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NetPage Previews 'Document Management for the Masses'; The developer demonstrates the upcoming release of an application code-name Project Chrome for tracking versions of Office documents across e-mails, hard drives and servers.

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SANTA CLARA, Calif. - Document management vendor NextPage Corp. is testing a new application to help individuals better track their iterations of Microsoft Office documents. During the **Supernova 2004 conference** here this week, the Draper, Utah, company demonstrated what it is calling "document management for the masses." The service is code-named Project Chrome and uses embedded metadata within documents to keep track of the most recent versions and changes, company officials said.

What makes Chrome different from typical document management approaches is that it supports a distributed work model rather than requiring documents to be stored in a central system, NextPage CEO Darren Lee said. Keeping track of documents is particularly difficult as employees share version through e-mail and with outside clients and partners, he said.

Chrome supports documents stored as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes, on users' hard drives and across network servers.

"You lose track of versions of the document and you're not sure who did what when," he said. "We're taking document management to the desktop."

Chrome entered its second beta release a couple weeks ago and has about 50 test customers, Lee said. NextPage is planning another beat round in September, with a public release to follow by the end of the year, Lee said.

Read more here about other new releases of distributed workflow applications.

Chrome includes both a desktop client for users as well as a service that tracks document versions and history. Only the users with whom a document originates needs the application in order for Chrome to track versions and changes, said Cyndi Tetro, NextPage vice president of marketing. Non-users still receive a signature line with basic versioning information.

Along with providing information on document versions, Chrome also tracks who made changes, what changes were made and the next steps in the document creation and editing process.

NextPage has been developing the new document-management application over the past 18 months. The company also makes a peer-to-peer content management system called NXT to connect distributed repositories of content.

Click here to read more about features of NXT.

Chrome supports Windows 2000 and higher as well as documents from Microsoft Office 2000 and higher. While NextPage is focused on Microsoft files such as Word and Excel documents in the initial release, the company also is planning to support other document types such as PDFs in future releases, Tetro said. Pricing for the application has not been set, but Lee said that Chrome likely would charge a yearly service fee.

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