

Introduction

The Need for Office Servers

Although many might think that recent releases of the Office product line have been lacking in sensational new features, it is clear that the reason for these blasé feature sets is not so much a lack in ingenuity on the part of Microsoft, but rather a natural evolution of a product to its perfection. In truth, how many updates can be provided to Word, Excel, or PowerPoint (the power-trio of the Office suite)? A ceiling had been reached, leaving room for only minor improvements from one version to the next. With industries competing to bring the next level of technology to its users, these new technological advancements that will take place are guaranteed to alter and transform how things are done on a daily basis. So, the question Microsoft had to ask was “where do we, or *can* we, go from here?”

Office 2007 is more than an upgrade in your office applications, more than a new ribbon user interface. Office 2007 represents a new direction by Microsoft that provides enhanced Office user collaboration, automated business processes, management functionality, project analysis, and more.

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server has been improving its functionality since its release in 2001, and the 2007 version offers greater control over documentation shared among Office users. However, in addition to releasing a new version of SharePoint Server, Microsoft has released a group of *new* “Office servers” that enable you to expand the capabilities of Office. By providing the familiar Office interface, Microsoft has decreased users’ fear of the unknown, allowing them to feel comfortable quickly with these new servers.

This book, *Administrator’s Guide to Microsoft Office 2007 Servers*, introduces you to the new server lineup. This book will help you install each new server and start working with and using it to its greatest potential for your organization.

An Overview of the Office 2007 Servers Lineup

This section offers an overview of each server and explains what each is designed for. Even as Microsoft strives to be cutting edge, each server is built to be cost- and time-efficient. Although some features might be in common from one server to the next, each server works specifically in a way to improve business; each serves a unique purpose and will be a niche in its own market.

Microsoft Office Forms Server 2007

The first of the new servers, Forms Server 2007, works in harmony with SharePoint Services 3.0 to allow users to fill out electronic forms created with the Office InfoPath

2007 application. InfoPath 2007 enables you to easily create electronic forms. In the past, you could fill out these forms with the InfoPath client program (and you still can), but with Forms Server, you can fill out these via a Web browser (any Web browser), and thus cut out all the hassle that once came along with paper forms. Forms Server allows wider use and provides a way to centrally locate, manage, and secure the forms that your organization uses.

All businesses have forms of one type or another. Consider the benefits of being able to easily design those forms in InfoPath and then deploy them through a specialized server. Although you can use SharePoint Server 2007 to host your forms, the Forms Server can function all on its own. It all comes down to cost. A Forms Server is much more cost-effective than a SharePoint Server; so if all you need is to host forms, Microsoft is allowing you to use this one aspect of SharePoint at a cheaper rate.

Forms Server is the next step in electronic forms processes. Forms Server checks for errors, eliminates repetitiveness, and manages data quickly and effectively. It even allows users “on the go” to fill out forms quickly and efficiently right from their mobile and handheld devices. With Office Forms Server, you’re your own boss. Create forms just the way you want them, leaving out all the unnecessary. You can also control who has access to create and publish forms. It’s a cheaper solution if all you need is a way to supply forms in an electronic format!

Microsoft Office Groove Server 2007

Groove 2007, an excellent tool included in some of the higher-end versions of Office 2007, enables teams to work together in workspaces that go where they go. According to Microsoft, “Teams can work together dynamically—anywhere, anytime, and with anyone—without compromising....”

It might sound similar to SharePoint Server, but Groove allows for a more personal collaboration structure. Documentation is updated immediately among team members when connected to the Groove server. Those team members can work on items and notify each other immediately and safely through always-on encryption of those files. Groove provides tools for more than file sharing; it provides tools for discussions, meetings, and calendars. You can even play a game of chess through Groove. One frustration of modern communication is “tag” inefficiency (caused by playing phone or email tag). Groove Server addresses this frustration with advanced presence awareness, which means that you know when your team members are online.

To make all of this work properly requires Groove Server 2007, which comes in three different flavors: Manager, Relay, and Data Bridge. These three server applications are installed separately and make up Groove Server 2007. The Manager defines workspaces, the Relay controls site traffic, and the Data Bridge connects back to a SharePoint server or possibly SQL servers (or other databases).

To enable various aspects of Groove functionality, you must have the Office Communicator on your clients (along with the Groove client). And, you can make use of SharePoint Server 2007 sites if you have a SharePoint server.

Microsoft Office Live Communications Server 2005/2007

Consider it the “professional of IMs.” Live Communications Server enables you to easily locate and communicate with coworkers and business partners in an instant. With Live Communications Server, you can share applications safely; it allows for Voice over IP (VoIP) connectivity, and does all of this in a secure way without going through a virtual private network (VPN). It’s an instant messenger server that functions outside the network to allow immediate communications between team members or business associates, allowing for greater effectiveness and higher-level productivity in the workplace.

In addition, Live Communications Server connects in real time and can be accessed from your mobile device, which gives you greater mobility—no more sitting at the desk waiting for a reply to an email or voicemail left days ago.

With Live Communications Server, you can hold voice- and video-enhanced sessions. You can also go from public IM conversations to network-based conference calls (and thus cut back on travel time and cost).

Office Communications Server 2007, the next release, enhances all the features of Live Communications Server and provides a host of newer features, including enterprise voice (as a way of entering the enterprise VoIP market), on-premise Web conferencing, compliance archiving, and call detail records (CDRs).

Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007

Consider this one the “psychic” of all servers. This server is a performance management (PM) application that allows for score-carding, analysis, planning, forecasting, consolidating, and reporting. You can create plans and detailed budgets for your departments and make consolidated forecasts, all from one centralized location; this functionality enables organizations to glimpse their timeline and compare according to what’s been planned.

Like all the other servers, Office PerformancePoint Server is reliable, fast, and user friendly. It saves time and cuts costs. Its functions help to visibly increase performance all around by monitoring progress. This server easily determines problems, compares plans with real-time performance, and allows users to work side by side so that there is nonstop planning and contributing from all.

With Office PerformancePoint Server, the overall outcome of any business can easily be improved; it is perfect for new businesses.

Microsoft Office Project Portfolio Server 2007

The main purpose of the Office Project Portfolio Server is to allow you to see what works best for you and your business or organization. Project Portfolio enables you to create portfolios that revolve around your project(s). Through the portfolio, you have centrally hosted workflows that you can connect to from anywhere in the enterprise through your browsers.

Project Portfolio aids centralized data aggregation that relates to project planning and implementation, thus providing you helpful insight.

Manage ... track ... view, that’s the power behind Project Portfolio Server 2007.

Microsoft Office Project Server 2007

Designed to keep you on the front edge of your project schedule, job costs, and resources, Microsoft Project Server 2007 will help you create effective communication channels and collaboration, and will provide the visibility and insights necessary to make you successful!

Project Server 2007 provides a central cache of information, and thus enables you and your organization to analyze, manage, report, standardize, and centralize resource management. Project Server functionality includes budget and resource tracking and activity plan management. Much like other 2007 servers that work with Office 2007, you can access the data through your browsers. You can also make use of Excel, Visio, and Outlook.

One of the key features of Project Server 2007 is the Cube Building Service, which allows you to use portfolio analyzer cubes for analysis and reporting at a more refined level.

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 for Search

You might want to deploy a SharePoint server to take advantage of its ability to search through content, but perhaps you are inhibited by the cost of a SharePoint deployment. The SharePoint Server 2007 for Search (MOSS 2007) allows you to build an intranet or Internet search solution immediately, with the possibility of upgrading this in the future to full SharePoint functionality.

MOSS 2007 for Search should prove interesting to organizations that want to implement enterprise search (with the option to upgrade to a portal later) without changing their infrastructure and search implementation. Via protocol handlers, it enables you to search file shares, SharePoint sites, Web sites, Exchange public folders, Lotus Notes databases, and customer repositories.

NOTE

For more information about each of these servers, see the Office 2007 site at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/products/default.aspx>.

That was the 100,000-foot overview. This book provides you with a closer “look” in the following chapters, from which you will gain a better understanding of each of these servers and what they do.

How to Use This Book

This book is not exactly what you might call a “fireside read.” You won’t be bringing this to any book club meetings. And, although you will find step-by-step instructions throughout this book (especially in the sections that walk you through the install process of these

servers), it's not quite a step-by-step book either. It is a resource guide to each of these seven servers. It's primary function is to explain what the servers are used for, which will essentially dispel confusion as to the purpose of these new servers, and explain how to implement them from a practical sense.

Planning and deployment are some of the key discussions for each server, specifically because you can deploy them in stand-alone situations or in server farms (in the server farms to allow for higher availability, load balancing, and failover). This book covers these different scenarios and indicates which caveats you need to be on the lookout for.

To understand each server, you must also understand its configuration and management. This book will help you to understand the extent of control you have as an administrator over the server.

Advanced techniques are also considered for some of these servers. These concepts are beyond the install/configuration process and generally only get talked about on developer blogs; however, this book includes some of those concepts. Of course, you will need to use the Web to go beyond the scope of this book at times; but you will know, to a greater extent, what you are looking for after learning in this book what these servers can do.

With this book, you should first read the overview about each of the servers. By doing so, you can learn what Microsoft has to offer. When you understand the purpose of each server, you can then decide whether your organization might benefit from any of them. Or, if you are a network consultant, you will be able to recommend a variety of options to your clients.

Before deploying any particular server, you should read the chapters relating to that server and establish a deployment plan that meets your requirements. Consider your hardware and software requirements, determine whether you want to perform a stand-alone or farm implementation, establish your SQL back-end server if necessary, and so forth.

Before you install any of these servers in your production environment, you should install it in a test lab. Take the time to see which issues might arise and document those issues for your true deployment; doing so can prove invaluable. Although this book discusses many of the issues we ran into during our own deployment experiences, nothing beats personal experience. So, test *your* deployment first!

We want to hear back from you about your deployment scenarios (some "in-the-trenches" war stories, if you will). Please write and tell us your experiences. Perhaps we will include them in the second edition.