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Palm Management: Tivoli and ON Technology Include Support for Palm OS Devices

Analyst: Stephen D. Drake

IDC Opinion

How will Tivoli, ON Technology, and others provide enterprise management to the Palm OS and other handhelds?

As Palm OS devices and other handhelds infiltrate the enterprise, the need to recognize and begin to gain some control of these devices is coming to the forefront for IT administrators. With much of the critical data for these devices residing on other servers, desktops, and laptops, current enterprise management vendors are providing an opportunity to extend the reach of their solutions to administer handheld devices. An extension of a familiar interface for IT professionals provides enterprise management vendors with an early advantage. Customers look to these providers to deliver core management functionality to administer mobile systems without deploying new solutions.

With their recent announcements, Tivoli and ON Technology address two of the most important and basic systems management needs: centralized software distribution and asset management. Mobile and remote systems management vendors and handheld software providers will also vie for customer attention in this growing subsegment.

Announcement Highlights

On March 7, in separate announcements, Tivoli Systems and ON Technology announced support for management of Palm OS devices as part of their overall enterprise management solutions.

ON Technology

ON Technology announced ON PDA Manager for the Palm Platform, providing enterprise management to Palm OS devices. The ON PDA Manager is an add-on to its current CCM software management solution. In addition to the functionality provided in the CCM console, the ON PDA Manager for the Palm Platform provides the following:

- Automatic deployment, packaging, and updating of Palm applications and content to mobile and remote laptops, LAN-based desktops, and Palm OS devices
- An administrative console to distribute and configure a suite of personalized applications and synchronization software from centralized servers (NT, 2000, and Unix) to multiple devices
- Integration with CCM's centralized user database to group Palm users into domains and management by policy
- Support for Palm desktop and Puma IntelliSynch, with modules for Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes, ACT!2000, Meeting Maker, and other customized Palm applications.

Tivoli Systems

Tivoli announced the Tivoli Device Manager for the Palm Computing Platform as part of its Pervasive Management Business Unit, which also includes management of automated teller machines (ATMs), point-of-sale (POS) terminals in the retail sector, and cable modems and other set-top boxes. The Tivoli Device Manager for the Palm Platform provides:

- Discovery and "reining-in" of Palm OS devices
- Centralized Palm application deployment and removal

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- Real-time software and hardware inventory, important for updating scheduling and providing license compliance
- Problem resolution of Palm OS devices
- Integration with Tivoli Enterprise Console
- Support for Palm Connected Organizers: III Series, V Series, and VII Series; IBM WorkPad c20 and c3; TRG Pro Symbol SPT 1500 and 1700 series; Handspring Visor and Visor Deluxe; and Qualcomm pdQ SmartPhone

IDC Analysis

Handhelds in the Enterprise Is a Reality

The single most important new revenue source in desktop management is the untapped management of mobile PCs. Inclusion of other mobile devices, such as handhelds, is an important element of that growth. *IDC's Outlook for Management of Mobile and Remote Desktops: 1999–2003* (IDC# 20335, September 1999) estimates that almost a quarter of desktop management spending in 2003 will be allocated to the control of mobile and remote PCs and other handheld devices within the enterprise. IDC does expect, however, that mobile and remote systems management solutions will be fully absorbed into the overall desktop management market over the next 3–4 years.

Like the increased emphasis on managing mobile and remote users' laptops, as they are increasingly among the most critical employees in an enterprise, increased adoption of Palm OS devices has reached a critical mass. Whether or not users bring these devices through the “back door” or they are brought in as legalized IT devices, a growing amount of mission-critical business data and other resources reside on them. Palm use has been expanding from personal applications like address books and to-do lists to enterprise software, including shared databases, group calendaring, and messaging. Thus, Palms are no longer an “end-user's problem” but rather the responsibility of the enterprise. Just as IT administrators have had to recognize the importance of maintaining mobile PCs, they now need to incorporate Palm OS devices and other handhelds into the overall management strategy.

Disposable Theory: Are We Overmanaging?

Although most of this discussion focuses on managing handheld devices, the thought of the disposable model may be more palpable to IT professionals. As the market to manage mobile PCs is still in its early stages, IT departments are just beginning to address the distinct needs of these mobile users and their systems. Additional management responsibilities for a growing number of handheld devices could prove to be overwhelming.

Since most of the critical data from Palm OS devices resides on other servers, desktops, or laptops, there may not be a need to manage these devices directly. Clearly, there is a growing variance in handheld capability, from personal information manager (PIM) to companion to

virtually independent; however, IDC believes that the lead devices, such as Palm OS and Windows CE devices, function as companions to and not replacements of portable PCs. If these devices were to breakdown or experience a problem, the discussion of cost analysis may come to the forefront: Is the cost to support these devices much higher than the cost to replace them?

Who Will Manage?

If the decision is made that indeed these devices are to be managed, a natural choice for customers is the current enterprise systems management providers. Although these providers deliver LAN-based management, many solutions are not optimized for systems in mobile and remote environments. With Palm and other handheld devices acting as companions, much of the critical resources for these devices reside on the systems that these vendors already manage. This provides an opportunity for enterprise management vendors to administer handhelds through the primary device.

Several vendors are either currently addressing the needs of managing the Palm OS devices and other handhelds such as Windows CE or will be later in 2000. Included on this list are:

- Enterprise management vendors, such as Tivoli and Computer Associates (CA)
- Mobile and remote systems management vendors, such as ON Technology, Callisto, Xcellenet, and Mobile Automation
- Software management vendors focused on handheld devices, such as Riverbed Technologies

For large management vendors such as Tivoli and CA, the value to IT professionals in using a familiar management tool to rein in Palm OS and other handheld devices is strength in its positioning. These vendors can leverage their installed base position as their customers look to them to obtain more control over the growing number of handheld devices in the enterprise.

The installed base of large enterprises is Tivoli's (and CA's) competitive advantage. Their customers will not have to retrain on a new console just to manage handheld devices. That same console (Tivoli Enterprise Console, CA Unicenter TNG Framework) can be used for future management of other devices. Furthermore, other systems management applications, such as security and storage management, can be integrated with the device management solutions. The downside for Tivoli and CA is that their management solutions are geared toward large enterprises. Although they have products aimed at the midmarket, CA and Tivoli are still perceived as heavyweight solutions that are difficult to implement. Thus, midsize customers looking for a Palm management solution will be more likely to consider simple yet scalable solutions, such as that from ON Technology.

ON Technology, which provides both LAN-based management and mobile and remote systems management, delivers a complete end-to-end management story for customers looking to manage mobile and

desktop PCs as well as handheld devices. Xcellenet (formerly a division of Sterling Commerce) offers expertise in managing systems for mobile and remote environments supporting retail terminals and branch offices, as well as mobile and remote users with laptops, handhelds, and smartphones. Mobile Automation currently ships a product that provides integration of Palm OS and Windows CE devices for Microsoft's System Management Server (SMS). Callisto, another mobile and remote systems management provider, plans support for the Palm later in 2000. Riverbed, a company solely focused on software for handheld devices, offers an enterprise platform and management console for administering Windows CE and Palm OS devices.

Conclusion

IDC believes that the growing adoption of Palm OS and other handheld devices within the enterprise warrants a solution that develops a level of control, including the "reining in" of these devices. However, due to the nature of these devices as companions, it may not be necessary to "touch" or manage these devices as a typical PC. The extension of a familiar management interface to gain control of these devices bodes well for an already overburdened IT staff. Enterprise management vendors provide the best opportunity to drive this subsegment of the market given their large installed base with enterprise customers and their ability to extend current management solutions to support handheld devices.

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