

Mindjet boosts online collaboration with Catalyst

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"We are really changing the way people and teams work together," Mindjet chief executive Scott Raskin told AFP while demonstrating the

platform.

"We could all access the same mind-numbing slide presentation. We could sit in forced silence as we listened to our colleagues' ideas broadcast over the Internet. But creative problem-solving has been the last thing going on."

Current collaboration tools, he said, "are really just pushing us to serial communications."

Catalyst sets out to mimic the way people work together in the same room to solve problems, which Raskin said online conferences lack.

Catalyst team members can simultaneously video-conference while modifying a shared document on an online "white board." Photos, paperwork, sketches and other digitized data can also be shared.

Catalyst automatically notes which team members made what changes and for which tasks or deadlines individuals are responsible. Workers can come and go from the virtual room and changes are updated as matters progress.

[Internet telephony](#) and text messaging capabilities are also built in Catalyst.

"When you look at the Twitter effect or a Facebook social network, you get a lot of ideas, but challenges (remain) in putting those ideas into effect," Raskin said.

"Information needs to be accessible to everybody at all times. You've got to bring back the elements of human interaction to create something new."

Mindjet adopted early on mind-mapping and information visualization techniques. The company boasts 1.5 million users of its Mind Manager software for effectively managing projects.

"With Catalyst, I have a place I can work, see what others are doing and move from a great meeting into a great strategy," Raskin noted, praising the platform's ability to transform ideas into actionable plans.

Catalyst is hosted online as a service at a cost of 25 dollars per month per worker involved in projects.

Web video conferencing features require one team member to serve as a moderator, for a cost set at 50 dollars monthly.

Mindjet's customer list includes Coca Cola, Walt Disney, IBM, the US Army and retail behemoth Wal-Mart.

"Vendors like Mindjet are providing innovative solutions to optimize how their customers collaborate," said Robert Mahowald, research director of IDC's Enterprise Collaboration and Social Solutions research program.

"The Mindjet Catalyst platform takes on a unique, visual approach to empower individuals and teams to work together, collaboratively and productively, on problem-solving and key business issues."

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