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Sent: Thursday, October 07, 1993 11:14 PM
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Subject: Appware at Brain Share

This is a summary of Novell's Appware products and strategy, as presented at Brain Share Dallas early this week.

: summary

Appware is a Novell product strategy that includes, for now, a cross platform (Win, Mac, UNIX) development foundation (Appware Foundation), a visual Appbuilder, an object model (Appware Bus) and a distributed system services strategy (based on NW 4.x Directory Services). From the "Novell Distributed Appware Services" white paper, "Novell's strategy is to provide a set of enabling services to facilitate the t between the troops (Novell VPs from newly aquired pieces on down) and the company's (?)strategists (King, Edwards). IMHO Novell could be touting this as Cairo today. Given the market confusion of what Cairo is or it is not, they could easily claim they have all the pieces integrated and ready to go...

I have a lot more information in slides, notes and whitepapers if you are interested.

: announcements

: BORLAND: the next version of Borland's foundation library will be built on top of Appware Foundation, they will be sold as one product.

: Word Perfect: all future versions of Word Perfect will be built on top of foundation. The 60 WP engineers currently in charge of platform independence are now helping Novell with the founfation.

It is unclear wheather Appware Foundation, BUS and Visual Builder are ready or in their final beta cycle.

An uninterested party using the product confided that it is probably 6 months away.

However, Novell is already selling it, one time flat fee (i will get a free copy, if anyone is interested):

Foundation: \$595/platform

Visual Appbuilder : \$495/plat

Appware Bus, ALM SDK: \$295/platform

: Appware Foundation, speaker Doug Donzelli, STI ex-owner VP Appware sys group (under Edwards)

Though his first slide is: "Goal: Stimulate growth of network applications by hiding complexity of net and standardizing access to services" (a scary angle coming from Novell and if you include o/s APIs as

services), the rest of the presentation was as if it came from STI. Doug seems very smart, good

n, Mac, UNIX and, maybe GeoWorks on DOS 7 later:

- great performance: all code is native to plat. most APIs are very thin layers

- modularity: pick and chose layers, and thickness, to include

- extensibility: coexists with native code. uses platform's compilers: MS,

Borland, Think C, MPW, etc.

, UNICODE,

BiDi text...

- claim transport independence, but have very little specific functionality to back up
- NO OLE support: part of Apple's Open Doc, "will support OLE in as much as it is subsumed by AOD"
- NO threads
- NO file abstractions
- NO RPC support - but will do a superset of DCE-RPC
- NO NW 4.0 DS support

: Visual Appbuilder and BUS

This is the Serious technology acquisition. The Visual Appbuilder looks like a cross between VB and Object Vision. It sits on top of the AW foundation and is a way to create application from ALMs. ALMs are lightweight objects managed by the Appware Bus("first commercially available sw engine for managing intelligent sw components"). They are similar to VB's installable controls, but seem much easier to implement. There is no compound document technology yet, but will have OLE support "soon".

It is being marketed by Novell as a vertical app builder for now, but with potential for full-scale apps in the future.

akes it invisible

For now, the above is bullshit, since they have no mechanisms in place to accomplish any distributed execution and synchronization of ALMs.

There are "hundreds" of ALMs available today, but the ones demoed by Novell are mostly in the category of early low end or specialized VB controls, unusable for any large-scale commercial development.

: Luis's editorial

Why is Appware dangerous? What sets it apart from other 4-5GIs and cross-platform foundation tools?

1.- quality: might be first viable platform for commercial cross-platform development.

=> could in the long run blur the o/s API line and squeeze us into the camp of BIOS builders.

2.- backing by Novell brings:

- credibility, ability to harness the Network (NW 4.x DS, RPC, Messaging, etc)

- can be positioned as a Notes alternative:

=> might be nice if it fractures the mkt.

3.- Backing by Borland:

- an immediate boost of credibility and installed base of serious developers

4.- A vehicle for Novell and its networking strategy to be on developer's faces and manipulate

direction...they move from being the pipeline into the limelight.

5.- It can be touted as a Notes competitor on the way to Cairo. But, unlike Cairo, it is real and available

today (in fact I believe they can claim this IS Cairo)

6.- Might be channel to unleash 4.x features.

7.- It is NOT, for now:

- a Novell revenue source: they've spent mega bucks and have a lot of work to do, it is costing them much more than \$595 a pop!

- ready: they have a way to go

- focused:

:why in HELL invest so much in UNIX. they should promise UNIX as "it will come soon" and forget it

: their distributed system and networking integration stories are weak. they need to teach STI and Serious that Novell rules the Nets and nothing else.

8.- someone in our languages/tools group should be interested in this stuff and be prepared to kill it, or at least understand why it is, or is not dangerous to our strategy.