

Collanos Workplace 1.3.0.1 – Release Notes

March 4th 2007 – FDM

1 Summary

Collanos Workplace 1.3.0.1 is an important release of the multi-platform P2P team collaboration solution. This version contains a number of new features, major improvements to existing functionality, as well as many enhancements and bug fixes. The focus of this release was to further improve the overall user experience, fill-in functionality gaps, and increase the collaboration productivity of dispersed teams.

These goals have been achieved with the following measures. The core P2P content synchronization algorithm has been further enhanced with the much anticipated “fetch from any” capability. Team members can now synchronize with any other team member, even if the original content creator is not currently online. A brand new real-time instant messaging subsystem is replacing the old “send a message” function. The new instant messenger supports informal ongoing chats with all existing contacts, outside the scope of team workspaces. To improve the life of Task intensive workers, a new “All Tasks” perspective has been introduced. Tasks from all folders of all workspaces can now be viewed, filtered and changed in one location. To facilitate moving data in from and out to the operating system, a number of functions were added. Dragging and dropping of folders now works also from “inside-out”, i.e. whole workplace folder structures can easily be dragged and dropped to the file system. As an alternative function, users can also use the new “Copy To...” function. Finally, File objects can now be opened with any application, using the new “Open With...” feature. Many more enhancements have been implemented. See “Detailed Descriptions” for screen shots and more information.

As always, Collanos Workplace 1.3.0.1 is available in versions for Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. The software is available in English, German and Chinese translations. The current version 1.3 is compatible with the last version 1.2, which will give teams with mixed installations a smoother transition. The new release is available both as installer from Collanos' web site and automatic update process for existing users.

Collanos is proudly improving the FREE basic version of Workplace with each new release. Our gratification is a steadily growing and vibrant user community. We look forward to your feedbacks! Please help up by spreading the good news. Use the built-in “Invite to Collanos” tool and invite all your contacts and friends. Thank you!

2 Release Highlights

This Workplace release contains a number of important improvements and new features:

- The anticipated P2P "Fetch From Any" replication algorithm is now fully implemented
- New persistent Instant Messenger supports chats outside of workspaces
- New "All Tasks" perspective with table view aggregates Task objects from all workspaces
- New “Open With...” function on File objects allows to open them with any application
- Drag and Drop workspace folders out to the file system
- New “Copy To...” function on Workspace folder structures for copying to file system
- Automatic detection of “inconsistent members” and warning by the system
- Plus many more enhancements and over 130 issues resolved...

3 Compatibility

Workplace versions 1.2 and 1.3 are protocol-compatible with each other for all basic operations. Mixed teams will be able to work together.

Users with old versions will obviously not benefit from new features and improved capabilities. Furthermore, even 1.3 users will have limitations when interacting with old users. For example, a Workplace 1.2 user and a Workplace 1.3 user won't be able to use the new instant messenger together.

4 Automatic Update

We strongly recommend upgrading to the latest version. Workplace 1.2 users will benefit from an automated upgrade process. All you need to do is restart your application to trigger the auto-update process.

5 Detailed Descriptions

5.1 Improved “Fetch From Any” Synchronization

The long-awaited and much anticipated “fetch from any” content replication algorithm has been completed with this release! Until now, two peers (i.e. the originator and the receiver of some information) had to connect at least once and exchange some basic meta information, before they could exchange content through a “third party”. This important limitation is no more! From now on, ANY peer can fetch information pieces that it needs, from ANY other member peer in its workspace, that is, even if the receiver and the originator had never before connected with each other directly! All information will essentially be passed from peer to peer (e.g. A --> B --> C etc.) in all directions among all member peers!

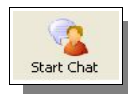
This fundamental improvement will lead to a drastically improved synchronization experience for teams that are typically not online at the same times.

The inner working involves every Workplace asking all its other member peers (across all workspaces) every 90 seconds about the availability of new information. All peers will exchange structural content information about all other peers on such an ongoing basis. If a peer creates new content that needs to be distributed, it will still notify its member peers immediately. The two mechanisms are playing together: Online peers will always be notified about current changes immediately, but all peers will additionally use the “check every 90 seconds” approach to fetch previously created changes from “any” peer.

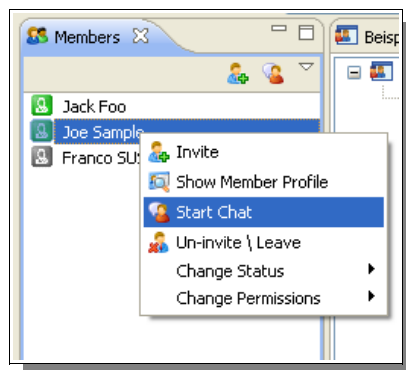
5.2 New Instant Messenger

This release introduces the all new Collanos instant messaging subsystem. In the past, Workplace offered only a rudimentary “Send Message” function. It worked transiently only between online members and it was not possible to go back to previous messages. The new instant messenger is much more powerful, enabling persistent and ongoing one-on-one chats with all your contacts (online and offline) outside of team workspaces.

To initiate a new chat session, you can use one of the following actions. Select an existing member and click on on the new “**Start Chat**” icon in the main tool bar.



You can also use the “**Start Chat**” action from the Members pane and through the pop-up context menu, by right-clicking on existing team members.



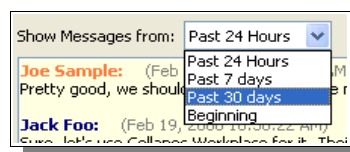
Every chat session will open in a separate window, in parallel to the main Workplace application window. Below you can see a sample screen shot. The user interface looks very much like any one of the popular IM tools and is straightforward to use.

This first release supports chats with only one person at a time, but in the near future we will extend it to group chats as well.

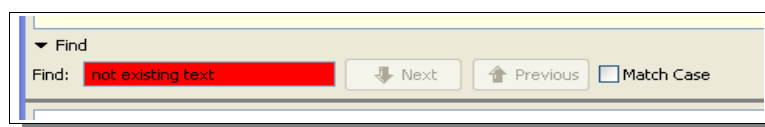
Please note, while the new instant messenger supports chatting outside of your team workspaces, you can still use the **Discussions** whenever you are **inside a workspace**. Think of Discussion objects being team chats with all members of a particular workspace.



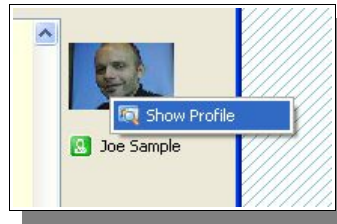
All your chat messages are stored securely in a local database on your computer. To view more or less of your past chat messages, you can use the “**Show Messages from:**” filter on top of the window:



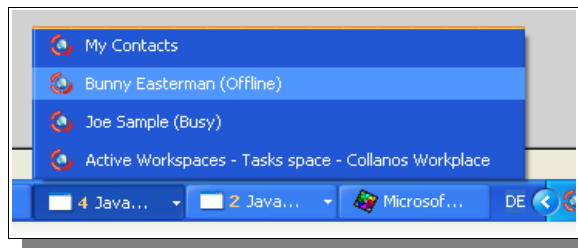
You can easily find keywords in your messages history by using the built-in “**Find**” functionality. Matching keywords will be marked with a blue background in the messages area and you can easily jump to “**Next**” and “**Previous**” occurrences of the keywords. The “**Match Case**” check box switches on case-sensitive searching. Finally, if the entered text pattern cannot be found, the entry field will turn red.



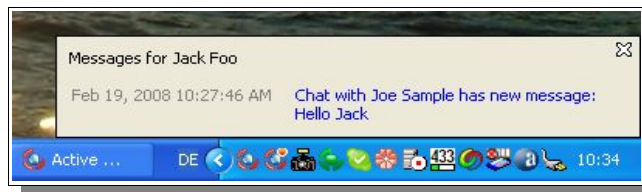
On the right side of the chat windows you have the picture, name and presence status of your chat partner. A context menu is available and offers the “**Show Profile**” action to display the user's profile.



You can have as many chat windows open as you want. All open chats windows will be listed in the respective areas of your operating system. The following screen shot shows the Windows XP Task Bar with a “stack” of four Collanos windows. The chat window titles show the names of your chat partners along with their presence status (Online / Busy / Offline) in parenthesis.

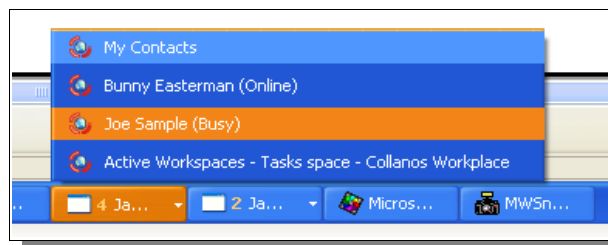


To notify users of new incoming chat messages, we are using a gray notification window in the lower right corner of your desktop. Additionally, if not already open, chat windows will be opened automatically in the background with a new incoming message.



On **Linux** and **Mac OS X** the gray notification box will appear for a few seconds **every time** a new message arrives. To reduce notification clutter, it will remind you only of the last message per chat. In other words, if you receive many messages in a row from the same chat partner, you will only see the notification for the last message that you received.

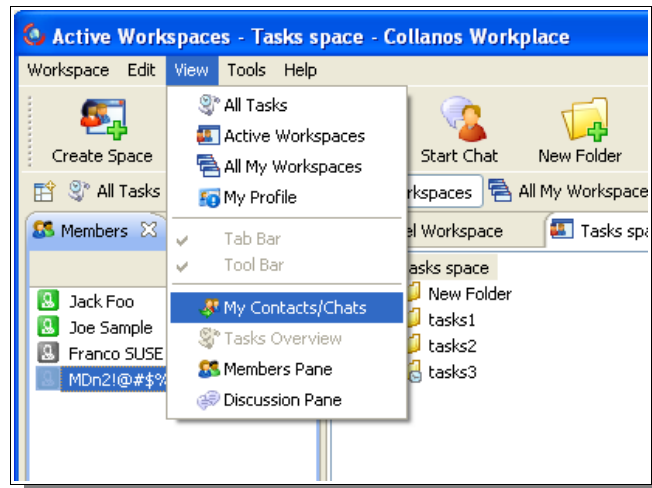
On **Windows** the behavior is slightly different. Here the gray notification box will appear only the first time, when the chat window is also opened automatically in the background. From now on, new incoming chat messages will trigger the visual “**orange blinking window**” effect. The next screen shot shows that a new message was received from “Joe Sample”.



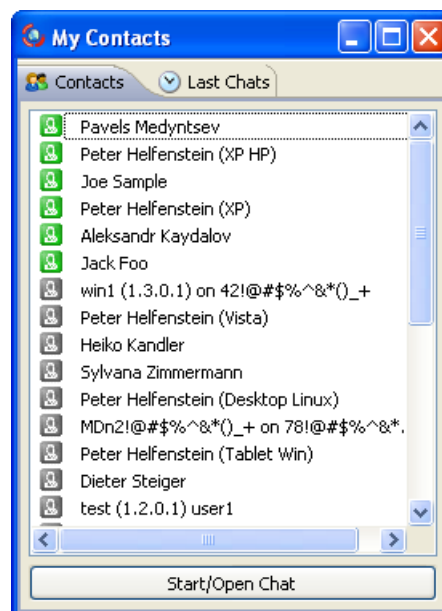
Known Icon Issue:

The Collanos icon in the Windows Task Bar disappears and is replaced by the white “small window” Java icon, as soon as two or more Collanos windows are “stacked”. We hope to soon resolve this visual annoyance.

There is another way of starting – or continuing – chat sessions. While Collanos Workplace doesn't (yet) offer complete contact management, we have created an approximation for such an address book and we call it “My Contacts”. It can be opened using the “View” menu and “My Contacts/Chats” menu point.



The idea of “My Contacts” is to pull together all members from all your existing workspaces in one consolidated contacts list. The “Contacts” tab shows the list of all team members as well as their presence status. Start new chat sessions or resume previous chat sessions directly from here. The “Last Chats” tab contains a list with date and time (for each contact) of your last chats.



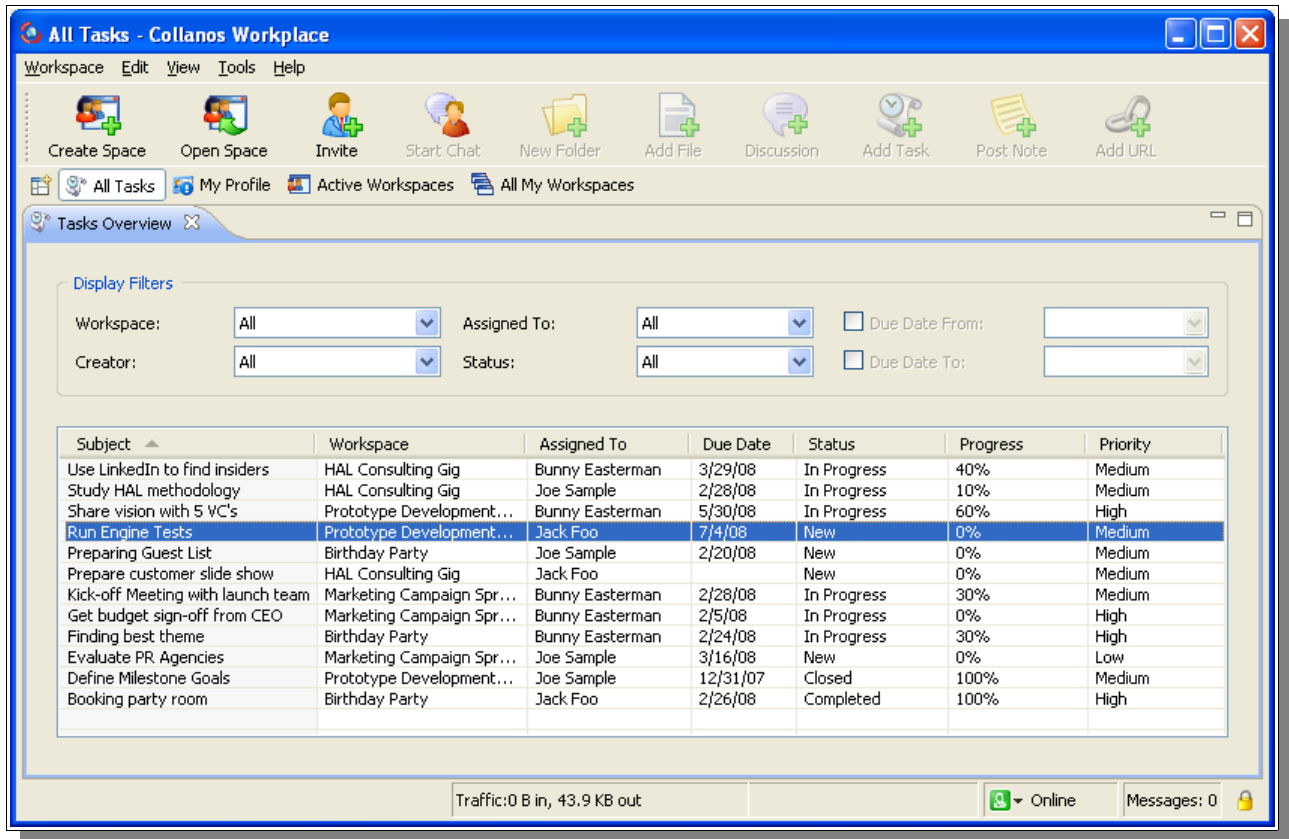
Note:

Please note that you cannot add or remove contacts from here. This is only a consolidated view of all your team members from all your workspaces.

In the near future, we will add a more comprehensive “Contact Management”.

5.3 New “All Tasks” Overview

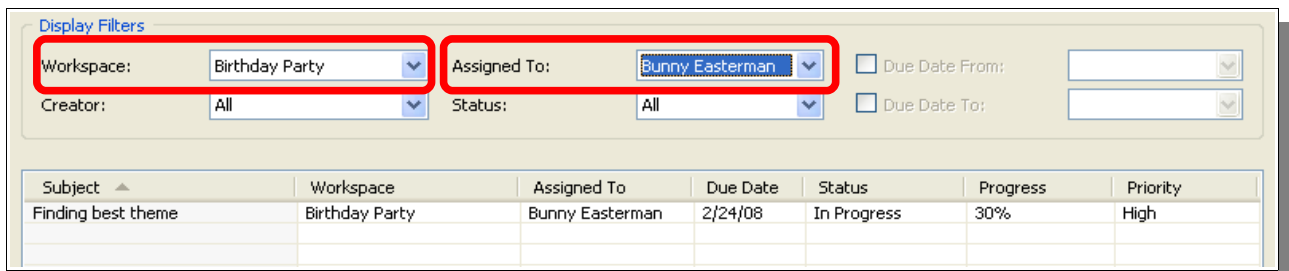
With this release we are introducing an important new perspective called “All Tasks”. It contains a tabular overview of all the Task objects in all folders of all your workspaces. This view will be invaluable for users that work a lot with Task objects.



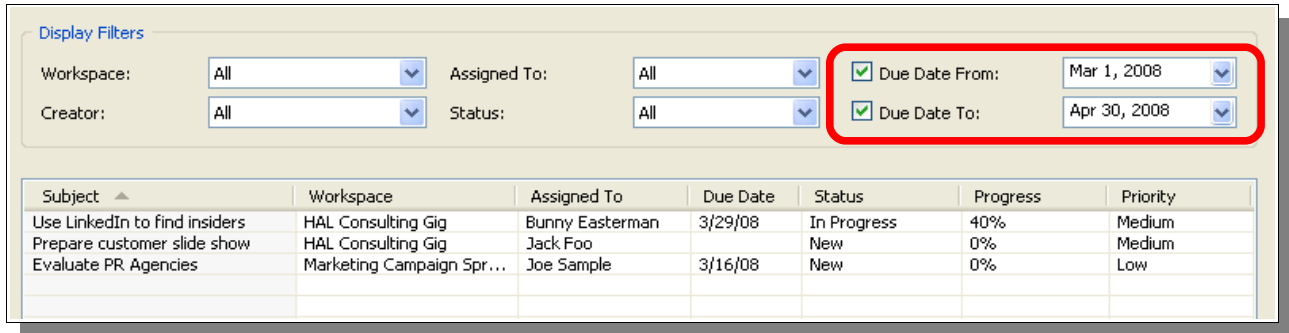
The upper part of the view contains the “Display Filters”. The default setting is no filters, which will show all existing Task objects. To narrow this view down and see only portions of the list, you can use one or several of the following filters:

- Show Tasks of a particular **Workspace**
- Show Tasks of a particular **Creator**
- Show Tasks **Assigned To** somebody
- Show Tasks by their **Status**
- Show Tasks in a given **Due Date** range (From / To)

The following example shows the Tasks of workspace “Birthday Party” that have been assigned to “Bunny Easterman”.



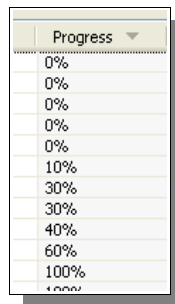
The following example shows all Tasks that with Due Date between March 1st and April 30th 2008.



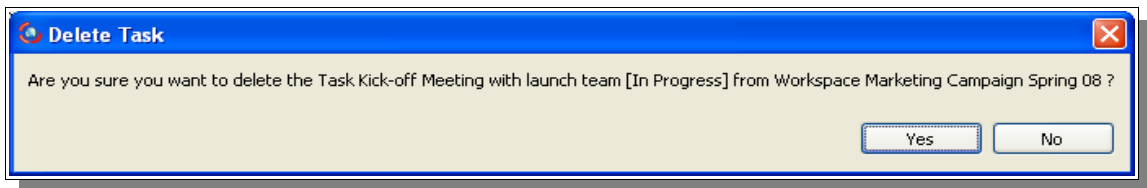
The screenshot shows a task management interface. At the top, there are filter options under "Display Filters". The filters include: Workspace: All, Assigned To: All, Due Date From: Mar 1, 2008, Due Date To: Apr 30, 2008, Creator: All, and Status: All. The Due Date From and To filters are highlighted with a red box. Below the filters is a table with the following data:

Subject	Workspace	Assigned To	Due Date	Status	Progress	Priority
Use LinkedIn to find insiders	HAL Consulting Gig	Bunny Easterman	3/29/08	In Progress	40%	Medium
Prepare customer slide show	HAL Consulting Gig	Jack Foo		New	0%	Medium
Evaluate PR Agencies	Marketing Campaign Spr...	Joe Sample	3/16/08	New	0%	Low

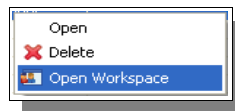
Every column in the table can be sorted in ascending or descending order, by clicking on the column header. The small triangular arrow indicates the sort direction.



All Tasks in the table view can be edited or deleted directly from the list. **Double-clicking** on a Task **opens** the Task edit form. All attributes can be changed and saved. The **Delete key** **deletes** the selected Task, but only after a confirmation dialog.

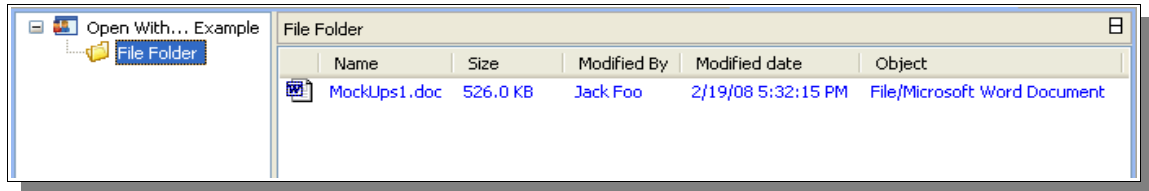


There is also a pop-up context menu that can be opened directly in the list. In addition to the already mentioned "Open" and "Delete" actions, it offers a "Open Workspace" function. This action will immediately switch the perspective and open the workspace that contains the selected Task object. The focus will be placed directly on the Task object itself. This feature is valuable to see in what context the Task object was used.

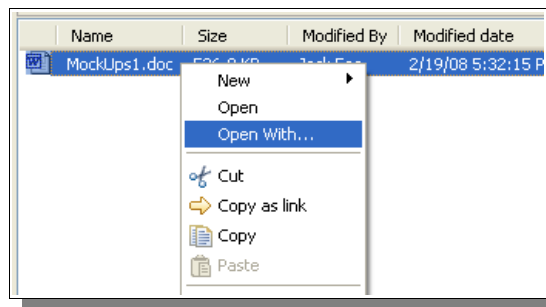


5.4 File “Open With...”

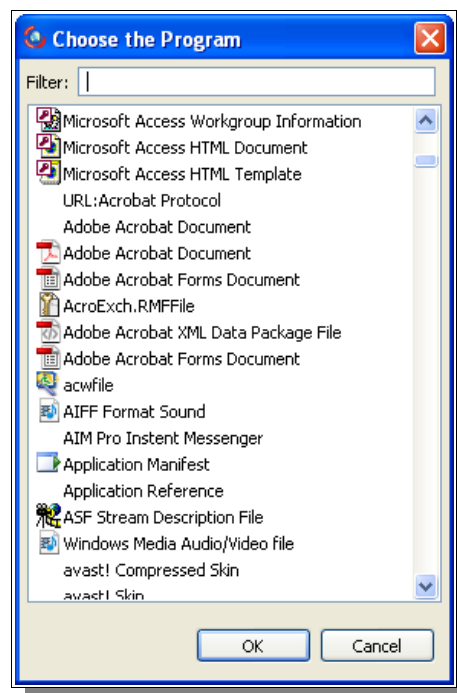
Until now files could only be opened based on their stored file type information. For example, the below Word file would want to open the application Microsoft Word based on its object type information “File/Microsoft Word Document”. In some situations users were not able to open documents at all, or they opened with the wrong applications. The unpleasant workaround used to be “Save as...” to the file system and open it from there. Many unnecessary steps.



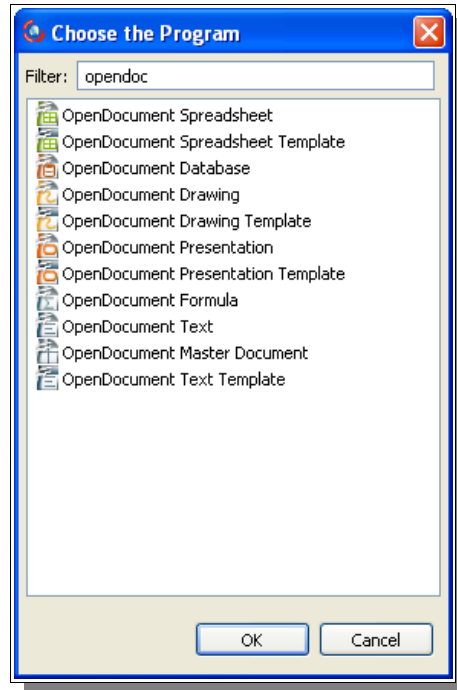
We now offer the new “Open With...” function, available in the context menu on **File** objects:



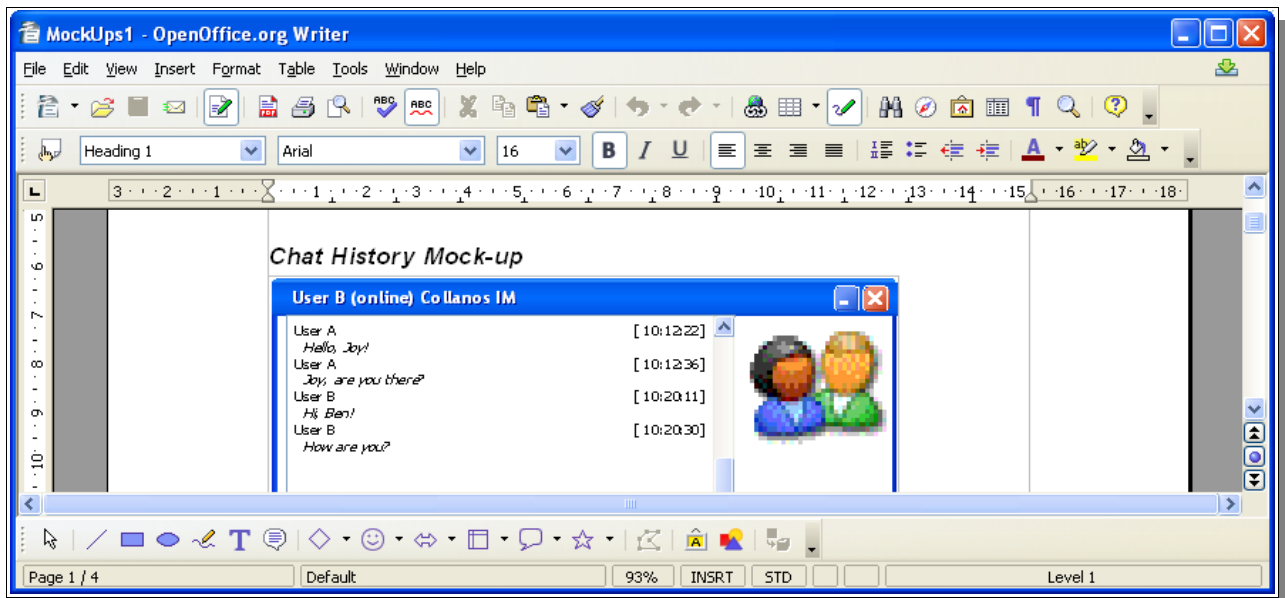
This action will open a “Program Chooser” dialog with a long list of applications and file types registered with the underlying operating system. You can simply scroll the list and pick the application you want.



The potentially long list could be overwhelming and annoying to browse. The **Filter** text field can be used to narrow down the list to a few candidates. In our example from above, we want to open the Word document with another text processing application.



After entering “opendoc” it narrowed down to a short list of “OpenDocument” file formats. The Word file “MockUps1” can easily be opened using the free OpenOffice Writer application.



5.5 Drag and Drop Folders Out

Dragging and dropping of folders now works also from workspaces out to the file system. Whole workspace folder structures can easily be dragged and dropped to the desktop of your operating system or to any other location of your file system.

Known Linux Issue:

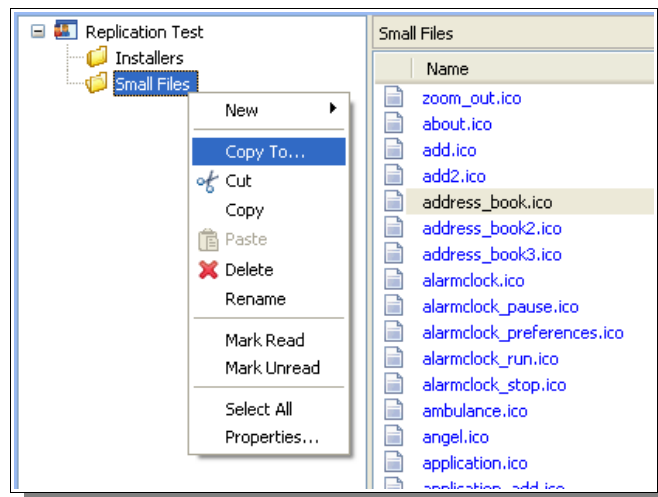
Under some Linux variants the behavior of dragging and dropping can be inconsistent. The result could be that not all files are being copied to your Linux file system. If you plan to use this function, it might be a good idea to double-check the correct behavior.

As an alternative function, Linux users can also use the new “Copy To...” function. See next point.

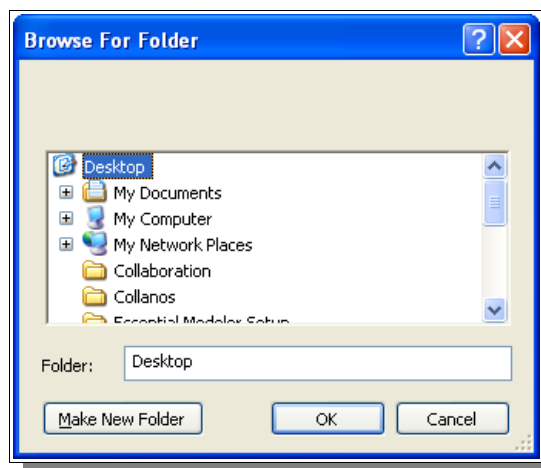
5.6 Folder “Copy To...”

A new function “Copy To...” is available in the context menu of workspace folders. It is possible to copy whole folder structures including all the files contained in them directly to a location on the operating system. Collanos specific objects like Task, Discussion, Note and Link will transformed into XML documents.

The following screenshot shows how to apply the “Copy To...” action on the folder “Small Files”.



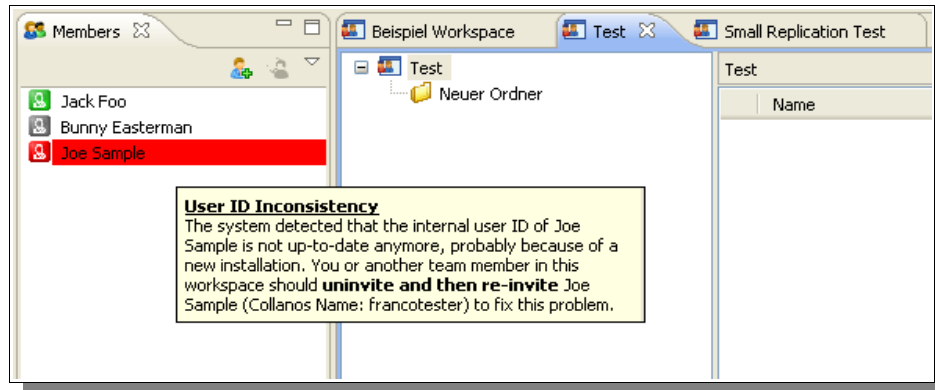
This operation will open a dialog where the destination folder for the copy operation can be selected. In our example, we decide to select the “Desktop” folder. As a result, the folder “Small Files” and all its content will be copied to the Windows Desktop.



5.7 Resolving “Inconsistent Members”

In the past it was not possible to find out if or when a member had become “invalid” within a workspace. This situation could happen easily, for instance when a member re-installed Workplace from scratch, using the SAME Collanos Name, but NOT reusing the existing data directory. In such a scenario this member would be displayed as “offline” in all of his members' workspaces.

The system is now able to detect this and will notify the user clearly, using a bright red background color. One of the affected team members can now simply go ahead and **uninvite** the “inconsistent user” and **then re-invite** the same user to fix the problem.



5.8 Additional Enhancements and Resolved Issues

Additional enhancements have been implemented with the release, as well as over 130 issues resolved. Without going into greater detail, here are some of the most “popular” improvements:

- New Relay and Rendezvous servers deployed for increased system availability and performance
- Presence subsystem further optimized
- Computer resource consumption reduced (fewer CPU threads and less memory)
- Disabling of “Auto-start with OS” works now also on Mac OS X
- Authentication security improved
- Temporary system files are now being deleted
- Role “Guest” is not allowed to invite other members
- Empty Global Spaces are now being deleted automatically, releasing valuable computer resources
- Changed “Reply To” email address to actual sender for email-based user notifications
- Confirmation Email not displayed on Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard)

6 User Forum, Feedback, Share the News!

We really want to hear from you!

Just go to <http://forum.collanos.com/> and share your feedback with us and with others. Let the world know what you think of this release: Does it work well for you? What improvements would you like to see in the next release? Don't be shy in replying to messages posted by other Collanos users.

Finally, if you want to help us, share the news about the availability of this release with as many users as you can. Use the “Invite to Collanos” feature in the “Tools” menu, or simply write about Collanos in your Blog.

Thank you for your continued support.