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## **Campaign to Open Source Domino**

### **An open letter to Steve Mills – IBM Software Group**

Dear Steve,

I hope that you can find time over the festive season to read and consider the position put forward in this letter. I will present, what I believe is a strong case, for IBM to transform the Notes/Domino product line into an Open Source, Community Development offering. It is my contention that such a move would not only enhance the strategic position of the IBM Software Group portfolio but would also transform and re-energize significant parts of the Software market as a whole.

Over recent years we have seen the decreasing traction of the Domino product line among enterprise customers, lower conquest rates in small enterprises and a lack of penetration in the SMB market. This decline in position of the product has continued despite clear IBM commitment to the ongoing development, marketing and support of the product line. Competitors in the messaging and collaboration space are increasingly applying the 'legacy' tag to the product line and winning conversion projects that result in more expensive and less functional solutions for the existing customer base. As this FUD increases, the demise of the product line will accelerate. I will not dwell here on an analysis of the decline of the product; I merely note that this decline will be irreversible unless there is a fundamental change in the market positioning of the product line. If we are to arrest and reverse this decline, we need a paradigm shift in the marketplace, not a feature review.

I propose that changing the development and publishing model for the Notes/Domino product line to an Open Source, Community Development model will provide the necessary paradigm shift to transform the Domino market. Further, I believe that such a bold move in taking a core product Open Source will have a much wider impact on the software market in general and would certainly force many competitors into defensive positions. There is a huge base of technical and entrepreneurial skill in the Domino marketplace and this move would unleash a torrent of innovation and activity that would revitalize the market.

These are some of the key opportunities that will arise out of the change to an Open Source model.

- The product will immediately qualify as a potential offering for projects that mandate the use of Open Source software e.g. European Union, Local and National Government and education sectors.
- In the messaging segment a more diverse range of client types and styles will emerge with increased integration with other workspace components.

- A wider range of workstation components will become available exposing back-end functionality to a much wider range of desktop products.
- The, still unsurpassed RAD capability of the product is likely to broaden with support for additional languages and scripting environments. This will inevitably attract more development support from the wider community into the Domino orbit.
- The wider community will be able to address many of the long-standing niggles inherent in the product.
- Once access to the product is available for students, education institutions and other professionals, this will help to instill its concepts, capabilities and advantages alongside other database technologies and development platforms.
- New directions for the platform will evolve offering new software and service opportunities.
- IBM will further enhance its position in the Open Source marketplace.

The model for the Community Development product line needs to be carefully selected and prepared to ensure

- IBM revenues are protected and increased.
- The ongoing strategic placement of the product within the wider IBM product and service portfolio.
- IBM strategic development targets for the product can still be achieved.
- Domino remains a coherent product with a clear position with enterprise customers.
- The full energy of the development community is harnessed.
- The position of licensed proprietary components used in the software needs to be addressed.

The wide experience of IBM in the Open Source marketplace and the broad support that the product enjoys among professionals will go a long way to ensuring that the opportunities of such a move are fully exploited and that the challenges are met with optimal solutions.

I have taken soundings from several luminaries and practitioners in and around the Domino marketplace and the predominant feeling is that an Open Source Domino would create such a buzz in the market, providing that it is done quickly enough, that it would result in not just a re-invigoration but a complete re-birth of the product.

I will be publishing this letter in the near future with the intention of creating an informal lobbying group in support of the proposition. I look forward to hearing any comments or observations that you have and will of course publish these along with the letter.

I wish you, your family and colleagues a very merry festive season.

Yours Sincerely

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