and place in

the organizational chart. Deatsch says that viewing a colleague's activities is very useful as a way to determine other people's actual experience and expertise. The profile page also surfaces similar people, and there is a tab to see who the person is following (with their recent activity) and the ability to filter personal connections by label.

Other Key Features and Elements

- More Like This
- More content by a particular person
- Top Participants
- Filter content activity stream by self-defined labels
- Join, search, or browse groups, including by tags. Users may also see which groups were joined by those colleagues one has chosen to follow.

Administrative Controls:

Rules, Rights, Privacy

It's the users, not a central administrator, who create the groups and set the rights and rules. There are four optional levels of user-defined security:

- Open: Membership is open, and nonmembers can view content and participate.
- Members Only: Membership is open, and nonmembers can view content but must join to participate.
- Private: Membership is by approval/invitation only, and only members can view content and participate.
- Secret: Membership is by invitation only, only members may participate, and the group is not listed in the group directory.

Support

In addition to access to the Jive support community, Jive offers email- and phone-based support 24/7.

Pricing

There are various options for implementation, including deploying the product on-premise, hosting it, or sup-



Figure 5

porting it via "the cloud." Pricing is customized for each individual user.

Socialtext

www.socialtext.com

Socialtext was one of the first firms to bring 2.0 technologies into the workplace, having introduced a wiki-based portal in 2003. It is well-known because its chairman, president, and co-founder, Ross Mayfield, is a key figure in knowledge management and 2.0 technologies. Located in Palo Alto, Calif., and founded in 2002, today it has 45 employees and more than 5,000 clients.

Philosophy and Goals

In a telephone interview, Mayfield told us that the problem with past efforts to find and share knowledge in the enterprise was that the software and approach were too structured. When using these earlier systems, users had to fill out predetermined forms. Since employees did not like those constraints, they did not freely share what they knew. Furthermore, there were gatekeepers who oversaw the editorial process, and this would slow down the information creation and sharing process. While newer versions of these systems focused on search, Mayfield said that those only provided more "results" but not necessarily "answers," since often answers did not exist or had never been shared.

But, Mayfield says, with unstructured content, staffers could define for themselves, as a byproduct of their natural day-to-day work, what to create, as well as define the content's elements and containers. Under those circumstances, Mayfield said, knowledge sharing and discovery takes place.

One content form particularly suitable for unstructured knowledge creation, explained Mayfield, was the wiki. And it was a wiki that Socialtext

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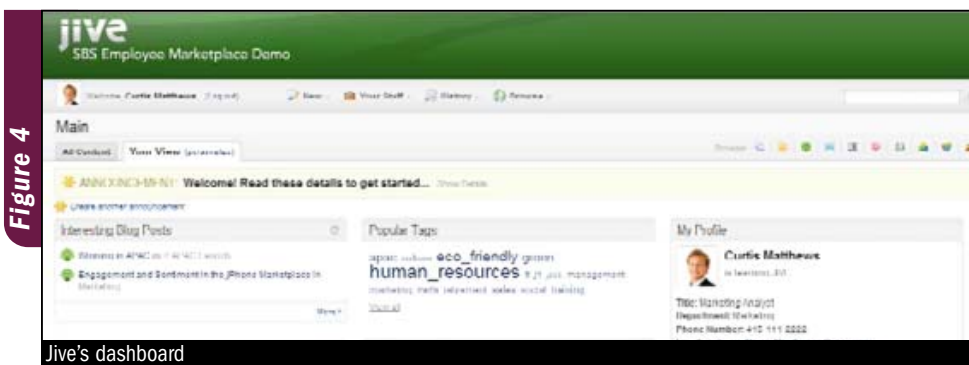


Figure 4

originally introduced to bring 2.0 techniques and methods to the workplace. While many more elements, features, and 2.0-type content has been added to Socialtext, the wiki still remains the heart of the company's offering.

Ease of Use and Intuitiveness

We had a chance to try out Socialtext. While we ran into a few quirks in getting all the trial features to work correctly, overall we were pleased. We found that the feel and design of Socialtext was different from cyn.in and Jive. Rather than providing a Facebook or Twitter look, with lots of images and social data streams, Socialtext was more "widget"-like, with a homepage displaying 2.0-type boxes (like iGoogle) that could be populated with content and then dragged and dropped. Furthermore, because Socialtext is built around wiki pages (which it calls Workspaces), a good deal of our work and testing was in editing our wiki pages. But all was simple. For instance, to add new content, just click the "add content" button on the top right of your homepage.

2.0 Elements and Features

Socialtext offers the following 2.0 "widgets" that can be added to one's homepage:

2.0 Content

- Status Messages (Called Signals)
- Wikis (Called Workspaces)
- Blogs
- Images
- RSS Feed
- Videos
- Recent Conversations
- Third-party widgets: e.g., Microsoft Outlook; Google Calendar; SlideShare feeds; Twitter Client; Delicious; MapQuest; Wikipedia; Flickr; others

Note that while there are no discussion forums per se, Socialtext supports conversations by surfacing comments made on the workspace. These can be viewed on one's homepage, via the "Recent Conversations" widget. That widget has three tabs: "My Conversations," which identifies updates made on any workspace where the user is a member; "My Colleagues," which lists people the user follows (it displays when those people have created tags, have



Figure 6

been tagged, or are following other people); and "All Changes," which displays recent pages uploaded in all workspaces of which the user is a member.

2.0 Features and Actions

- Comment
- Edit a workspace (wiki) page
- Follow people
- Click on a tag to find all people associated with that tag
- Choose to view signals from everyone or just those you follow

Search Capabilities

Socialtext provides extensive search and support, along with documentation. Users can search pages, page titles, tags, and the text of attachments. Searching is permitted in one's workspaces and for people (when "Socialtext People" is enabled). There is support for advanced searching that permits searches by phrase, title, tag, stemming, Boolean operators, nested searching, and more. Search results are also available as an RSS feed.

User Profiles

Clicking on a user's profile (see Figure 6) surfaces information such as contact data, name (and links) of that person's manager and assistants; and a link to his or her blog. It also identifies, under "Updates," recent activities: that is, what they have edited, tagged, and commented on. Also displayed is who that person follows, and their tags. A user's tags could be tags they've added themselves about their projects/interests, etc., or those that others have added to their pages.

Other Key Features and Elements

- Desktop client
- Drag-and-drop widgets on homepage to customize homepage

Administrative Controls: Rules, Rights, Privacy

Editing restrictions and rules are "inherited" when one joins a workspace group. Socialtext also provides a centralized administrative console.

Support

Socialtext offers both standard and premium support options. For standard support, users get help, via email, during normal business hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. Premium support customers obtain a personalized "customer success manager" (CSM) and 24/7 support with a faster promised turnaround time.

Pricing

Pricing for either Socialtext's hosted or "dedicated appliance" version begins at \$15 per user per month with a minimum of 50 users (\$750 per month) for the hosted version and a minimum of 100 for the dedicated version (\$1,500 per month). A free 14-day trial is also available.

Summary of Collaboration Vendors

In general we had a good experience with all three of these Enterprise 2.0 vendors. We found that the following stood out and distinguished each one:

- **Best Interface and Design:** cyn.in was the friendliest and easiest to navigate.
- **Best 2.0 Features/Elements:** We preferred the elements that Jive surfaced, such as "my colleagues," "my groups," and "more like this." For user profiles, we liked being able to view the person's manager and colleagues and their place in the organizational chart.
- **Best Search Functionality:** Jive and Socialtext

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