



Instant Technical Brief:

A Comparison of Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager with IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced

Introduction

With Lotus Sametime Advanced, IBM has extended the capabilities of Lotus Sametime Standard (instant messaging, VoIP, video chats, and Web conferencing) to include persistent group chat, broadcast tools, and screen sharing.

Instant Technologies, specialists in developing innovative, enterprise-class compliance and productivity solutions for IBM Lotus Sametime, has long offered comparable capabilities in Instant Team Sessions (encrypted and secure browser-based persistent chat rooms) and Instant Queue Manager (real-time, presence-aware access to subject matter experts).

This document compares the features of Lotus Sametime Advanced with those of Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager, along with the complexity of deploying and managing the two options, to help you decide which option meets your requirements for the lowest total cost of ownership.

Functionality Overview

Persistent Chat

Think of persistent chat as managed, multi-user 'places' in which cross-organizational teams can collaborate on specific topics in the atmosphere of an open forum where both the chat room and the content—conversations, documents, files, bookmarks—persist over time.

Persistent chat combines the presence awareness and real-time communication benefits of instant messaging with the interactive dynamics of live, in-person team meetings.

Both Lotus Sametime Advanced and Instant Team Sessions share a common definition of persistent chat's features and benefits.

Broadcast Tools vs Real-time Presence-Aware Queue Management

Lotus Sametime Advanced includes 'broadcast tools' intended to connect internal users with information and experts which would otherwise have been difficult to find. The main component of these broadcast tools is 'Skilltap', which enables internal Lotus Sametime users to request information or ask questions of a broad community.

Instant Queue Manager also connects users with information and subject matter experts, but it takes the concept several steps further:

- ◆ Requests can be initiated by both internal and external users via the Sametime client and/or STLinks embedded in a web page, thereby making Instant Queue Manager a valuable tool for both internal knowledge sharing (eg, help desk support) and external services such as sales and customer support;
- ◆ Requests are intelligently routed to relevant subject matter experts according to the nature of the inquiry;
- ◆ Issues can be escalated to 2nd- and 3rd-level support to improve first call resolution rates; and
- ◆ Instant Queue Manager automatically captures metrics for management oversight on performance—average wait time for assistance, time taken to resolve requests, names of agents who accept or decline requests, and more.

Functionality Overview (Continued)

Screen Sharing

Screen sharing allows users to share an application, a portion of their screens, or their entire desktop with other users in real-time—without having to stop to schedule a Web conference.

Both Lotus Sametime Advanced and Instant Queue Manager offer instant screen sharing capabilities between users. Lotus Sametime Advanced allows users to launch screen sharing within the Lotus Sametime Connect client, while Instant Queue Manager allows users to launch screen sharing via their preferred third-party web conferencing service.

Main Feature Comparison: Instant Team Sessions vs IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced

Feature	Instant Team Sessions	IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced
Persistent Chat Rooms: Members can come and go at will; the room - and a transcript of all that transpired - will be there when they return.	Yes	Yes
Persistent Content: Store information relevant to the team such as discussions, task lists, and bookmarks.	Yes	No
Secure Real-time Meetings; Encrypted Discussions: Discuss confidential matters and share sensitive documents safely.	Yes	Yes
Automatic Contextual Alerts: Users can create alerts so they will be notified when a topic relevant to their requirements is being discussed.	Yes	Yes
Server-based Alerts	Yes	Yes
Alerting API: Receive and/or transmit alerts to and from other systems.	Yes	Yes
Support for Multiple Open Chat Room Windows: Work in multiple persistent chat rooms simultaneously.	Yes	Yes
Support for External File Storage: Access control to external content via the Sametime client or embedded links to a Notes database.	Yes	Yes
Out-of-the-box Integration with Websphere Translation Server	Yes	No
Web-based Client	Yes—Customizable and 'brandable'	Yes
Rapid, Cost-effective Deployment	Yes	No
Requires Deployment and Maintenance of Additional Servers	No	Yes

Main Feature Comparison: Instant Queue Manager vs IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced

Feature	Instant Queue Manager	IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced
Real-time, Presence-aware Support for Internal Users	Yes	Yes
Real-time, Presence-aware Support for External Users (eg, Via the Web)	Yes	No—Internal only
Proactive Web Visitor Monitoring: Initiate contact with web site visitors to offer assistance proactively.	Yes	No
Open Back-end API to Support External Ticketing Systems (eg, BMC Remedy)	Yes	No
Push URLs to Users	Yes	No
Invite Other Subject Matter Experts to Render Assistance	Yes	Yes
Transfer Support Requests to Other Subject Matter Experts	Yes	No
Localized/translated Text Responses	Yes	No
Automatic Load Balancing of Incoming Requests for Assistance	Yes	No
Escalation to 2nd- and 3rd-level Support	Yes	No
Manager-level Control Over Access to Queues	Yes	No
Support for Premiere Conferencing Between Users and Subject Matter Experts	Yes	No
Support for Chat Surveys (With Full Logging for Report Generation)	Yes	No

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Main Feature Comparison: Instant Queue Manager vs IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced (Continued)

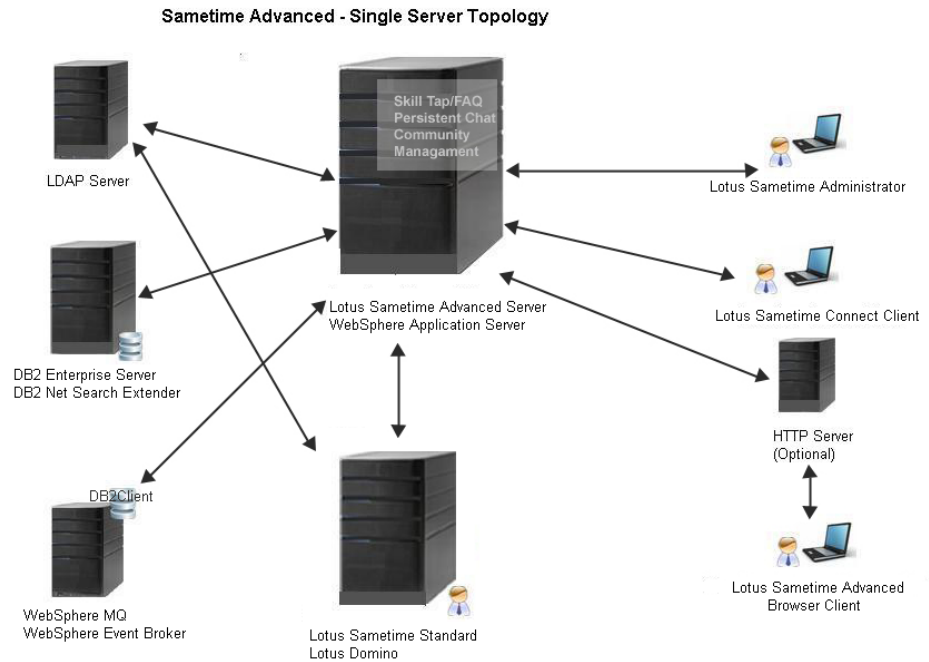
Feature	Instant Queue Manager	IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced
Automatic Metric Tracking for Management Reports (Refer to Note 1 below)	Yes	No
Screen Sharing	Yes—Within your preferred third-party web meeting service	Yes—Within the Sametime Connect client
Instant Polls	No	Yes
Broadcast Alerts: Requests for assistance are broadcast to all subject matter experts in the queue.	No	Yes
Round-robin Alerts with Configurable Response Time Standards: Requests for assistance are distributed amongst all subject matter experts and automatically passed to the next expert if the first expert does not pick up the request within a specified time frame.	Yes	No
Web-based Client	Yes—Customizable and 'brandable'	Yes
Rapid, Cost-effective Deployment	Yes	No
Requires Deployment and Maintenance of Additional Servers	No	Yes

Note 1: Sample of reports generated by Instant Queue Manager:

- ◆ Names of agents who accept/decline requests
- ◆ Time request was submitted (day, month, year, time of day)
- ◆ Time taken to resolve requests
- ◆ Escalation tracking
- ◆ Average user wait time for assistance
- ◆ Name of company that submitted the request

Deployment Comparison: Infrastructure Requirements for IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced

The diagram below illustrates the infrastructure required to run Lotus Sametime Advanced:

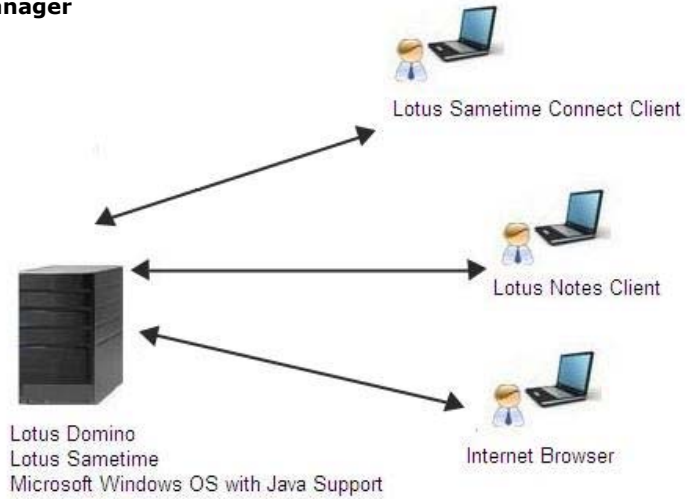


As illustrated in figure 1 above, Lotus Sametime Advanced requires a minimum of five separate servers (and more likely ten servers, if you require redundancy for availability and failover). This also means, of course, that your support staff require expertise in Websphere, Websphere Message Queue, Websphere Event Broker, DB2 Enterprise Server, and DB2 Net Search Extender. You need to consider very carefully the impact on total cost of ownership of all this hardware and requisite technical expertise.

Deployment Comparison: Infrastructure Requirements for Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager

The diagram below illustrates the infrastructure required to run and the products from Instant Technologies that combine to deliver capabilities comparable to those found in Lotus Sametime Advanced:

Topology for Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager



As illustrated in figure 2 above, Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager run on your existing Lotus Sametime infrastructure. You can easily add value to your investment in Lotus Sametime Standard without incurring additional costs for hardware, training, and the ongoing maintenance and support of a complex Lotus Sametime Advanced Environment.

Note: For optimal performance, Instant Queue Manager should be deployed on any machine on your network that can connect to your Lotus Sametime server. Instant Queue Manager effectively functions like a user logging in to your Lotus Sametime server.

Deployment Comparison Summary: Servers and Technical Competencies

Server Requirements	Instant Queue Manager and/or Instant Team Sessions	IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced
Lotus Sametime Standard w/ Lotus Domino	1	1
Lotus Sametime Advanced (Websphere Application Server)	0	1
DB2 Enterprise Server w/ DB2 Net Search Extender	0	1
Websphere Message Queue Server w/ Websphere Event Broker	0	1
LDAP Server	0	1
HTTP Server (Optional)	0	1

Technical Competency Requirements	Instant Queue Manager and/or Instant Team Sessions	IBM Lotus Sametime Advanced
Lotus Sametime	Yes	Yes
Lotus Domino	Yes	Yes
Websphere	No	Yes
Websphere Message Queue	No	Yes
Websphere Event Broker	No	Yes
DB2 Enterprise Server	No	Yes
DB2 Net Search Extender	No	Yes

Conclusion

As with any product comparison, the preceding pages illustrate an overlap of features common to both options as well as features unique to each option.

Lotus Sametime Advanced's main advantages are its enhanced broadcast capabilities and its support for screensharing within the Lotus Sametime Connect client. Those advantages, however, result in a significant increase in deployment complexity, which in turn creates IT overhead for the additional technical expertise required to manage and maintain the environment.

Your analysis must therefore extend beyond the relatively low initial buy-in for Lotus Sametime Advanced and take into consideration the total cost of ownership over the long run. Instant Team Sessions and Instant Queue Manager, deployed separately or in combination according to your requirements, deliver comparable (and in many areas superior) functionality—utilizing your existing hardware and your existing technical capabilities.

Additional Resources

Instant Technologies' website contains a wealth of information to help you choose the right solution for your unique requirements.

Product Pages *(Includes links to datasheets, screenshots, and recorded demos)*

http://www.instant-tech.com/Team_Sessions.cfm

http://www.instant-tech.com/Queue_Manager.cfm

Case Studies *(Real-world stories of product deployments, in the customers' own words)*

http://www.instant-tech.com/case_studies.cfm

From IBM *(Product pages and knowledge base articles)*

Lotus Sametime Advanced:

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/lotus/products/sametime/advanced/>

WebSphere Event Broker:

http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/wmbhelp/v6r0m0/index.jsp?topic=/com.ibm.etools.mft.eb.doc/ae03240_.htm

WebSphere MQ:

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/integration/wmq/>

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg247128.html>

<http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/wmqv6/v6r0/index.jsp>

DB2:

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/data/db2/>

<http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/db2luw/v8//index.jsp>

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/abstracts/sg247214.html>