ZDNN

Desktops Multimedia Software
Modems Scanners Printers
Handhelds Notebooks Upgrades

•ZDNET •NEWS •INTERNET •PRODUCTS •SHOPPING •DOWNLOADS •MAC •GAMES •ZDTV HOME
•HELP! •SMALL BIZ •LEARNING •MAGAZINES •INVESTOR •ANCHORDESK •COMMUNITY •E-BUSINESS

Search ZDNN

Page One
Headline Scan
News Bursts

AnchorDesk
Business
Commentary
Computing
CyberCrime
Internet
Investor
MSNBC News
Wilson Spin
ZDTV

Click here!

Advertisement

Resources
News Specials
News Elsewhere
Company Finder
Custom News
Contact Us
Corrections

Other ZD News
PC Week
Inter@ctive Week
Sm@rt Reseller
MacWeek
GameSpot
ZD Infobeads
ZDTV News

WIN FREE STUFF
@atitech.com

Netscape Communicator 4.5 gains mail edge

By *Matt Kramer And Jim Rapoza*, PC Week Online
July 17, 1998 8:43 AM PT

The next version of Netscape Communications Corp.'s Communicator suite is shaping up as a useful upgrade, with significant improvements in messaging features and a few helpful new Web navigation options.

In PC Week Labs' tests of the first public beta of Communicator 4.5, released this week and slated to ship in the fall, we found that its new e-mail functions bring it on par with proprietary LAN-based e-mail clients and give it an edge over Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer browser.

The few improvements to Netscape's Navigator browser component, including Smart Browsing features, are useful but don't significantly alter the browser landscape.

Look what's in the mail

Communicator 4.5's improved e-mail interface is the most noticeable change in its Messenger messaging component, giving users a three-pane display of folders, messages and message contents that makes it easier to manage mail and note which messages have been read, answered and forwarded (see screen).

A new template option let us quickly create preformatted messages for reuse, but using the templates was cumbersome because they are not readily accessible from the compose menu option.

Addressing messages in Communicator 4.5 has been simplified with a new address completion feature, already found in

TOP STORIES

Updated October 21, 1998
7:05 PM PT

- MS vs. DOJ: Tech trial of the century
- Game over for Dwango
- Clinton approves tech bills
- Sun-MS documents released
- GeoCities trims losses
- Businesses need Y2K help
- MS rethinks service packs
- Investor PM: Winning ugly

E-mail this!
Print this!

RELATED LINKS

INVEST
Netscape Communications Corp.

COMPANY INFO
United Airlines Corp.
Alexa Internet

Free! Fast! Direct!
You need to know. So start your day with a snappy digest of the top tech headlines. Delivered directly to you by e-mail early every morning.
Subscribe to ZDNet's News and Investing Email Alert.

GOVERNMENT EXHIBIT 1288

competing messaging clients, that takes a portion of a name, looks it up in the address book, and fills in the rest of the name and the address. Communicator's address book also makes it easier to create distribution lists and to search LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol)-compatible directories.

Communicator 4.5 is the first release designed to work with the Netcenter Web portal, giving users access to Netscape's Netcenter site for improved browsing capabilities and storage of address books and bookmarks. This lets users access e-mail via a Web browser on any PC, saving them the trouble of taking a laptop when traveling. However, only some of the Netcenter links work in the beta.

The ability to search for messages has been expanded with the addition of Boolean search capabilities, but there is no way to store search queries in a folder as Novell Inc.'s GroupWise does.

Some of the e-mail improvements, particularly in support for IMAP (Internet Messaging Access Protocol), won't be available to first-round beta testers. Support for shared folders, which are the equivalent of the public folders found in proprietary systems such as Microsoft Exchange, were not working in the initial beta and so far are only supported by a few mail servers.

Communicator's improved support for offline operation made it easier to create folders and to compose and manage messages offline than it is with some other IMAP clients, such as Microsoft's Outlook Express.

Somewhat better browsing

The Smart Browsing features, intended to make it easier to find information on the Internet, could use work. For example, the What's Related button that has been added to Navigator's location tool bar lets users see a drop-down list of Web sites with content similar to the one currently being viewed, but although this worked well on some Web pages, others showed no related sites.

Netscape added this capability through a partnership with Alexa Internet Inc., which provides a similar feature in its Alexa client.

The Internet Keywords feature, which works like Centraal Corp.'s Real Name System, lets users type a company name and descriptive term and immediately launches the site. This worked in some cases, such as finding www.ual.com from a keyword of "United Airlines," but not in others, such as when it failed to find www.infoseek.com from a keyword of "Infoseek." If it can't find the proper site, the browser launches a Web search using the keywords.

The Communicator 4.5 beta includes improved support for JDK (Java Development Kit) 1.1. However, we saw no performance boost over Communicator Pro 4.05 with the JDK 1.1 patch installed.

Top

SPONSORED LINKS

Finance NextCard Visa - 2.9% Intro APR - Real-time Approvals!
Contest Enter the **Winner-A-Week PC Sweepstakes!**
COMDEX **REGISTER NOW** for best conference programs & VIP seating
Software **X10.com** -- The SuperSite for Home Automation

ZDNET FEATURED LINKS

Freeware **It's a software free for all - 100 FREE downloads!**
Savings **Great deals** on computer products: Shop The Basement
Library **It's free!** Sample the best new computing books

MAGAZINE SAVINGS

Best Deals **Free** Trials, CD-ROMs and Super Savings on ZD Magazines

Use of ZDNet is subject to certain Terms & Conditions
Please read ZDNet's Privacy Statement

Copyright (c) 1998 ZDNet. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of ZDNet is prohibited. ZDNet and the ZDNet logo are trademarks of Ziff-Davis Inc.