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Enterprise 2.0 and SharePoint 2010

Doculabs has many clients that are investigating their options for deploying Enterprise 2.0 or social computing capabilities for their organizations. From a technology standpoint, their decision often boils down to using SharePoint or using a purpose-built social computing platform.

The question for SharePoint customers is: To what extent can SharePoint 2010 support the breadth of capabilities that organizations are likely to need for Enterprise 2.0? If it falls short, what is the investment needed to extend or enhance it to support enterprise social computing capabilities?

This paper explores these questions and provides Doculabs' independent perspective, based on our client work, discussions with technology users and systems integrators, and our vendor research. It also provides a series of recommendations and considerations for organizations to keep in mind to ensure success when moving forward with social computing strategies and implementations.

Executive Summary

Doculabs helps clients develop strategies and roadmaps for enterprise social collaboration and content management. We have many clients that are investigating their options for deploying Enterprise 2.0 or social computing capabilities for their enterprises. The decision often boils down to two options:

1. Use SharePoint 2010, which many of our clients are already using for document management and portal capabilities; or
2. Use a purpose-built Enterprise 2.0 solution that has comprehensive capabilities for social computing

For these organizations, the question is: To what extent can SharePoint 2010 support the breadth of capabilities that organizations may need for Enterprise 2.0? If it falls short, what additional investment is needed to bridge the gaps?

Our Approach:

This paper explores these questions and provides Doculabs' analysis and conclusions, which are based on the following:

- Our perspective from consulting projects with organizations that are implementing social computing strategies and solutions
- Teleconferences with users about their social computing priorities
- Discussions with systems integrators familiar with SharePoint 2010
- Our own vendor and market research into the enterprise content management and Enterprise 2.0 spaces

Our Conclusions:

- **SharePoint 2010 has evolved significantly as an enterprise content management (ECM) solution.** Microsoft continues to address gaps and bolster SharePoint's content management capabilities, and many of our clients are having great success in adopting these enhancements.
- **SharePoint 2010's social computing capabilities are basic**. Our analysis indicates that SharePoint is not yet sufficient as an Enterprise 2.0 platform for organizations that want comprehensive social computing features in areas such as unified activity streams, community building, conversation-centric collaboration, and advanced notifications and recommendations.
- **Enhancing SharePoint 2010 will be expensive.** For organizations intent on using SharePoint as an Enterprise 2.0 solution, customization and/or third-party Web Parts will be required – which likely will be time consuming and expensive (with potential up-front costs ranging from hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars, plus ongoing maintenance expense).
- **Organizations serious about Enterprise 2.0 now should consider a purpose-built tool, rather than customizing SharePoint or using third-party Web Parts.** SharePoint customers that are ready for social computing now may not want to wait for the next major SharePoint upgrade, which will certainly have improved social capabilities but will likely not be released until 2013 or later (based on Microsoft's history).

Background

Who's going social – and why

- Enterprise 2.0 technologies provide a place to share information across geographies and leverage ideas and expertise from throughout the organization, as well as from customers, partners and contractors.
- Looking at our client base, many of the organizations that are at the forefront of rolling out social capabilities tend to be those with global operations. Think of the international mining company that needs to share expertise, or the manufacturer that's looking for more efficient approaches to operations, or a financial services firm that's seeking to develop innovative products and services.
- But smaller organizations are also finding ways to leverage the collaborative capabilities of E2.0 technologies. These organizations want to provide a single place where employees can share information via blog posts, or links to web sites, or comments or discussions.
- Reflecting common terminology in the industry today, this report uses the terms "Enterprise 2.0" and "social computing" interchangeably.

With all the market attention around social media and social computing in the consumer market, the bar is high for organizations that want to provide Enterprise 2.0 capabilities to their users.

People are well accustomed to the kinds of social computing capabilities they have available to them through social sites like Facebook – capabilities like forming connections and communities, following others, sharing content and comments (such as through wikis, blogs, RSS feeds, etc.), social tagging, and viewing activity streams and status. Beyond the specific features, these common social capabilities are presented to the users in a simple and intuitive way. It's this type of experience that sets the user expectation level as to what should be available in a social computing platform – both within the enterprise as well as with trusted parties outside the firewall such as partners, contractors, and clients.

As organizations look to provide these kinds of social computing capabilities to the enterprise – and to achieve goals such as improved collaboration for geographically distributed users, process efficiency, and innovation – it is natural to consider leveraging existing IT investments rather than adding new technologies. For many organizations, this means taking a close look at SharePoint 2010 and what it brings to the table for social computing.

Indeed, Microsoft has made advancements on the social computing front, with new capabilities in SharePoint 2010 that extend the product from the enterprise content management (ECM) space and into the Enterprise 2.0 space.

Microsoft has also begun to incorporate certain "social" computing capabilities into SharePoint 2010. For example, SharePoint 2010 now includes blogs and wikis, team sites, social tagging of content and people, and an improved "MySites" for managing and sharing user profiles, status, and activity feeds.

But are SharePoint's capabilities comprehensive enough? If not, what would it take to customize SharePoint to provide these capabilities? This paper summarizes our findings and opinions about these questions. Specifically, this paper provides:

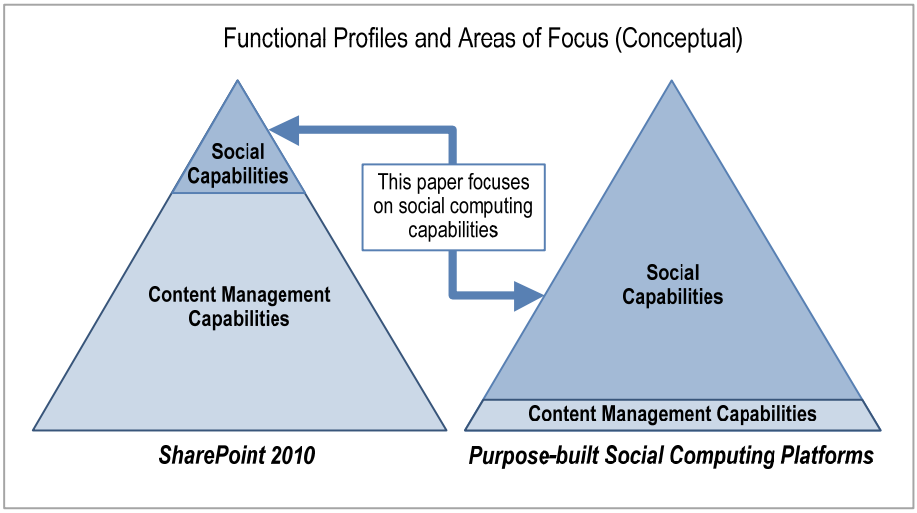
- Doculabs' view of the key capabilities that are required within a comprehensive Enterprise 2.0 environment
- General opinions from clients and systems integrators about the level of effort required to customize SharePoint in order to deliver such capabilities in an integrated way
- Recommendations for SharePoint 2010 customers that are considering using it for their social computing needs

Understanding the Focus of SharePoint and Social Computing Platforms

It is important to understand that SharePoint and social computing solutions have different histories, design objectives, and functionality. SharePoint was originally conceived as a document management solution, and is now an established platform that continues to mature in capabilities for enterprise content management, portal, and collaboration.

In contrast, there is a whole market of solutions in the social computing space that were developed from the ground up to support Enterprise 2.0 applications as their primary focus. Some were originally conceived as utilities to support particular social computing needs – such as blogs, wikis, or RSS feeds – and have expanded their offerings over time. Others were conceived from the beginning as integrated platforms to support the breadth of capabilities needed in a social intranet or extranet. And the market continues to change rapidly, with new capabilities emerging, new vendors entering the market, and predictions of a wave of market consolidation.

The following figure provides a conceptual comparison of the key areas of focus for Microsoft SharePoint and for purpose-built social computing platforms.

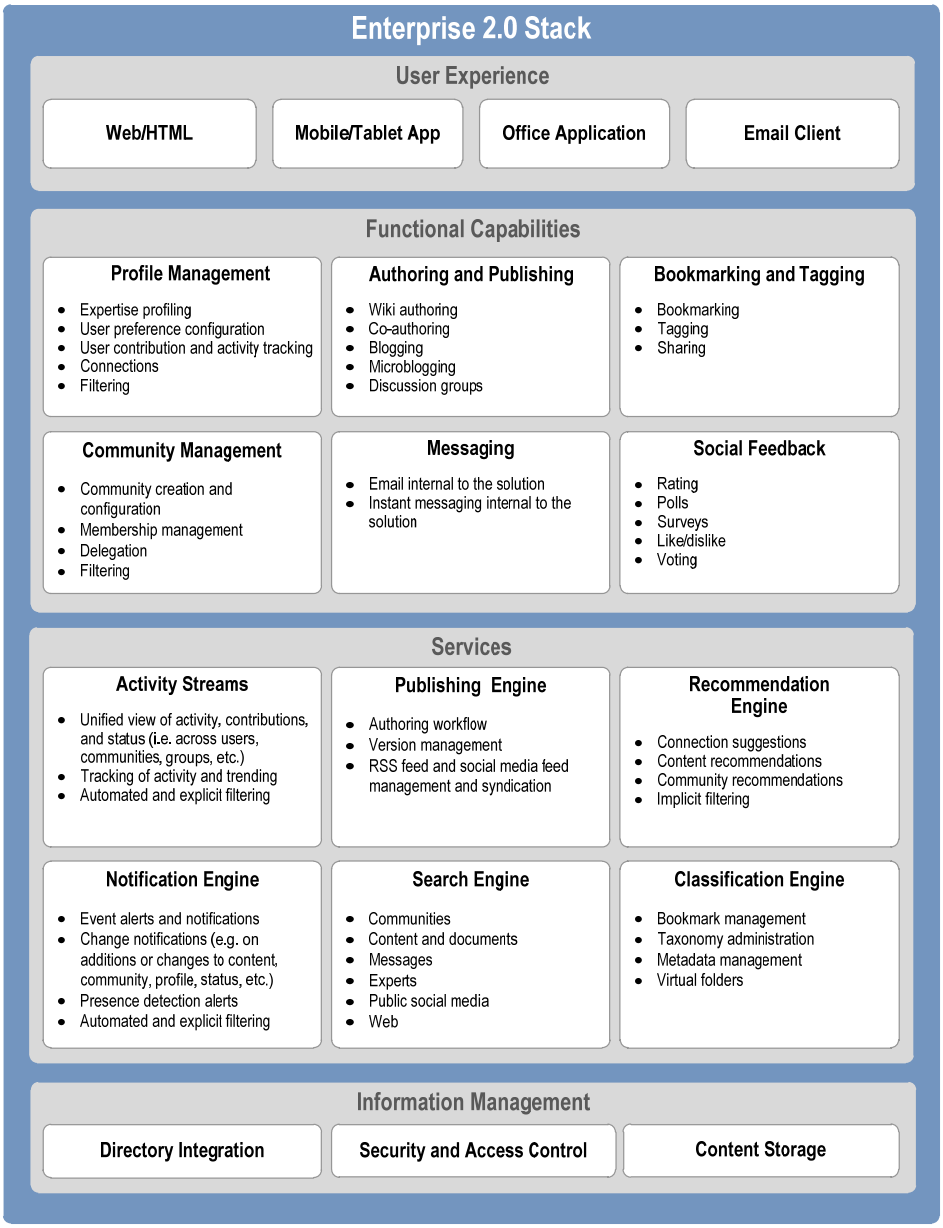


As this figure illustrates, SharePoint's foundation is content management capabilities, with an emerging set of capabilities for social computing that was introduced in SharePoint 2010. Contrast this with purpose-built Enterprise 2.0 solutions, which focus nearly entirely on social computing capabilities and provide very little in the content management arena. This is important to understand from a user experience perspective as well, as these different types of tools are designed to support different work styles.

Enterprise 2.0 Capabilities

The following figure provides Doculabs' breakdown of the key capabilities and functionality that fall under the Enterprise 2.0 or social computing umbrella. In other words, **this graphic illustrates the set of capabilities that we believe represents a comprehensive Enterprise 2.0 platform**. Stated another way, these are the capabilities that we believe many users have come to expect will be provided in the social computing tools their organizations adopt.

Conceptually, we depict these capabilities in a series of layers, each providing specific types of functionality that can be used together to deliver Enterprise 2.0 and social computing applications to users that may include employees as well as external partners or communities outside the firewall.



Understanding Doculabs' depiction

- Doculabs defines the ideal Enterprise 2.0 environment as one with four distinct layers of capability, each of which interacts with the other layers.
- While some organizations may not require all of these capabilities, or may define them differently than we have, we believe this depiction provides a fairly straightforward view of the superset of capabilities in the Enterprise 2.0 space.
- Many of these capabilities are easily understood through their prevalence in intuitive and well-integrated consumer tools like Facebook and LinkedIn, but this model also highlights Information Management capabilities that are important to organizations.

The following table provides a more detailed description of the capabilities outlined in the Enterprise 2.0 stack.

Layer	Capability Category	Key Capabilities or Functionality
User Experience layer: The interfaces through which users interact with the Enterprise 2.0 environment	Web Browser	• Browser-based interface that provides a portal-type experience for users
	Mobile/Tablet Application	• App that is tailored for the form factors of smart phones or tablet computers and can run on those devices' operating systems
	Office Applications	• Extensions that allow users to access the Enterprise 2.0 environment and capabilities directly from desktop applications such as Microsoft Office
	Email Client	• Extensions that allow users to access the Enterprise 2.0 environment and capabilities directly from email clients such as Microsoft Outlook
Functional Capabilities layer: Includes the key features and functionality that users access via the Enterprise 2.0 interfaces	Profile Management	• Tools that allow users to add, change, and control information about their identities, roles, areas of expertise, and interests • Includes controls that allow users to tailor their experience, such as levels of content filtering and frequency of notifications • Allows users to adjust privacy and sharing controls that determine how visible they are to others on the network • Includes the ability to leverage users' activity information and connections in their expertise profile
	Authoring and Publishing	• Multiple but separate wikis, with support for distributed management of the content they contain • Support for multiple people to view and edit a document simultaneously • Fully integrated blogging capabilities (including comments, social feedback, etc.), with moderation and syndication capabilities • Broadcast publishing capabilities, such as Twitter-like announcements to an audience of followers (microblogging) • Advanced discussion group framework with comments, social feedback, moderation and syndication capabilities
	Bookmarking and Tagging	• Tools for tagging content • Tools for bookmarking content and sharing that information with others • All content types share a common tagging mechanism and interact with the same taxonomy • All content input or publishing mechanisms support the ability to post, send, or share the content with other members of the network
	Community Management	• Ability for users to control their own relationships and memberships to contacts, groups, and communities that they interact with on the network • Ability for users to create or self-provision new communities and desired application functionality with minimum involvement of IT • Ability for users to control of the configuration and content of self-provisioned communities, within the guidelines established by the organization
	Messaging	• Onboard (internal) email and instant messaging services for communication among network users • Ability to use corporate email systems (e.g. Microsoft Exchange, Lotus Notes) to send messages outside of the network
	Social Feedback	• Mechanism for users to provide feedback by rating, ranking, liking, disliking, flagging and blocking content that is posted on the network • Polls and surveys that users can implement to collect data from users on the network, with the ability to automatically or manually publish the results to the network

Layer	Capability Category	Key Capabilities or Functionality
Services layer: The underlying services required for processing and managing information and interactions within the platform and its Functional Capabilities layer	Activity Streams	• Central service that provides a rolling "status update" that is displayed to each user, informing them of new postings, messages, content, and other network activity • Provides intelligent automation that assesses inbound events and automatically identifies what to show the user, based on preferences
	Publishing Engine	• Processes user input and delivers it to the appropriate application • Manages multi-step workflows for the authoring process • Manages and delivers content and messages as RSS feeds, for ingestion by other systems and applications including social media sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) • Manages version control for documents or content with multiple authors • Supports real-time document sharing and editing (e.g. for co-authoring, conferencing)
	Recommendation Engine	• Central indexer and analysis engine that crawls and monitors posts, messages, and documents for similar themes and concepts, and recommends them to users • Assesses interrelationships in the network and suggests new contacts and experts, in context with and based on a user's activities or behavior • Provides users with suggestions for groups, blogs, and communities that may be of interest, based on profile information, preferences, search patterns, etc. • User configurable to reduce the volume of less-relevant recommendations
	Notification Engine	• Central process that delivers all notifications to users based on any event in the network (e.g. presence detection, new postings or messages, uploaded content, membership to a community or connection to a user, etc.) • Ability to deliver notifications to the activity stream or through internal messaging or email • Support for user-configured notification preferences
	Search Engine	• Single tool to search across the network and return results in a concise, organized, and relevant format • User aids such as spell checking, search term recommendations, relevancy ranking, results grouping by content type, results sorting, search term history, saveable searches, thumbnail previews, etc.
	Classification Engine	• Tool that provides taxonomy services for classifying, tagging, and organizing content and documents • Maintains a metadata catalog, ensuring more consistent tag selection • Provides tagging data for use in analytics and visualization (tag clouds, etc.) • Makes contextual connections between users, tags, and bookmarks for use by the Recommendation Engine
Information Management layer: Provides underlying storage, security, and directory integration services required by the Services layer	Directory Integration	• Integration with the organization's directory service (e.g. Microsoft Active Directory, LDAP, etc.) to provide user profile information to the network
	Security and Access Control	• Security and access control mechanism that is granular enough to control access to all aspects of the network (e.g. communities, content, etc.)
	Content Storage	• Mechanism for securely storing and retrieving structured and unstructured data created and used by the platform (which may include text, graphics, documents, rich media, etc.)

The Cost of Social Enablement for SharePoint

With SharePoint, Microsoft has a strong history of product improvement with each release. MOSS 2007 saw significant improvements in document management capabilities, and SharePoint 2010 continued this evolution with improvements in scalability and records management capabilities.

While Microsoft has incorporated some "social" computing capabilities into SharePoint 2010, the functionality does not approach that which would be required for a comprehensive Enterprise 2.0 environment. So for organizations that are already using SharePoint and that want to provide users with Enterprise 2.0-type functionality, the logical question is, "Is SharePoint good enough to meet our needs? If not, how much extra effort is required?"

For our typical client looking for an Enterprise 2.0 solution to support an environment with 10,000 or more users, this is a critical question to answer. For example, what's the effort involved for such an organization to customize SharePoint to deliver an integrated solution with which users can dynamically set up and build communities, see activity streams and content from other users, share comments and content, receive notifications and recommendations based on activity and status tracked by the system – without IT involvement?

To gain some perspective on how much effort might be involved in customizing SharePoint 2010 to use it as an advanced Enterprise 2.0 solution, we interviewed a number of clients as well as several systems integrators familiar with SharePoint 2010's capabilities. We asked them to review our list of Enterprise 2.0 capabilities, and provide us with their perspective on the level of effort needed to deliver these types of capabilities with SharePoint 2010. Our findings from these interviews include the following:

- There were differing opinions on which capabilities SharePoint 2010 addressed out of the box and which capabilities would require additional customization in order to deliver advanced functionality.
- All the interviewees agreed that to deliver a comprehensive set of advanced Enterprise 2.0 capabilities, organizations will need to invest in significant customization.
- It was not possible to pin down a consistent estimate of dollars or hours involved (estimates ranged from $500,000 to more than $1 million to start).
- Many interviewees commented on the ongoing, and potentially significant, costs involved in maintaining these customizations over time.

Based on these findings, we conclude the following:

- It will be very difficult for organizations to determine exactly how much incremental investment they'll face if attempting to use SharePoint as an Enterprise 2.0 solution.
- Customization can be a slippery slope; initial costs may seem low, but organizations must also factor in the costs of maintenance, solution provisioning, and communication and training.
- Time to market will be a challenge for organizations that opt for customization.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For organizations already using SharePoint that are interested in Enterprise 2.0 capabilities, Doculabs offers the following perspectives and recommendations:

- **SharePoint 2010 continues to mature as an ECM product and has introduced some social computing capabilities, but it still not yet sufficient as an Enterprise 2.0 platform.** Given Microsoft's release history, it will probably be at least three years before Microsoft releases the next version of SharePoint, and longer than that before large numbers of SharePoint customers are ready to upgrade. While we can expect that the new version will have social computing enhancements, some organizations may not be willing to wait that long to provide advanced social computing capabilities to their users.
- **Recognize that some (potentially significant) level of investment will be needed to deliver advanced functionality in many of the areas described in this paper.** This could be in the form of customizations or additional technologies that fill SharePoint's gaps – both of which involve ongoing maintenance costs in addition to their one-time costs. For this reason, we recommend that organizations serious about Enterprise 2.0 now consider a purpose-built tool. At a minimum, IT organizations should help their users understand their options and their associated costs and effort.
- **Don't underestimate the change management implications of social computing in the enterprise.** While the concept behind social computing is that it is easy to use and adoption grows virally, we see plenty of organizations where adoption falls short of expectations. Organizations need to focus attention on areas including user experience, usage guidelines, participation incentives, and communications and training.
- **Take the time to thoroughly define your vision and requirements for social computing**. This involves understanding the benefits you're trying to achieve, the types of usage patterns you're trying to enable, and the user demographics in your organization. From there, you can prioritize your requirements and the types of capabilities that you want to deliver, and develop an approach for delivering them.
- **If you have to start small, do it with a vision for the future.** The return on investment associated with Social Computing technologies are generally softer than for traditional process worker technologies, so we expect that some organizations will try to start small and try to show success through targeted deployment of technology that can later be expanded. We caution against doing this without first defining your overall goals and requirements for social computing at an enterprise level – or you may find yourself with a solution that works well for certain usage scenarios but it not appropriate for broad-based enterprise adoption.

Above all, we believe that success with social computing requires that organizations define their overall goals, strategy and requirements before moving forward. **Don't bypass or short-change this analysis**, as we don't believe it is realistic to simply conclude that a given tool can meet your Enterprise 2.0 requirements without first conducting a thorough review.

About Doculabs

We are experts in enterprise social collaboration and content management. We help our clients by delivering highly actionable and comprehensive strategic plans and road maps, helping our clients achieve their business goals and create competitive advantage. Our consulting services also help our clients improve their records management and information governance approaches to facilitate compliance, reduce risk, and reduce the cost of e-discovery.

Founded in 1993, Doculabs has an established track record in helping its clients bring content under control and improving the ways they collaborate. Our engagements focus on guiding our clients with our experience, analysis, and in-depth market knowledge. And we're independent; because we don't sell software or implementation services, our clients can be sure that our recommendations are objective.

Our consultants are all highly experienced, averaging more than 20 years of relevant professional background and many years of working together as part of the Doculabs team. We're recognized thought leaders in the industry, frequent speakers at industry events and webinars, and active contributors to leading publications, social media sites, and organizations like AIIM.

Hundreds of Fortune 1000 organizations and government agencies have turned to Doculabs for assistance with their information management strategies. For more information about our services, visit the web site at www.doculabs.com or call (312) 433-7793.

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