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Rumors of GroupWise's demise are greatly exaggerated

By Paul McNamara

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As if [Novell](#) doesn't have enough trouble, now the company has to fight a false rumor that it is about to pull the plug on GroupWise.

An artfully spoofed e-mail purportedly from **former CEO Eric Schmidt** is bouncing around the Internet with the unfounded message that Novell's messaging software - No. 3 in a market dominated by Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange - will be discontinued Jan. 1.

"It's spreading like wildfire through the GroupWise community, and it's being taken as legitimate, even though it's not," says a Novell employee.

A GroupWise administrator in Detroit received the e-mail, and, unsure of its authenticity, sent it to the popular NGW mailing list. "Which was like looking for a gas leak with a match," says my source, as the phony message then began to circulate at Internet speed. Novell was left scrambling to reassure customers and head off real damage.

One reason the rumor achieved momentum was it could not be easily dismissed: Novell is indeed reshuffling its product lineup, and who's to say GroupWise wouldn't be a casualty? (New **CEO Jack Messman** promises that won't be the case in an interview on page 1 of this issue.)

Two other reasons for the wildfire, however, are the ease with which e-mail can be spoofed . . . and the gullibility with which so many people assess anything that lands in their in-box.

A fresh report from **Jupiter Media Metrix** predicts that e-commerce conducted over Web-enabled telephones will account for about \$4 billion - not this year, not next, but in 2006.

And, while \$4 billion may sound like a significant chunk of change, Jupiter points out that it will constitute only 2% of online shopping five years hence. As for this year, the researchers expect that total to reach a paltry \$22 million.

Allow me another spin at that 2006 projection: Back the travel and entertainment industries out of the \$4 billion, and mobile commerce stands roughly alongside your county flea market in terms of important sales channels for most companies.

The Jupiter folks strained to find a silver lining in their bucket of ice water, positing "that shopping-related content on mobile devices will influence transactions online via PCs, and offline in brick-and-mortar stores." Moreover, they see such devices playing a bigger role in customer relationship management.

Still, the report should raise a basic question for those who are contemplating major investments in the infrastructure necessary to fully extend online sales operations to mobile devices:

Might that money be better invested serving customers who already exist?

We like to think of '**Net Buzz readers**' as intellectually well-rounded network professionals; the antithesis of geek stereotypes. . . . And we're pleased to report that our faith in this proposition has been reinforced.

Last week we heard from a reader who told of having seen a list of Web links referred to as a "hypheography."

"This was supposed to be the Web equivalent of bibliography, 'hyphe' being Greek for 'web,' " he said.

That observation prompted an invitation from yours truly for someone to explain the word "hyphen." So up to the plate steps **Jim Cooper** (or, as we'll dub him here, Professor Cooper):

"The origin of 'hyphen' is unrelated to 'web.' Hyphen is composed of two words: 'hypo' and 'hen.' The 'o' is omitted in combining the words, just as we do in English with contractions. Hypo is a preposition with the basic meaning 'under'; hen is the neuter form of the word that means 'one.' Hyphen is used to indicate that multiple words are to be treated 'as one.' Thanks for the rare opportunity to exercise my classical Greek."

No, professor, thank *you*.

Feel free to chime in. The address is buzz@nww.com.

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