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Hot Vendors in Group Chat, 2015

Summary: *For many industries, persistent group chat is an important part of internal and external collaboration. Our 2015 Hot Vendors in Group Chat provide persistent group chat to help distributed teams collaborate securely.*

Persistent group chat has long been an enterprise capability, even from the early days of enterprise instant messaging and before that with the IRC in the 1990s. While this functionality has been subsumed into other collaboration categories such as the emerging mobile collaboration space, it is still a standalone capability required by many enterprises for team collaboration. This research note highlights three hot vendors who are making a difference in Group Chat.

Persistent group chat was in many ways social collaboration before that even became a popular term. Persistent group chat offerings support the ability to create channels that users could subscribe to for team-based collaboration. It was common for lines of business such as marketing, Sales, IT and HR to create departmental channels to streamline project based collaboration initiatives and to keep track of departmental activities.

Most early enterprise Instant Messaging providers such as IBM and Microsoft support persistent group chat. We see persistent group chat being used often in industries such as financial services and defense. In defense, group chat is critical in areas where bandwidth may be limited and collaboration is needed in the field in combat situations. These are situations where lives are at stake, so secure chat capability is critical.

As the market is evolving to include chat with other UCC capabilities, group chat becomes an interesting launching pad to other real-time modalities such as web and video conferencing with in context file sharing. It is this trend that serves as one of the driving forces behind the emerging mobile collaboration space.

Aragon Research
2015 HOT VENDOR

Topic: Collaboration

Issue: Who are the Collaboration providers and how will they evolve?

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Persistent group chat offerings give the concept of a room or channel as a persistent space so team members can collaborate in context. Since it is persistent, whatever changes or updates are made in a group are saved so you can see updates when you log back in. This is powerful for project management if you are using project based rooms to collaborate. It can provide efficiency to your project workflow where exceptions are very common.

Chat is also becoming a social media weapon of choice to engage with external people such as customers, prospects and peers in public moderated chat use cases. Marketing professionals commonly use this method for engagement and as part of their overall digital experience strategies.

MindLink



Figure 3: MindLink provides persistent group chat on any device.

MindLink, based in London, has a long heritage in secure and compliant enterprise group chat (see Note 3). It has traction in many industries including financial services and government. The software platform provides both instant messaging and persistent group chat. Available across all devices and on the web, MindLink gives enterprises an efficient way to communicate and collaborate with colleagues cross-company in persistent chat rooms (see Figure 3). MindLink supports REST APIs and can be fully integrated with email, social media, portals such as SharePoint as well as Lync and Skype for Business.

What makes MindLink hot is its focus on security and compliance as well as its ability to work seamlessly with Lync/ Skype for Business and multiple ESNs. This makes it able to span multiple products and services. Specifically, MindLink can run across all operating systems and devices, making it easy to communicate and collaborate among distributed teams.

Enterprises looking for a secure and compliant persistent group chat solution for collaborative interactions and that can integrate with existing infrastructure, should evaluate MindLink. Enterprises that already use Microsoft Lync or Skype for Business should definitely look at MindLink for persistent group chat.

Note 3: MindLink at a Glance

MindLink is changing the way enterprises use group chat. They have developed a fully mobile, integrable, secure platform designed for improved business collaboration.

Location: London, UK

CEO: Justin Forrest

Key Offering: MindLink

Availability: On-premises now, with cloud offering launching in September 2015

Website: www.mindlinksoft.com

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprise planners responsible for collaboration should assess the need for persistent group chat for streamlining team collaboration.
- Make procurement decisions for group chat in alignment with infrastructure decisions for UCC and other collaboration technologies.

Bottom Line

Persistent group chat has become a key part of UCC and many mobile collaboration offerings, just as other consumer-based collaboration technologies have moved into the enterprise when their usefulness is proven. Ensure that technology decisions are not made in a vacuum. Evaluate these Hot Vendors if you need to integrate group chat into existing infrastructure and processes.