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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO WINDOWS USER GROUP (CWUG)  
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Windows City™

## Not "If" to Consolidate, but "How"?

By Andrew Page

The term *server consolidation* has gotten a lot of attention from IT managers, industry analysts, and trade publications. The driver behind the "gut feeling" that all these servers are not needed and that reducing the number of servers could enable savings from a cost perspective—from reduction in the number of administrative efforts to reducing the complexity of the environment. The "do more with less" in a tough economy has made server consolidation a top concern of IT and business leaders.

However, done without planning, server consolidation could actually increase complexity and cost. Running applications side-by-side introduces many new variables and dependencies on machine maintenance and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). To further complicate matters, many applications themselves were written with the assumption that they were the only applica-

tion running on that box.

Server consolidation should be considered as a process for aligning IT resources to business goals. True server consolidation, or a more accurate term being server "rationalization," takes into account the cost and efficiency factors while ensuring that IT is capable of meeting the needs of the business.

When looking at a typical server environment in an IT department, you often see rows and stacks of servers. These racks have grown at a faster rate than most businesses. So, how did we get here? Racks of servers are focused on solitary tasks. You also notice servers lined up side-by-side that were implemented to increase availability or scalability. Three things are certain to the IT department: manageability and complexity increases as the numbers of servers increase, IT staff hasn't grown at the same rate as servers have, and this growth rate can't continue.

While at the center of any successful consolidation strategy, consolidation is much more than swapping out many smaller servers with fewer larger ones. It's more about server rationalization by optimizing the infrastructure and the processes surrounding it.

There are three general approaches to reducing the costs and easing the management around consolidation:

1. Reducing the servers: This is the most straightforward way to optimize any server environment. The key is to ensure good planning—from capacity planning to service level agreements.

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### COLLABORATION CORNER

## "The User Group is Dead... Long Live the User Group!"

By Dan Friedrich

At the peak of the "new economy" bubble, conventional wisdom pronounced the user group dead—disintermediated by on-line knowledgebases, news-

groups, and other cool Internet technologies. Today Webinars are especially compelling alternatives to some of what user groups do. And yet, somehow, like most of the other prematurely announced dodo birds of the

new economy—financial advisors, insurance brokers, travel agents, banks, auto dealers, and brick-and-mortar stores—the user group lives on. Why?

To remain relevant, user

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## Server Consolidation...

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**2. Rationalize the platforms:** Different business drivers have often created several different pockets of technology—UNIX, Windows, AS/400s, Linux, Novell NDS. The addition and maintenance of each platform brings increased training, support, and purchasing costs. A clear business driver for bringing down complexity and associated costs is to determine which platforms are most strategic, most cost effective, and bring most business value to the organization's goals.

**3. Improve management:** For many organizations, ongoing management is the single highest component of their total cost of ownership (TCO). Therefore, improving management will have a much more positive impact on costs than the initial

purchase costs of hardware and software. Using the best defined practices and technical guidance for efficiently running a platform is a key driver to achieving a more managed platform.

### Reducing Servers by Type

File and print serving are generally the largest group of Windows servers. Technology improvements in Windows Servers and hardware have enabled corporations to consolidate commodity file and print environments. Many corporations have leveraged the performance im-



Happy people at the October CWUG meeting

provements of Windows Server 2003 to reduce file servers by 30% and print servers over 80%.

Domain controllers have been a prime candidate for consolidation as well. With NT 4.0 server and the associated domain model, numerous servers were required in large numbers of physical locations. Active Directory in Windows 2000 Server and Windows Server 2003 has changed the criteria for domain creation, and therefore the requirements and placement of domain controllers. Lockheed Martin and Rohm & Haas were able to reduce their domain controllers by 50%-64% without impacting services levels for customers and business groups.

Application servers, while most guilty of creating the server sprawl, represent a prime candidate for consolidation. Since this is the most complex and most risky, there are several options available for consolidation:

- **Hardware partitioning:** Some hardware vendors allow the physical division of powerful servers into smaller hunks of processors and memory, called partitions. Each partition is allocated before starting up, creating a separate "machine" that can run independently of the other defined partitions. You get complete isolation at the

cost of flexibility in not being able to make changes to the environment on the fly.

- **Workload management:** Workload management provides granular control over CPU and memory, and requires that all applications run on the same version of the operating system. Windows System Resource Manager (WSRM) is the workload management version included with Windows Server 2003. Most hardware vendors also have a proprietary version of workload management.

- **Virtual machine:** VMs enable application consolidation by running several "virtual" machines on one host machine. Each VM runs its own operating system, and is isolated from all other VMS and the host operating system. This enables the "rack 'em and stack 'em" approach of hosting dozens of smaller applications that require their own server with relatively small processor requirements. Microsoft Virtual Server is an upcoming product that will enable virtual machines on Windows Server 2003.

### Windows Server 2003

In addition to WSRM and Virtual Server, Windows Server 2003 brings several other improvements to enable server consolidation options that weren't available before:

**Side by side DLLs—**enables multiple copies of the same DLL to work on the same server, reducing conflicts and enabling more application isolation and decreasing dependency and application testing

**IIS multiple instances:** the total redesign of IIS6 ensures reliability and independence of running applications

**Shadow copy:** allows users to bring back deleted or modified copies of their files. No going to tape to restore a file!

**Multipath I/O:** technology in Windows Server 2003 to increase reliability & availability

**Scalability enhancements:** up to 64 processors, hot swapping and hyper-threading

**Load the copy you received** at the first CWUG meeting and give the consolidation enablers a test drive!

Get a full evaluation copy of Windows Server 2003 at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2003/evaluation/trial/evalkit.mspx>

For more on consolidation, see: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem/articles/consolidation/default.mspx?o=search.microsoft.com/search/results.aspx?view=en-us&p=1&s=0&c=2&st=b&qu=consolidation&na=30>

Windows Server 2003 enables new server consolidation options.

# He Was A Real Player, Once Upon a Time

Confessions of an Old School Gamer

By Rob Nottoli

So when I volunteered to write something for the Chicago Windows User Group on Windows PC entertainment, I had no idea what I would write. One thought was that I should write some reviews of games I've played recently, and that's when it hit me... I am no longer a gamer.

Let me tell you about my past first, so I can establish my credentials as a gamer. My first "PC" system was a Texas Instruments Sinclair that a friend of mine gave me. His dad bought it and couldn't figure it out, so off it went to me. It had only one game, hangman, but man was I hooked! Along the way I had systems like a TRS-80, Vic-20, TI-99 (man, the sprites on that thing) and my all-time, old-school favorite, the Commodore 64.

The C-64 is really where I became a "gamer." I would buy magazine and enter the game code by hand for hours on end in order to play. I also saved my money to buy \$60.00 games. When the bargain bin was refreshed, I hit that thing with gusto to find the best games for the least amount of money.

My gaming days evolved to the Commodore 128, the Apple IIe, and finally the Amiga's hit the scene. (I not only owned an Amiga 500, but an Amiga 2000, 2500HD, and an Amiga 3000.) I was in heaven with the Amiga's cool graphics and great games; the NFL Football games were the best back then.

Then I grew up and started working on X86 machines

back in the early 90s. When I say working on them, I mean I was a computer technician at a small computer store out in McHenry County. We would do anything for a buck. One minute I was fixing a person's motherboard and the next I would be optimizing their Dos 4.01 system so they had enough memory to play the hot games.

It was during these times that I became engrossed in strategy games like Steel Panthers, Civilization, Ancient Art of War, Defender of the Crown, and so on. This is also about the time I met face to face with my gaming downfall—my wife.

My downfall was slow... it took my wife years to break the gamer mold. I think she had it planned from the start; first marriage '92, then kid 1.0, then mortgage '98, and finally—her secret weapon—kid 2.0!

Gone were the days when she'd wake up on Saturday morning to find me still playing the same game I had started the night before and claiming that I had every

intention to play it until Monday morning. Gone were the times when I would map out my Bard Tale's plan while I was driving to work. Gone were the days of not eating or drinking for 16 hours at a time.

So what have I become? I am now a has-been (I could have been a contender). The only games I have played this year are D&D: Temple of Elemental Evil, Civilization: Play the World, and Medieval: Total War. All three are great games that don't require a huge investment of hours and hours. All three are games that do not need muscle memory or lots of invested hours to have fun and accomplish something, like you need to do with many of the first person shooters and real-time systems out there.

So this whole article has come down to: if you have a little time each week to game, try out one of the games mentioned above. They gave me a quick fix, and I am sure if your story is similar to mine, they'll give you a quick fix too.

in new ways is only part of the formula for survival for mediators like user groups. It is not enough to stay out of the way of the new economy; mediators need to embrace it to improve their value proposition. We need to ask: What can a user group uniquely offer its members that they can't get as effectively any other way? If we can answer that question, we can build an organization built to last.

Part of the answer is that a

user group uniquely offers face-to-face contact with technology fellow travelers across industries—and a chance to talk directly with their key technology vendors. This may take the form of business-to-business networking, interactive Q&A, or just plain camaraderie. Because this is a more distinctive core competency of user groups than their information dissemination role, they need to do everything they can to strengthen it. Some of these steps can be implemented in the meetings themselves—by favoring interactive formats (like Q&A sessions or live demos) over push formats (like lectures). But given the high cost of coming together in a physical meeting, even perfectly aligning meetings with these priorities can only take us so far.

As the song says, we live in the in-between time—and that's where most of the upside opportunities lie. If in-between we can both support the physical meetings and use them as a sling-shot to energize the in-between time, we can build a new kind of user organization—local, face-to-face, based on communities of shared interests AND virtual, infomated, real-time, agile, hyperlinked to related communities and information—in short, the best of the new and old economies.

Those of you who attended my session on collaboration at our October 16 CWUG meeting know where I'm headed—and you will be shocked-shocked to learn that the answer is... really cool Microsoft technology, namely Windows SharePoint Services 2 and Windows Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003. SharePoint lets you rapidly build any kind of web site portal—Internet, Intranet, Extranet, or Any-Other-Net—using reus-

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groups, like the other "old economy" person-to-person mediators, have had to reinvent themselves. A user group that meets every other month cannot today content itself with announcing the latest product announcement or patch and disseminating tech factoids. There are now other, more immediate ways to accomplish those goals.

But de-emphasizing those activities that are best handled

## The Chairman's Corner

October 2003

We had an awesome turn-out for our third meeting, held on October 16 in Downers Grove. Over two hundred folks attended presentations on patch management, collaboration with Windows SharePoint™ Services, and Windows Media Services.

Attendees each received a CD containing a variety of patch management documents from Microsoft, as well as video tutorials on how to set-up Microsoft's Software Update Services (SUS) and use vulnerability scanners. In case you missed the meeting, these materials (and the other presentations) are available at [www.cwug.net](http://www.cwug.net).

We continue to try to find the right mix of meeting topics. Feedback from attendees is an incredibly helpful way for us to measure how we're doing and better understand what you want. A summary of feedback results and sample attendee comments are summarized elsewhere in this newsletter.

I'd like personally invite you drop me an e-mail with your comments and suggestions. You can reach me at [robnotto@microsoft.com](mailto:robnotto@microsoft.com).

Our next meeting is on December 4, 7:00 p.m. at Dave and Busters in Addison. Our theme is distinctly non-technical—Holiday cheer with a purpose! We're organizing a social event that will benefit the House of Good Shepherd, an organization devoted to assisting battered women and their children.

In addition to helping this worthwhile group, we're really looking forward to getting to know each other better and enlisting your ideas for how to make CWUG better.

I know it seems way to early to be thinking about a Holiday Party, but please pencil it into your calendar now. A formal e-mail invitation will be forthcoming. I hope you can make it.

**Rob Nottoli,**  
**Founding Chairman,**  
**Chicago Windows User**  
**Group**

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able Web Parts that you can drag and drop in the browser. You can use the Parts in the box (discussion threads, contact lists, event lists, Office object viewers, and the like) or build your own using Visual Studio.NET. You can create reusable part, page, and site templates in FrontPage 2003. In fact, all Office System 2003 programs are SharePoint-enabled. You administer all of this with simple browser pages. And the whole thing runs on Windows Server 2003 and SQL Server 2000 so it's got a great scalability story. And that's just a few highlights; for more, see [www.microsoft.com/sharepoint](http://www.microsoft.com/sharepoint) or my PowerPoint presentation at [www.cwug.net](http://www.cwug.net).

Of course, SharePoint by itself is

only part of the answer, but the shared portal-based interactions it can facilitate for CWUG is a critical enabler. SharePoint changes the portal development equation so dramatically that it now becomes feasible to provide to a grass-roots not-for-profit organization like CWUG capabilities that only a Fortune 500 corporation could have afforded a few years ago.

We envision a CWUG SharePoint site that evolves to support every facet of our organization, from our leadership team planning sessions to our meeting logistics and all of our on-line networking and information sharing. It will also support our growth, by facilitating the evolution of informal and formal special interest groups—our Mini-Me's.

SharePoint is a big new frontier that is of interest to many CWUG members, and it is fortuitous that it is at the same time a great enabling technology for CWUG itself, so we will have a great opportunity to explore this technology by living real-world use cases. If you are also excited about these possibilities, the CWUG leadership team encourages you to get involved—send your suggestions, volunteer to serve on the community portal development committee, volunteer to beta-test the early versions of the site. And when it goes live, actively contribute—participate in discussions, post questions and answers, post links to useful materials, post your suggestions. Without your involvement, our cool SharePoint site will be a big lifeless shell. Get involved, drop me a line: [DanFriedrich@FriedrichKlatt.com](mailto:DanFriedrich@FriedrichKlatt.com) or (773) 753-1806.

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# First Annual CWUG Holiday Charity Event !



**Come join us for some holiday fun!**

**Get to know your fellow CWUGers a little better!**

**And help some of Chicagoland's less fortunate!!!**

We will be getting together at Dave and Busters in Addison on Thursday, December 4th at 7:00 P.M

Dinner will be served and then you can enjoy all Dave and Busters has to offer with some new friends.

We ask for a \$15 donation (more, if you like). All proceeds go to the House of Good Shepherd charity.

Visit [WWW.CWUG.NET](http://WWW.CWUG.NET) to register for the party.  
 Hurry, seating is limited! See you there!!

Dave and Busters in Addison is located off I-355at Lake Street.  
[www.daveandbusters.com](http://www.daveandbusters.com), 630-543-5151)