



Instant Solution Brief:

Real-time Collaboration with Persistent Chat

Secure, Encrypted, and Collaborative Cross-organizational Communications

Abstract

This document outlines the benefits of deploying persistent chat in the enterprise.

The solutions it describes are available directly from Instant Technologies, or indirectly from IBM as they have embedded the products in their Collaboration Core Enterprise Service (CCES) and their SOA Foundation Accelerator (SOAF-A).

Introduction

Instant messaging enables us to communicate in real-time with anyone, anywhere, thanks to 'presence awareness' that eliminates barriers of time and distance inherent to all other forms of communication.

But while IM's value as a communications medium is unquestioned, what if you want to *collaborate* in real-time?

Collaboration requires individuals to work together as a team, to cooperate and share knowledge, to strive towards a common goal. Collaboration in real-time, therefore, requires an element of permanence that is not inherent to ad-hoc IM chats.

Persistent Chat: Collaboration at the Speed of Light

Think of persistent chat as managed, multi-user 'places' in which cross-organizational teams can collaborate on specific topics in the atmosphere of an open forum where both the chat room and the content—conversations, documents, files, bookmarks—persist over time.

Persistent chat combines the presence awareness and real-time communication benefits of instant messaging with the interactive dynamics of live, in-person team meetings.

Practical Considerations in the Enterprise

To be viable in the enterprise, a persistent chat solution must address three key concerns:

- I. Security and confidentiality
- II. Discoverability
- III. Language barriers

Issue I: Security and confidentiality

Sensitive data on which important decisions are based will be shared in your persistent chat rooms, so it is vital that access be strictly controlled via an Access Control List, and that the conversations and transmission of documents be encrypted.

Solution: Instant Team Sessions addresses the issues of security and confidentiality. It delivers encrypted and secure browser-based persistent chat rooms for IBM Lotus Sametime. Access is controlled and password protected, and all conversations are time synchronized and logged. In addition, configurable contextual alerts will automatically update chat room members when content of specific interest is discussed or posted.

Issue II: Discoverability

Because your persistent chat rooms are facilitating critical decision making, it is highly probable that those conversations will need to be reviewed at some point in the future. It is vital, therefore, that everything be archived and indexed for subsequent search and auditing.

Solution: Instant IMtegrity Archives meets your requirements for discoverability. It provides IM archiving, search, and discovery for IBM Lotus Sametime (including Instant Team Sessions traffic). If questions are asked about who said what to whom, Instant IMtegrity Archives will provide irrefutable evidence.

Issue III: Language barriers

It is entirely possible that project teams could have members who speak different languages. For persistent chat to be of value across geographical boundaries, language barriers must be eliminated via automatic, instantaneous translation into each team member's preferred language.

Solution: Integration with **IBM Websphere Translation Server** overcomes language barriers. Websphere Translation Server automatically translates all chat conversations from the language of the sender to the language of the recipient so Instant Team Sessions users can collaborate freely in their native languages.

Persistent Chat in Action

Departmental meeting spaces. Cross-organizational project collaboration. Customer support knowledge repositories. These are just a few of the potential uses for persistent chat in the enterprise; its value is limited only by your imagination.

IBM's Global Defense / Net Centric Ops team is thinking creatively—they have bundled Instant Team Sessions, Instant IMtegrity Archives, and Websphere Translation Server into an offering they call 'Collaboration Core Enterprise Service' (CCES). CCES overcomes the challenges of communicating and sharing information in complex joint operations environments. Consider this real-world CCES example of persistent chat in action:

Mission: Interdict ships in hostile waters. Identify hostiles and take appropriate action.

Execution: Boarding team takes pictures of the target ship, its crew members, its equipment, etc. The pictures are instantly uploaded to the mission's persistent chat room, where intelligence experts at command headquarters analyze the data and decide on actions to be taken.

Result: The innocent are quickly freed to go about their business; suspects are detained for further investigation.

If persistent chat enables military and government organizations to make critical decisions in real-time, just imagine what it can do for your business. Consider two examples of persistent chat in the enterprise:

Goal: Improve collaboration to accelerate product development.

Execution: Persistent chat rooms are created for each product development project. Cross-functional team members (project management, engineering, product marketing, manufacturing, etc) are granted access. Each team member creates keyword-based alerts relevant to their role so they are instantly and automatically notified when someone mentions something that requires their attention.

Result: Increased visibility for all team members into the entire development project minimizes bottlenecks; improved communications and real-time collaboration reduce the time it takes to bring new products to market.

Goal: Shorten sales cycles and improve customer support by resolving issues faster.

Execution: You have a key client in the pilot phase of a potentially large new purchase. You create a persistent chat room that includes members from the client, plus your sales team and customer support organization. The client can submit questions and issues in real-time as they arise during the pilot project. Your internal staff will be instantly and automatically notified so the proper person can respond quickly. Every interaction—including chats, shared documents, etc—is logged and maintained for the life of the project and subsequently archived for future audit or discovery requirements.

Result: Improved communication between your clients and your sales and support teams keeps the pilot project moving forward, with full visibility into the project for both sides; questions and issues are quickly addressed by the relevant experts; sales cycles are reduced and your odds of winning deals are increased.

Take Action

Additional Information

You can learn more about real-time collaboration via persistent chat and what it can do for your organization at these links:

www.instant-tech.com/Team_Sessions.cfm

www.instant-tech.com/IMtegrity_Archives.cfm

You can download datasheets and white papers, as well as request a web demo and/or trial software for evaluation.

CCES and SOAF-A from IBM

IBM's Collaboration Core Enterprise Service (CCES) and their SOA Foundation Accelerator (SOAF-A) include the solutions described in this document—they are, in effect, collections of associated assets from IBM and third-party vendors such as Instant Technologies that support the sale, delivery, operation, and maintenance of your real-time collaboration infrastructure. CCES and SOAF-A deliver rapid implementation of a suite of best-of-breed products that will improve the way you do business.