Cloud Computing

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Microsoft reported to be buying Yammer

Although not yet officially confirmed, it has been widely reported over the last week that Microsoft is to purchase Yammer for around $1 billion. Whether or not the deal goes ahead, it highlights an important gap in Microsoft's collaboration offerings for enterprises. Yammer is essentially a Twitter/Facebook service for private use within organisations, which allows employees to chat online, share files and run polls within the browser. Yammer claims over five million corporate users spread across 200,000 organisations. Tony Bradley, writing in PC World (http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/257790/why_yammer_is_worth_1_billion_to_microsoft.html), says the acquisition would help Microsoft's SharePoint offering, which has not been able to really engage users in a social way. It would be similar to Salesforce's Chatter service, which offers real-time messaging within the organisation. Other commentators are pointing to Microsoft's recent acquisition of Skype, and question whether Skype, SharePoint and Yammer could be integrated to create a unified system for communication and information sharing in the enterprise.

Will tablets replace the PC?

IT analysts Forrester declared in April that tablet computers would become the personal computer of choice for hundreds of millions of people around the world within a few years (http://blogs.forrester.com/frank_gillett/12-04-23-why_tablets_will_become_our_primary_computing_device). There is a logic to this claim, as tablets become more powerful, have better batteries and get cheaper. For checking email, browsing the Web and basic document creation and editing, they are more than adequate for most people. Used in conjunction with cloud services such as Dropbox, Google Apps and Evernote, the desktop PC model of personal computing looks increasingly outdated. Dion Hinchcliffe in ZDNet (http://www.zdnet.com/blog/hinchcliffe/shifting-it-delivery-to-tablets-the-strategic-issues/2092) lays out the advantages and issues for organisations in moving down the tablet path for employees, and

concludes that "To get the real competitive advantage of the next-generation of end-user, computing will require rethinking how tablets and their innate capabilities and strengths can be used to transform business processes. Location-awareness, always-connectedness, augmented reality, pervasive video/audio, and more can create highly situational and context-aware apps that hold the potential to provide hard business benefits. These benefits include boosting worker productivity, improving decision making, saving time, enabling more self-service, and reinventing business processes to operate in deeply integrated, highly immersive, and seamless new ways."

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