

LotusLive Share. Meet. Collaborate. Quickly and Easily.

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Hello and welcome to this IBM podcast titled: LotusLive – Share. Meet. Collaborate. Quickly and Easily.

My name is Martha Swanson and I am the IBM Collaborate to Innovate Portfolio Program Manager in the Americas.

Today I am pleased to be joined by Martha Hoyt – the LotusLive Senior Product Manager. Welcome Martha!

Hi Martha, I'm happy to be here to tell you a bit about LotusLive and to share some user experiences and benefits

Our discussion today will focus on understanding Software as a Service which is sometimes referred to as SaaS or Cloud Computing and how LotusLive allows you to focus on your company's core competencies and not IT.

Our format today will be a Q&A session. Martha will be answering a series of questions to help educate us on how and why Software as a Service enables the "Enterprise of the Future."

Let's get started. What is LotusLive and why should businesses want to adopt it?

Sure Martha, happy to help you with that. LotusLive is a suite of online business services and offerings designed to help Midmarket users work together quickly and easily beyond the boundaries of their organization. The offerings include services for Networking & Collaboration, Web Conferencing, and E-mail. There is no software or hardware for the customer to install or to manage and it's all available through a web browser.

LotusLive is the first suite of Web-delivered social networking and collaboration offerings that connects people from different businesses so that they can work together quickly and easily. Think of a Facebook for business if you will. LotusLive combines social networking and online collaboration tools to help businesses of all sizes securely work together across firewalls and beyond organizational boundaries. This suite of online services allows individuals to share documents, contacts, engage in joint project activities, execute online meetings and build networking communities for business via the cloud.

Sounds like LotusLive can really benefit a company's ability to connect to everyone they do business with even outside the firewall. Our next question: What are the conditions that have led up to the demand for Software as a Service?

Well I think that companies are constantly looking for the solutions that provide the answers to the business needs of profitability. Many of the on-premises collaboration solutions help to solve internal company collaboration problems but don't address challenges around information sharing with customers or partners outside of email or across-firewall project participation

Companies are beginning to recognize the value of being able to focus only on their core business. I think it's simple to say that a service provider can often offer a better, cheaper, more reliable application than companies themselves without a dedicated IT staff. This is particularly true for mid-sized companies, who do not require a customized solution, but rather are seeking a solution to allow them to innovate and grow without spending time and people skills on IT. The need to drive top line growth and innovation is definitely driving organizations to want to work more closely with their customers and partners and the services and architectures that LotusLive provides allows this to be available now to customers.

Thank you Martha. Now let's focus on the service offerings and benefits of LotusLive. Can you tell us what types of collaboration services LotusLive offer and what are the benefits?

There are multiple offerings in our LotusLive suite

The first one I'll talk about is a **Web Conferencing** offering called IBM Lotus Sametime Unyte, but in a short amount of time is going to be rebranded to **LotusLive Meetings**. LotusLive Meeting, or Sametime Unyte, is a full-featured online meeting service that integrates web, audio and video conferencing in an always-ready space format. We also have a second offering within our web conferencing area and that is IBM Lotus Sametime Unyte Events, shortly being rebranded **LotusLive Events**. This is an online event management service that allows you to create, host and manage your online conferences. In addition to full-featured Web conferencing, you get all the tools you need to manage the registration process for an event from start to finish, host your event and follow up with post event analysis.

So that was the first offering. The second sort of collection of offerings if you will is around **Networking & Collaboration**. The first in this networking and collaboration area is **LotusLive Engage** which is currently in beta – it's not yet available, which is different than Sametime Unyte and Sametime Unyte Events. LotusLive Engage is in beta and it is an integrated set of collaboration tools that combines your network with web conferencing and collaboration capabilities like file sharing, simple project management, instant messaging, surveys and charts. In addition, after we release and make LotusLive Engage available later in the first quarter of the year, we'll have a second networking and collaboration offering called **LotusLive Connections**. Connections will provide a subset of the LotusLive Engage services at a lower price point.

So that was area two – that was the Networking & Collaboration offerings. The third area is offerings for email services. There is e-mail offering with **LotusLive Notes**, which is typically aimed at companies with greater than 1,000 employees but IBM can tailor software and service plans for smaller companies. And then a second email offering in this category is **LotusLive iNotes** which is the web-based messaging service for email. And it lets you access critical data and information anywhere.

So for our email services we have LotusLive Notes and LotusLive iNotes and they are both available now.

It sounds like LotusLive is a very full-function set of offerings. On to the next question: What makes a business a good candidate for LotusLive?

For every company I'd say there will be unique factors which can make Software as a Service a good business decision. One of those is if focusing dollars and manpower on maintaining the IT infrastructure of a firm is not a priority then SaaS can have huge benefits.

What's important is the methodology behind the company's SaaS strategy. For all the benefits of cloud computing, companies need to realize that incorporating their SaaS into their environment allows them to focus on their core competencies and grow their businesses. Benefits include accelerating the time to innovate and to focus their finite resources on the company's vision. And that's because Software as a Service is a subscription model so we, IBM, takes care of all the infrastructure and networking and all the business has to do is purchase the subscriptions and gain the benefits of the services.

A simple method we've found is to focus on some typical business use cases that can benefit from LotusLive. The two I like to talk about most revolve around what the software industry is calling "boundary workers", like those in sales and project management. These employees work on the boundary between their own company and others that they want to do business with.

Consider the sales person. He is always challenged with getting the most up to date information to prospects and doing quick presentations and follow-ups over and over again to make sure he builds loyalty with his customer population. A company can setup an account in LotusLive and

provide their salespeople with a readily accessible set of collaboration tools to make their sales interactions simpler. The salesperson can then invite their customer to a meeting, work with their customer, post a file, and have frequent contact with them in a professional space. The sales person can refer other resources to the customer quickly and create a group which can completely support the customer.

The second use case to consider is that of the project management type resource who's often pulling together many different companies, many different people internally to pull a project along. Innovating and then getting to market quickly in these times requires bringing people in businesses like vendors and customers together as quickly and efficiently as possible. LotusLive provides this with a simple project and to-do tracking with online meetings and instant messaging to get people together and file sharing to get participants the right information. The project managers can quickly call an online meeting, invite all project and stakeholders, review status and share notes. The list of contributors and information can be very dynamic. There are simple ways to use LotusLive Engage features like groups to make company boundaries disappear and focus on the tasks and ultimate business vision that may or may not require information technology.

So if your business could benefit from being able to easily interact with customers and suppliers, you should take a look at LotusLive. Now what near term results should a business expect to see from LotusLive? As well as the longer term?

The real beauty of cloud computing is that you don't have up-front infrastructure and hardware and application development costs. It's really a way for you to rent your IT services rather than buy them—so it's just as you might rent an office copier rather than buying one.

Most cloud computing vendors offer their services as subscriptions or on a pay-as-you-go utility model. And cloud computing may become even less expensive down the road as more companies end up sharing infrastructure costs. There's lots of economies of scale to also benefit the pricing.

So, by cutting those IT costs, cloud computing may provide small and medium businesses with extensive IT capabilities that might otherwise be out of reach for these sized companies. And thanks to not having to own and maintain hardware and software—and no longer requiring extensive training for these systems—mid-market companies may also discover more cash on hand to cover other operating expenses.

Midmarket companies can further investigate the potential of cloud computing with little risk by trying these services out before buying. Just like I mentioned earlier with LotusLive Engage – is currently in beta – it's free to try with no obligation. Sampling the services is a great way to get started with them. There are an increasing number of cloud computing services as well. It's not a crazy idea to try this out with one department and test it. LotusLive team likes to set up pilots to have people try it out and try out the use cases. It doesn't cost any up-front money to do this. You buy a few seats of service, you give them to some of your advanced users, and you see how they like the service. And, if you don't like the service you probably won't be locked into a particular offering in the same way that you might be with traditional IT.

With this flexibility, mid market companies can prepare themselves for a development that may well change the way business technology is accessed and provided. What's more, companies that take advantage of the new IT access model may find that having lower business technology costs may make them more agile and better able to compete in challenging markets. Cloud computing may still be in its infancy, but if the history of technology repeats itself, companies prepared for IT change are better positioned to take full advantage of new opportunities.

Those are some pretty compelling reasons to take a hard look at incorporating SaaS into your business strategy. How can companies try IBM's Software as a Service to see how it will work for them?

If you would like to “test drive” LotusLive Engage which is the collection of collaboration services integrated together and built to enhance your business network you should visit www.lotuslive.com. There’s a link on this page to “Try” LotusLive Engage.

Well, Martha thank you and that concludes our list of questions. In closing – if our listeners only remember one thing from this podcast – one single benefit of LotusLive – what would it be?

It’s IBM’s vision of SaaS that makes LotusLive. Our is LotusLive is IBM’s vision of Software as a Service – the first suite of Web-delivered social networking and collaboration cloud offerings designed to connect people from different businesses. LotusLive and the offerings in this family or suite of offerings combines social networking and online collaboration tools to help businesses of all sizes to securely work together across firewalls and beyond organizational boundaries.

Well thank you Martha for joining us today and sharing your expertise on LotusLive suite of offerings. And I would like to thank our audience for taking the time to listen.