By Alin Spinaga, Technology News Editor

New Microsoft Platform Available

Focused on experimentation

Microsoft has made available a new platform focused on providing a comprehensive test bed for both software and services. The Microsoft Experimentation Platform is designed to overhaul traditional product planning, testing and development, by providing a medium of direct interaction with the end users and placing feedback at the center-stage. The brainchild of General Manager Ronny Kohavi, the **Experimentation Platform** is set up to fuel innovation in building software and services through experimentation. "We have an unprecedented opportunity to run A/B tests with online users and innovate more quickly based on actual user response. Microsoft needs to shift the culture from planning the exact features to planning a set of possible features, and letting customers guide us," stated Ray Ozzie, Chief Software Architect. And this is in fact the essential role of the Experimentation Platform, to enable flexible product building by taking into account end user interaction and input. The Experimentation Platform is powered by Office Live Small Business and has already been integrated into various Microsoft product development projects. The Redmond company is already running live experiments via the Experimentation Platform on a number of its websites. Kohavi revealed that the platform can be tailored to fit both client software and service testing, but that it fits like a glove on scenarios involving services-based software. "The Experimentation Platform enables product groups at Microsoft and later on will enable developers using Windows Live to innovate using controlled experiments with live users. The platform enables testing new ideas quickly using the best-known scientific method for establishing causality between a feature and its effects: randomized experimental design. The basic methodology in controlled experiments is to expose a percentage of users to a new treatment, measure the effect on metrics of interest, and run statistical tests to determine whether the differences are statistically significant, thus establishing causality," reads an excerpt of the platform's description.