

Empower Your Company With Collaboration Tools

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The way SMB knowledge workers are conducting business is changing. They increasingly are working from multiple locations, including home offices, hotels, conference centers, partner locations and airports. These changes have created an increasing need to collaborate electronically rather than in person, leveraging both asynchronous and synchronous applications and services.

Collaboration Models		
	Characteristics	Examples
Asynchronous	Non-Real-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ E-mail ✦ Message Boards ✦ Blogs ✦ Wikis ✦ Shared Workspaces
Synchronous	Real-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Voice ✦ Video ✦ Instant Messaging ✦ Web Conferencing

Figure 1: Collaboration Models
(Source: Nemertes Research 2007, Building The Successful Virtual Workplace)

What To Use And How

SMBs are faced with a daunting set of choices for collaboration, often with a limited, albeit highly qualified, IT leader or team. For most, e-mail is still the staple, coupled with instant messaging for real-time chat. But this is changing as SMBs become increasingly aware of new alternatives such as shared workspaces, blogs and wikis.

Shared workspaces represent an effective way of storing, sharing and collaborating on files including documents, spreadsheets and presentations. Many shared-workspace systems support features such as the ability to check-in and check-out documents, assign tasks, track progress and assign controls to prevent unauthorized use, viewing or modification. Shared workspace options include applications such as Microsoft Office SharePoint, IBM Lotus Quickr, and Jive Software's ClearSpace. Shared workspace capabilities are also increasingly available as a hosted application via services such as Google Apps and Microsoft Live Workspaces.

Adoption of shared workspaces among SMBs is currently at 27% (versus 65% for the overall enterprise market), with another 13% evaluating their use, meaning that the bulk

of the SMB market still hasn't taken advantage of the collaboration benefits of using shared workspaces. (Please see Figure 2: Shared Workspace Usage.)

Shared Workspace Usage

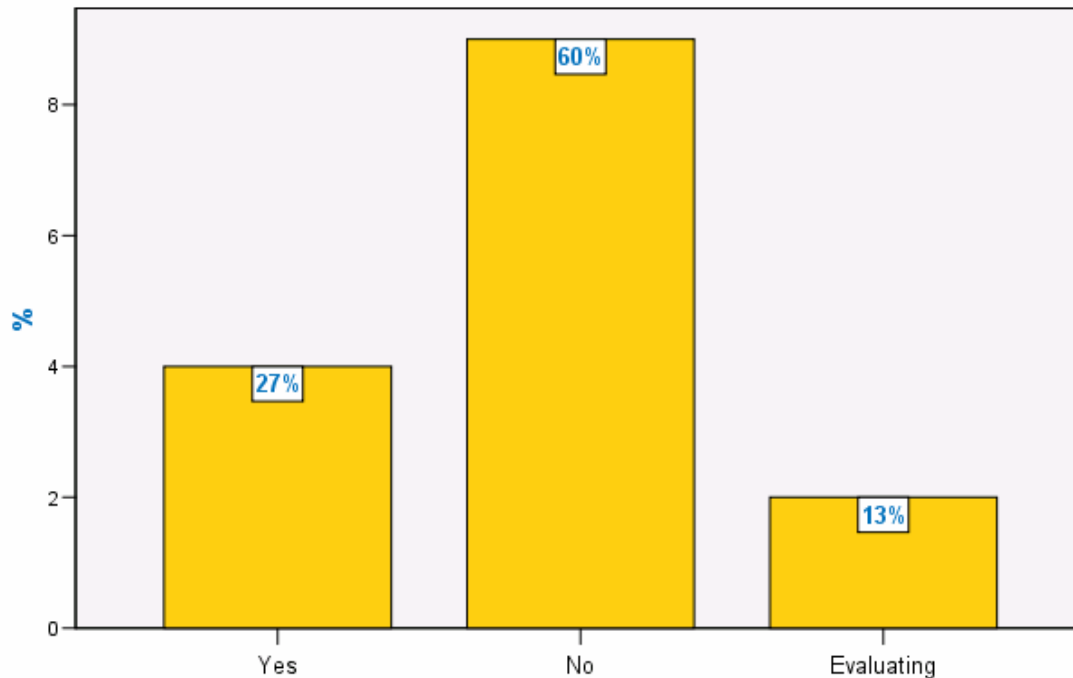


Figure 2: Shared Workspace Usage
(Source: Nemertes Research 2007, Building The Successful Virtual Workplace benchmark)

Leveraging Web 2.0

Web 2.0 refers to the use of the Internet as an application platform, where end-users can leverage Web-based applications to generate and manage their own content, enabling self-organization of social networks. Popular applications of Web 2.0 include social-networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Orkut, as well as user-driven sites including YouTube. One of the most popular Web 2.0 applications is the wiki, a user-editable Web page, allowing individuals to easily create and share information. Perhaps the best known wiki is Wikipedia, a Web-based encyclopedia that anyone can modify.

In the collaboration space, wikis are especially useful for SMBs to use as an information repository for such things as client data, best practices, documentation and instructions. Wikis typically don't possess the sophisticated document management capabilities of a shared workspace, but they are instead useful as an easy, flexible way to manage information.

SMBs adoption of wikis is roughly the same as that of the overall enterprise market, with 29% of SMBs using wikis, and other 7% evaluating, versus 32% using and 5%

evaluating for the enterprise market as a whole. (Please see Figure 3: Wiki Usage.) The wide availability of

Web-based and open source wikis makes their use especially well-suited to cost-conscious SMBs, while the ease of deployment and use means that SMBs can adopt wikis with little upfront investment in training.

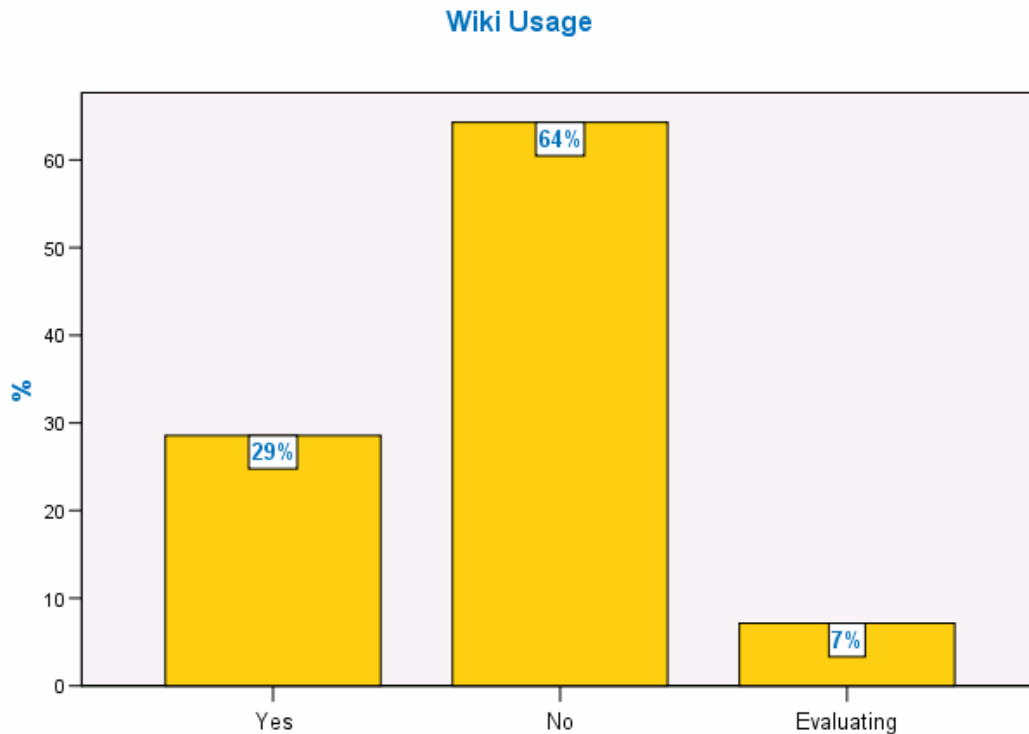


Figure 3: Wiki Usage
(Source: Nemertes Research 2007, Building The Successful Virtual Workplace benchmark)

Conclusion

Shared workspaces and wikis are two emerging collaboration tools that are ideally suited to the needs of the small-medium market. Shared workspaces and wikis allow groups of all sizes to collaborate on projects, client deliverables, and internal processes and procedures using applications or Web-based services custom designed to foster collaboration.

About Nemertes Research: Nemertes Research is a research-advisory firm that specializes in analyzing and quantifying the business value of emerging technologies. You can learn more about Nemertes Research at our Website, www.nemertes.com, or contact us directly at research@nemertes.com.