

Collaboration Platforms

The collaboration Platforms market is comprised of enterprise software and services covering a wide swath of products including enterprise social networking solutions, productivity suites, conferencing solutions and messaging and calendaring products. These solutions typically drive operational efficiencies and foster corporate agility through interpersonal activities such as team building, knowledge capture and dissemination, idea generation and corporate communications. These collaboration tasks focus on connecting and therefore empowering groups of people, making them more productive and helping them contribute to and draw upon knowledge from their peers. In this way, collaboration solutions are geared toward people rather than process, shared knowledge rather than siloed data.

Collaboration platforms research market is broken down into a number of functional activities and areas of expertise, including:

- Messaging, Tasks and Calendaring
- Forums, Blogging, Wikis
- Event Streaming
- Presence and Location-Based Services
- Video Sharing and Conferencing
- Web and Virtual Conferencing
- Search, Tagging, Filtering
- Expertise Location
- Mashups, Scripting and Information Syndication
- Portals and Collaborative UIs
- Analytics and Business Intelligence
- Document Sharing and Editing

These activities and areas of interest are often combined in various configurations and brought to market as collaboration suites such as Novell Vibe, Google Apps for Business, Jive Engage and Cisco Quad. Point solutions are also available, targeting functions such as social networking (IBM Lotus Connections), expertise location (Cisco Pulse), document/content sharing (Microsoft SharePoint) and messaging/calendaring (IBM Lotus Notes/Domino).

A major defining property of collaboration platforms is their propensity to break down barriers and connect employees, partners and customers. Collaboration platforms also span all market segments and company sizes. These facts are exposed in both how collaboration solutions are deployed and how they are used. For example, collaboration software is available as either on-premise, licensed software or via cloud-based subscription, as with IBM LotusLive and Microsoft Office 365, both of which are software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings that incorporate on-premise

software. Increasingly, customers can also maintain software spanning both cloud and premise, as with Microsoft's Office 365 service, which allows customers to leverage a single license across both deployment schemes.

Likewise, collaboration software is breaking down corporate boundaries typically defined by closed data networks. For example, both on-premise and in-cloud collaboration software serves either internal or external requirements, empowering enterprise employees or supporting customers and partners. In both cases, collaboration software is increasingly capable of actually bridging disparate environments, creating a single collaborative space that secures internal information while exposing public content.

Lastly, collaboration platforms are at the forefront of the consumerization of IT, bringing together corporate and consumer technologies. Collaboration software used in the enterprise, for instance, is being heavily influenced by consumer-driven collaborative solutions such as social networking sites LinkedIn, Twitter, Skype, YouTube, Google+, Foursquare and Facebook. These freely available services connect with and publish content into the enterprise collaboration offerings mentioned above, greatly expanding their population and subsequent value, particularly within disciplines such as customer relationship management, customer support and marketing/sales.

Collaboration Platforms: Areas of Coverage

The **Current Analysis** coverage of the Collaboration Platforms sector focuses on the rapidly expanding use of collaboration applications and services that let employees interact with one another and work on joint projects and documents over local and distributed networks. Our coverage centers on four main product categories:

- Enterprise Social Networking
- Productivity
- Conferencing
- Messaging and Calendaring

Within these four areas of interest, our research addresses corporate-bound solutions geared toward building employee productivity as well as facilitating collaborative conferences among both employees and external business partners. The research practice also addresses the rapidly converging consumer and corporate markets as the two exchange technologies, business models and best practices. Multi-channel delivery mechanisms including managed/hosted services, SaaS, platform-as-a-service (PaaS), traditional on-site software and appliances are also covered.