

November 29, 2007 07:10:21 AM PST

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Oncontact Takes Advantage of Web Extensibility

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11/28/07 3:00 PM PT

Oncontact's approach to Web extensibility differs from vendors that purport to offer the same hybrid functionality, according to company president Jon Zimmerman. "For some Software as a Service vendors, the disconnected version is a glorified Excel

spreadsheet," he said.

[Oncontact Software](#) released version 6.1 of its CRM application, which caters to the growing demand among users for software delivered through the Internet . For the first time, with this release the vendor is providing users with Web extensibility along with its traditional client server  access.

What this means to end users is that the application and its content are available via the Web through a corporate network  and offline in synch mode -- with the same feature


set and functionality available through all three channels, explained Oncontact president Jon Zimmerman.

Not Your Average Hybrid


This approach differs from vendors that purport to offer the same hybrid functionality -- that is, in a client server environment as well as via the Web, he told CRM Buyer.

In reality, Zimmerman maintained, what these companies offer instead is a stripped down version of such features in the lesser developed channel.

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Oncontact 6.1 also provides a customer and partner Web portal, ClientNet. Through that Internet access, users and their partners are able to log into a corporate Web site to view such data as sales history and service cases, as well as provide Web-based self-service  and download company-specific information.

From Client Based to .NET

The third release in .NET, .1 is a continuation of Oncontact's Microsoft-centric approach. A staple in the CRM space since 1999, the vendor migrated from a client-server platform to the .NET platform and Visual Studio family of applications. When [Microsoft](#) (Nasdaq: MSFT)  rolled out Vista, Oncontact was among the first vendors to incorporate support for the operating system into its CRM application in its 6.0 product.

That release -- which was developed so that end users could implement it with little integration, according to Zimmerman -- offered typical CRM functionality as well as compatibility with Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Office 2007 and Lotus integration. It

also included a project management module, time billing module and advanced search function.

Oncontact decided to focus on its Web channel as more companies have been requesting Web accessibility to their CRM data, Zimmerman said. However the firm's back office administrative processes -- such as client billing, for instance -- are still structured around the on-premise model. **ECT**

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