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**NEWS**

## SPC 11 Keynote: Microsoft 'Investing Big' in SharePoint, SharePoint Online

By Gladys Rama • 10/03/2011

Microsoft opened Day 1 of its SharePoint 2011 conference in Anaheim, Calif. by talking about the upcoming release of the first major update to SharePoint Online as well as other investments its making in the software.

The update to SharePoint Online, part of the cloud-based Office 365 suite that Microsoft launched in June, will launch by the end of this year, according to Microsoft's Jeff Teper, corporate vice president of the Office Business Platform at Microsoft. Teper said during his keynote presentation that SharePoint Online will come with Business Connectivity Services (BCS), among other features.

Teper also said that the SharePoint team is working on "the next major release," presumably referring to the customer premises product, but did not give details on a timetable. He did say that "this is the biggest release of SharePoint we've ever done, [with] the largest engineering team."

"We're investing big in this technology," Teper said.

Teper's talk comprised the bulk of Monday morning's keynote. Jared Spataro, senior director of SharePoint product management at Microsoft, preceded Teper with a string of statistics to underline SharePoint's rapid growth. According to Spataro, SharePoint is the fastest Microsoft product to generate $1 billion in revenue, making it one of the largest products in the company's portfolio. In fact, Spataro said, if SharePoint were a standalone business, it would rank as one of the top 50 software firms in the world.

In all, Spataro said there have been over 125 million SharePoint licenses sold to over 65,000 customers worldwide, including 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies.

Teper followed Spataro onstage to give the audience of roughly 7,500 people an overview of the SharePoint development team's three main goals: redefine the nature of collaboration, "unleash the ecosystem" and build a world-class platform.

He also revealed that there are "thousands of partners building apps on SharePoint," many of whom have requested a way to move those apps to the cloud. To that end, Teper said the next update of SharePoint Online will have BCS, "including read-write access to Web services, to make it easier for people to build cloud-based applications that front-end on their data."

According to this SharePoint Team Blog, "BCS lets customers use and search data from other systems as if it lives in SharePoint -- in both read and write modes." With BCS

included, the forthcoming SharePoint Online update will let users "connect to data sources via Windows Communication Foundation (WCF) Web Services endpoints."

In addition to announcing the SharePoint Online update, Teper unveiled a new certification program: Microsoft Certified Architects (MCA) for SharePoint. Those who achieve the MCA SharePoint certification "have a level of depth, training and certification that is unmatched on complex SharePoint enterprise deployments and application development," Teper said.

This Microsoft Learning page indicates that the beta period for the MCA SharePoint exam will end sometime during the duration of the SharePoint Conference, with Board exams scheduled for Feb. 6, 2012.

One of the highlights of the keynote was a demo by Richard Riley, a director on the Microsoft SharePoint team. He demonstrated SharePoint's scalability, FAST search capability and ability to quickly recover from a network failure. Onstage were two server clusters, one from EMC and one from NEC, housing 14.4 TB of data pulled from Wikipedia. The demo by Riley used SQL Server code-named "Denali" CTP 3 as the database management system.

The load test simulated 7,000 users on the network accessing the 14.4 TB of data. Riley was able to use Microsoft FAST search to pull up 100 million items in 2.3 seconds. Next, Riley used the Windows Cluster Manager to show a failover happening live on stage. One of the server clusters was unplugged on stage resulting in a 14.4-TB failover to the next server. The other server cluster reconnected the data after the failure in 40 seconds, bringing back the entire SharePoint farm.

Kurt DelBene, the president of Microsoft's Office Division who took the stage after Teper, emphasized that the capabilities of this demo are all being made available to customers through the cloud with Office 365, and that Microsoft's cloud takes away the need for organizations to have failover and clustering expertise in-house when running SharePoint. He described Microsoft's earlier Business Productivity Online Service as "not so friendly" compared with Office 365. DelBene didn't elaborate, but BPOS is Microsoft's first-generation cloud technology, which had been been based on Office 2007, whereas Office 365 is based on SharePoint 2010 technology. If users want a private cloud, Microsoft supports that too, DelBene said.

*Kurt Mackie contributed to this article.*

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