

## Exchange Server Public Folders

I'm happy to say that Exchange Server public folders are not only not dead but have just gotten a very public new lease on life with Microsoft's recent announcement that public folders will be fully supported in the next major release of Exchange. The full announcement is on the Microsoft Exchange Team Blog, and it contains some interesting things to consider.

The first point, of course, is that Terry Myerson's original post from September 2005 about public folder support in Exchange Server 2007 was widely taken out of context. Myerson's comment that public folders were being de-emphasized was thought to mean that public folders were headed for the dustbin, and later attempts by various Microsoft folks to clarify that statement (including a more detailed blog post in February 2006), never seemed to gain much currency in the Exchange community. With the new announcement, it's good to see a clearly stated roadmap for the future of public folders through the next Exchange release...

The second interesting point from the announcement is the inclusion of an easy-to-understand table showing some of the key differences between SharePoint folders and Exchange public folders, along with recommendations for when it makes sense to use each respective application. Many other situations could still benefit from clearer explanation, though. For example, SharePoint offers some useful task list functionality, including a shared task model that doesn't really have an Exchange/Outlook equivalent. We can hope that the Exchange or SharePoint teams will flesh out this list over time.

The third thing worth mentioning is that Microsoft still doesn't have its own tools (or even guidance) for migrating Exchange public folder content to SharePoint. There are some solid third-party tools, but I can't understand why Microsoft isn't providing at least a basic solution to help jump-start migration. (Actually, I can understand why the Exchange team isn't spending its time on such a tool, but why not the SharePoint team?)

Finally, notice how the blog post carefully avoids naming the next major release of Exchange or dropping any clues about when we might see it.