

BRUNEL: Hello, and welcome to another episode of Getting the Most Out of IBM U2. This is Kenny Brunel, and I'm your host for today's episode which introduces wIntegrate version 6.1.

First of all, I've got a guest with me today joining me from the UK over the phone. David Robertshaw. David is the chief architect and inventor of wIntegrate, and he's been working with wIntegrate well, since its inception over 15 years ago.

Now, David I know that most of our listeners probably are familiar with wIntegrate and have used its many capabilities. But for those listeners who may not be as familiar with it, could you give us an overview of what wIntegrate is?

ROBERTSHAW: Yes, Kenny, hi. We talk about the four capabilities, the four types of features in the product. The first would be the piece we just want to install and forget, that's the out of the box features like your regular terminal emulation, data transfer, cut and paste and all those good things. We overlook them sometimes but they're really important and so kind of slick.

Second would be people who want to keep accounts based interface to their U2 host but do a little bit of

integration, perhaps for in documents in Word, from a host basis application, create Excel spreadsheets and e-mail the results to people automatically, that kind of thing. So you keep the original application but just have those Windows features as appropriate to your end users.

Third and this is a tough one really for many people is the GUI-tization. wIntegrate has complete GUI-tization capabilities, but it's not easy, it's work, it's...there's a sliding scale here of effort and benefits.

People have done it very, very successfully. Some customers have GUI-tized their applications using wIntegrate using host subroutines and host code to drive the dialogue boxes on the client.

And these are just as convincing GUI applications as any on the desktop; they're tremendously successful. And of course these GUI applications migrate seamlessly to the new Java clients so people have a choice on how to deploy them.

And fourthly, OEMs can take their application with agreement from IBM and deploy it as part of customized solutions perhaps using the Active X components to create completely new kinds of applications which don't in fact look like wIntegrate at all.

BRUNEL: Thank you for that overview, David. I have another guest with me today. He's in the room with me. Our new product manager for the U2 tools, this include wIntegrate, Vinny Smith. Vinny's worked with the U2 products for nearly 20 years.

Vinny, I understand this release provides enhanced recovery capabilities, a new Java look and feel and significant performance improvements. So can you go into some, a little bit of detail on what's really different about this new release of wIntegrate?

SMITH: Certainly, Kenny. So this release, which is wIntegrate version 6.1, has a couple of major features and improvements and also some general updates. For example, we brought the look and feel of wIntegrate up to include the latest Vista standards and also added the capability for thin client interoperability for mail merge and transfer out to Excel and those are things that were missing from previous versions.

As you mentioned sort of the resiliency and recovery capabilities, we've enhanced the telnet connectivity to allow you to recover a session if you're ever disconnected intermittently for example if a WiFi network drops.

We've also enhanced the existing query builder or reporting

capabilities adding a number of features including the ability to provide prefilled dates. So you can specify dates on a query in terms of today, tomorrow, next month, last month, next year, rather than having to use a, or try to sit there and think about well what date is it next month and what is it I actually need to type in.

On the thin client performance, we've done two things. One is to increase the interoperability with other Java clients and the most significant certainly from a customers' perspective is we've improved the performance by as much as 40 percent in some of the testing that we've actually done, but I'll let David talk a little bit more about that in the future.

And we've also enhanced the look and feel of the thin client, the Java client with improved [tabbed folders] and roll over buttons.

BRUNEL: Okay, thank you Vinny. My next question is going to go back over to David. And with wIntegrate being a mature product, David, I was wondering if you could give us some reasons to our users as to why they would want to upgrade.

ROBERTSHAW: Yes, Kenny, you're right. This is a mature product. And with any mature product it's very difficult to

add compelling new features that a user is going to look at and say, hey, that's something I've got to have, that's a reason for me to upgrade.

So what we focused on in recent years is deployment techniques. Ten years ago, everybody installed applications to the local hard disk so the internal applications were installed locally.

Now the cost of ownership of that was [really a main sort of cost], it was fairly high. Recently what we're seeing is a move to thin client deployment where going back to the techniques of the eighties, really, you install the application centrally on a server and then the end user connects and software is downloaded at run time.

Well, what we do is we split the main application into two parts. We still support the regular local version so people can install that to their heart's content if that's what they want to do.

But this new technique is an option, they're also available on the same CD, the [current] CD, and it splits the application into two parts where the wIntegrate server [so called] sits on the essential machine in the user site and thin clients have like a screen in keyboard interface connected to the wIntegrate server which is actually the

core of the application and serving perhaps 150 or 200 different end users.

Now, the thin client can be either a Windows application, traditionally installed or in version 6 we introduced the Java thin client which is downloaded at run time. And the Java thin clients operate in two ways: either as an application so it looks and feels very much like the traditional Windows thin clients or as an applet in the browser for integration with Web sites and that kind of thing.

So that's what we focused on. We still support all the features we always did but what we do now is make it easier for you to deploy them and with a thin client server deployment and reduce the cost of ownership.

BRUNEL: That makes good sense, David, thank you. Okay, so my next question now is going to come back over to Vinny.

Vinny, perhaps you can tell us why someone would pick wIntegrate over another terminal emulator?

SMITH: I think that's a good question Kenny and there's a number of reasons and a number of features that wIntegrate offers which make it superior to the emulators out in the multi value market.

As David talked about, the multiple clients or the multiple deployment methods that you can use with wIntegrate to go anywhere from a local install in a traditional environment on a Windows system all the way up to a zero footprint installation and using the thin client which would work on actually a PC or a Mac or Linux.

We also have IBM's backing. You know, the wIntegrate product is a mature product; we've continued to develop and enhance it in all the years that it's existed. IBM has a solid commitment to all of the U2 products and they'll continue to enhance these products driven by customer requests for as long as needed.

You know, the other things that wIntegrate can offer that some of the products offer perhaps not as well in terms of bringing the products from the traditional green screen over into the Windows environment and modernization for the GUI-tization and scripting options, those are features and functions that people have never seen before should go online and have a look at what wIntegrate can do.

BRUNEL: Okay, so, and David I know you're going to probably want to add to this but there was one thing that Vinny mentioned that I want to focus on and that's zero footprint installation. What do you mean by that? And David, I'll ask you from the technical side of things to

give us a brief explanation if you will.

ROBERTSHAW: Yes, Kenny, that's the Java client. Essentially it's on a Web server. The user clicks on a URL and it's downloaded to run time onto the desktop machine. So there's nothing to preinstall, nothing to preconfigure. All the settings are stored on the central server available to any administrator. It allows complete flexibility and then nobody needs to touch the users' PC.

BRUNEL: This aspect of wIntegrate is something that you've actually coded in a 40 percent improvement in performance, is that correct?

ROBERTSHAW: Yes, that's right. What's happened is that we input, with the Java clients or the Windows thin clients for that matter, it introduces a new tier to the communications. So there's the thin client, the wIntegrate server and the U2 server.

Now, obviously, that's going to slow things down a little. What we've done is we've done a couple of things to improve the performance, particular for GUI-tized applications which have been migrated to the Java environment.

One of our customers GUI-tized their application of a very large application with many users. They GUI-tized it for

Windows many years ago and their customers wanted it run on MACs. So working with them on the Java clients we got the Java client working on Macs and now they're using the traditional U2 application, GUI-tized, completely GUI-tized on Macs and PCs interchangeably and then there's nothing to preinstall in the client.

BRUNEL: Okay, well thank you David. So I think you've given some good information and good reasons of why someone would want to upgrade to this latest version. So now I would like move into how they would get the most out of it.

And I'm going to turn my attention back over to Vinny and Vinny what can you tell us?

SMITH: Well, Kenny, there's a couple of different options for existing customers who are using wIntegrate who have software subscription and support, they can upgrade to wIntegrate 6.1 after March 31st at no additional cost.

For new customers, they can come through U2 [askus] (u2askus@us.ibm.com) and request a sales rep and we'll give them more information on contacting those later. Once you get your upgrade and upgrade can be as simple as taking a CD image or getting an electronic download. There's a couple of different resources that you can use to look for how to use the new capabilities.

There will be online documentation provided with the product, and we've also added a number of our technical support team including our advanced technical support engineer for wIntegrate creating some tech notes.

Tech notes are available either through the standard IBM my support site or you can come through the U2 tech connect support site (<http://www-306.ibm.com/software/data/u2/support/>) and link through to the IBM my support site through one of the URLs on that page.

Over the years, we've continued to create new tech notes. There's a big library there. We've been building this for more than 10 years and if anybody has any additional items they'd like to see covered by a tech note, they can send that request into U2 tech connect or support.

BRUNEL: Okay and you had mentioned U2 [askus] I think and I just want to point out to our users that that is our common e-mail interface. So if you do have any questions or comments about anything, you want to send an e-mail to U2askus@us.ibm.com. And just before we finish up here, David is there anything else that you'd like to add?

ROBERTSHAW: Yeah, well, in common with Vinny we're very pleased at this release. So it's been a year in the making,

a lot of work goes on, we don't just do these things that you see, we do all the underlying internals that keep the code up to date so its going to work on the new platforms and all those kinds of things.

And the new features in there really come from customer requests. We don't sit in an ivory tower here sort of doing these things up ourselves. We really want to hear from customers, we want to see what customers have done, all that knowledge of what's happening out there in user land is so valuable to us. So if you have any ideas or suggestions for new releases, please let us know. It's u2askus@us.ibm.com.

Everything gets very carefully considered.

BRUNEL: Great, well I would like to thank both of you for joining me today. David, I appreciate you calling in from the UK, and Vinny for joining here in the office today.

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for user comments and feedback that will take you to our developerWorks site where we have a forum and you can have lively chat about any questions you may have for U2 products including this version of wIntegrate. Be sure to keep an eye on our podcast page for what future episodes are up and coming.

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