New blog on integrating Groove with Office

October 11, 2005

Raymond Chen

Andrew Wharton from Groove has started writing about integrating the team and its product with Office. His opening salvo sets the stage and hooked me in for what looks to be an interesting glimpse into life in another division at Microsoft. (Something that is as mysterious to me as it is to you.)

In the early days of the Windows division, there was friction among the groups that were thrown together to form the project, because when your group is told to join forces with another group, your natural tendency is to treat the other group as "them". And of course "they" are dumber, slower, and less physically attractive than you are. That's why they're "they" and you're "us". "We" always make the right decisions and "they" always make the wrong ones.

To remedy this situation, the powers that be established regular "Windows Integration Meetings" (also known as "WIMs"), wherein the disparate and mutually distrustful groups would get together and work out their differences. The medium for this process was, of course, beer and snacks.

The "meetings" were a success. The groups began seeing each other as members of a team rather than adversaries. As the Windows division grew, these "Integration Meetings" welcomed new groups to the project and continued to serve their purpose of smoothing tensions among them.

At some point, the "I" in "WIM" began to stand for "Informational" rather than "Integration", but that had no practical effect since people still call it the "WIM". Regardless of what the letter officially stands for, the "I" stands for "beer".

Raymond Chen

Follow