

Alloy Quarterly™

Newsletter for the Alloy Software Community

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Product News

Alloy Navigator 6 Takes the Helm

This year at Alloy Software we'll be undertaking our most ambitious release with version 6 of Alloy Navigator (AN6). Through a solid team effort from our company and the involvement of our customers we feel this next version is going to truly make managing the IT infrastructure easier and more efficient than ever before. We're beyond excited at the prospect of getting AN6 into your hands so you can begin to take advantage of it.

What specifically about version 6 should excite you? Let's start by taking a quick look at AN6's roots - Alloy Navigator 5 (AN5).

AN5 was a huge success for us in so many ways. From a business point of view it not only expanded our customer base and solidified our foothold in the market, but it was a huge leap forward in terms of product design and scope. Lead by an open architecture and an adoption of ITIL principals, version 5 was embraced by medium and enterprise businesses alike. The balance of flexibility, simplicity and affordability was a winning combination with both customers and the industry. Not only was Alloy Software honored by the Software 500 and Inc. 5000, but AN5 was the proud recipient of the Technology Marketing Corporation's CRM Excellence and Customer Interaction Solutions Product of the Year awards two years in a row.

Building on that framework and success, we took the secret formula to the next level by implementing some great new features, expanding existing capabilities and, in some cases, redesigning select areas. In addition, we were able to retain simplicity in the product and even reduce administration overhead despite all the new functionality we added.

Featured Events:

Change Management

Change Management overview.

Event Type: Live webinar

Date: October 12-13, 2009

Product Overview

Experience the power of Alloy Navigator, Alloy Navigator Express and Alloy Discovery. Targeted for prospective customers and evaluators.

Event type: Live webinar

Date: [See online schedule](#)

Reseller Training

Learn about Alloy Software's products and licensing structure.

Event Type: Live webinar

Date: October 19-21, 2009

Let's take a look at some of the latest features and technologies used in Alloy Navigator 6.

Web Portals

In AN5, the Technician's Web Portal was a remote technician's best friend, but unfortunately it only provided a fraction of the Windows client functionality. With version 6, we made it a priority to close the gap between the two clients and the result is something we think you're going to like. The newly redesigned portal now gives you access to all of the areas the Windows client gives you - Incidents, Change Requests, Software Licenses, Computers, etc. - and also allows you to run reports.

The Self-Service Portal also received a complete redesign and let us just say, it looks sweet! On top of the look, it packs a powerful combination of end-user simplicity and administrative goodness. Administrators can now easily control available fields through a user-friendly interface, and users will enjoy the straightforward, easy-to-navigate design.

Microsoft Exchange Integration

If your company is a Microsoft Exchange shop, you've asked for it – Microsoft Exchange integration. With AN6 you'll have seamless integration with your Exchange server for both incoming and outgoing e-mail. The amount of configuration and hassle goes down, and the level of security and convenience goes up.

Announcements

When the mail server goes down and the helpdesk is flooded with tickets you're going to like this new feature. AN6 is armed with a new Announcement ability that allows you to alert and inform technicians and/or end-users of important events. You can even notify your customers about scheduled downtime or service updates to keep them proactively informed. This feature will greatly cut down the burden on your helpdesk when major issues come up.

Change Request Approvals

Sure, you could create a Change Request Approval flow in AN5, but it required a great deal of customization. Version 6 now has built-in Change Request Approval system that allows you to choose from a number of

standard voting methods such as Majority Decision, Required Percentage, Sequential Approval and more.

Improved Workflow

AN5's Business Logic was great, but we've taken workflow management to a whole new level in AN6. While the equivalent of Business Logic is still included, the big improvements are with the new Action system. This new approach not only saves on administration and greatly extends the flexibility of the application, but it also provides visibility to technicians and drives business processes proactively at the same time.

To explain the benefits of Actions, let's first ask, what is an Action?

Think of an Action as one of the steps you perform regularly when handling your daily tasks. Maybe you assign, resolve or escalate tickets or maybe you maintain printers or approve purchase orders. As with any business process, the availability and sequence of these steps must be controlled. Additionally, you'll want to make sure that while each step is performed, proper checks and balances are in place, required data is entered and the proper parties are notified accordingly. AN6 gives you the ability to make that happen through a series of new workflow tools.

Part of the new workflow management is a new toolbar designed to inform and guide technicians called the Action Bar. This bar shows all available Actions a technician has available to them based on their role and the lifecycle of the record they're working with.

For example, imagine a customer's issue has just been fixed by a technician. The next logical step would be for that technician to resolve the ticket. Through the Action Bar, an Action called 'Resolve Ticket' can be selected triggering a form that requires the technician to enter details about the solution and the ticket automatically goes into resolved status.

As a result of the ticket being resolved, the 'Resolve Ticket' entry will disappear off the Action Bar. Instead the Action Bar would show an entry called 'Close Ticket' and after the ticket was closed a 'Reopen Ticket' entry will appear. I think you get the gist.

To go one step further, if you didn't want technicians to Close or Reopen tickets, you would simply not assign those Actions to their role. These Actions would then

not be available in the Action Bar to the technician because they wouldn't have permission to see them.

Behind the scenes, Actions are a powerful combination of workflow components – templates, forms, functions and e-mail notifications – that allow you to do all sorts of things like apply field values, send e-mails, update fields, update and create related objects, execute SQL, and trigger external commands.

On top of that, the entire system helps cut down on administration by tackling redundancy. All of the components in AN6's new Action system are reusable. Each of the workflow components, such as forms and templates, can be related to as many Actions as you'd like. Compared to AN5's Business Logic, this saves a ton of time.

Views

We've done a bit of tweaking with views in AN6 and have also added more functionality while we were at it. While we've made various filtering and interface enhancements, one of the improvements we think you'll particularly like is the ability to assign views to specific roles. This ability greatly increases the efficiency of technicians by making sure they only see the views they need to work with.

Administrator Alert System

If you've administered AN5, you'd know that it was hard to tell when the application required attention. For instance, if you received an audit conflict or if a step in your workflow failed you wouldn't know unless you checked the administrative console's logs. With AN6, we've included a new system that will alert you when issues occur so you can spend less time checking logs and more time handling your other tasks.

Software Licensing

One of the most difficult tasks for an organization to handle is the management of software licenses. To combat the complexity of the task, AN6 provides you with the ability to handle software licenses and particularly software suites more effectively.

Object Standardization

We've made a major push to standardize the various areas in the application. For instance, AN5 tickets allowed you to track a record's history as well as keep

track of your work through activities. Unfortunately these items weren't available for assets such as computers, hardware and software. Now in AN6, you'll find that all areas have similar capabilities. Items like record history, activities and common fields, among other functionality, have been applied across the board.

New Auditing Methods

AN5 only had one method of auditing computers, but in AN6 the ability to audit has been greatly expanded. You'll now have the ability to audit Windows, Linux and Mac computers using several audit methods - on-demand, scheduled on-demand, scriptable agent based, e-mail, portable and more.

Here's also a few other quick items to mention:

- **Service Catalog Functionality**

AN6 sports a redesign for Services and SLA's that provides improved capabilities to help you catalog your services more effectively.

- **Full-Text Searching**

You can now take full advantage of Microsoft SQL's full-text searching abilities which will make it much faster and more efficient to search for information.

- **Interface Enhancements**

AN6 has received a smooth new look and several key areas have gone through a facelift such as the web portals, sidebar, menus and administrative settings to name a few.

- **SNMP Auditing**

Discover devices such as printers and switches on your network using SNMP.

- **Conflict Resolution**

Computer audit conflicts are greatly reduced through the ability to configure conflict resolution rules that best fit your environment.

- **Unicode Support**

AN6 provides the ability to work with content containing non-English characters with new Unicode support.

- **Crystal Report Automation**

Schedule the creation of Crystal Reports for situations where you need recurring delivery of data.

- **Active Directory Import Mapping**

AN6 gives you full control over where your Active Directory data is imported by allowing you to specify how Active Directory information is mapped to Alloy Navigator.

- **Improved E-mail Handling**

Control the scheduling of outgoing e-mail through a new e-mail queuing feature.

- **User Defined Fields**

AN6 provides better control over where you place the custom fields and also improves the way they're stored in the database for easier report creation.

- **Configuration Assemblies**

Group assets under assemblies for easier tracking of larger systems.

This must already sound like plenty, but this isn't even a complete feature list!

Now that we've talked about a few of the numerous additions and improvements in Alloy Navigator there's no doubt you're bursting with one question. When can I get my hands on Alloy Navigator 6? We expect AN6 will be released towards the end of 2009. However, if you'd like to help us work out some kinks in the early version, we do have a beta testing program and we'd be happy to have you aboard. If you're interested, please contact support@alloy-software.com.



Voice of Support

An Inside Look at Alloy Navigator 6

Paul Ille, Director of Technical Services at Alloy Software interviewed by Joe Mindo, marketing specialist at Springboard PR

Joe: I know you've been working with AN6 gearing up for the release. What feature is most exciting to you and why?

Paul: If I had to pick just one I'd have to say the new workflow model. I'm really excited about the improvements and can't wait to get it into the hands of our customers.

In AN6, workflow becomes not only more intuitive, logical and reusable, but it also becomes more central to the way the product is used. Administrators can now provide guidance, graphically, through a new Action Bar that resides in each object. This is a nice departure from AN5's Business Logic and the 'behind the scenes' approach.

The Action Bar shows users their available workflow options, provides them with information about the workflow and, through the use of forms, keeps focus only on the necessary fields they need to work with. For example, let's say an Incident is in the 'In Progress' status. Workflow can be designed to show only certain actions in the Action Bar such as 'Place on Hold' or 'Resolved'. Other actions, such as 'Take off Hold' or 'Close Incident', can be hidden as they don't apply.

In this case, Actions allow users to spend more time resolving issues than fiddling around with items in a record they shouldn't be concerned with. They also allow administrators to enforce strict procedures.

Beyond that, the flexibility is also quite impressive. Along with the pre-existing workflow functionality from version 5, you can also create and update related objects, perform If/Else logic and run SQL scripts. The ability to run external tools has also been integrated into Actions

Paul Ille, our Director of Technical Services here at Alloy Software, has been with the company for over 5 years now. His 15+ years experience working with technology across various industries has given him a well rounded knowledge of the challenges customers face as well as the solutions our products offer.

so they're no longer just for assets. Just the other day I created a really nice Action called 'Search Google' that takes the summary of a ticket and uses it to search Google. It's very flexible.

"In AN6, workflow becomes not only more intuitive, logical and reusable, but it also becomes more central to the way the product is used."

Paul Ille

Joe: You must get questions all the time regarding AN6. Are there common questions that can be answered for people reading this newsletter?

Paul: Sure, there's a few that come up often. Here are the top 3 I've heard so far.

Q: Will AN6 support certain operating systems or database platforms?

A: When it comes to Microsoft Operating Systems we'll be supporting whatever exists at the time of release. As for database platforms, AN6 will feature support for Microsoft SQL Server 2008.

Q: Will AN6 include support for Assemblies/Systems?

A: For those unfamiliar with what these are, Assemblies provide the ability to organize assets that are part of a larger system. For instance, Production E-mail is both physical hardware (server) and software (Microsoft Exchange). The answer is yes, AN6 will support them.

Q: As an upgrader is there anything specific I should know prior to upgrading to AN6?

A: It's a little early to say just yet, but it's important to note our goal is always to bring data safely over from previous versions. There's still a lot more testing to be done and the final installation hasn't been completed yet.

Joe: Do you have any funny stories about meetings you've attended about AN6's development?

Paul: That's probably fairly easy since I'd guess 4 out of every 5 meetings has us chuckling at one point or another.

Hmm, ok I'll give you one.

ITIL has a term called Configuration Item (CI) and a while back we were having a discussion about CI to determine how AN6 could handle them in a more productive way.

Well, the conversation took an unexpected turn when, next thing you know, we were having a conceptual discussion about the Buddhist philosophy regarding existence. The parallel was somehow drawn between 'inherent existence', which attempts to show the interlocking relationship between something that exists and it's dependencies, and Related CI. It was shortly after this point was made that we decided to get coffee and end our meeting for the day :)



Getting Involved

Alloy Software Community is growing strong, and we thank you for participating.

User Community

Participate in the Alloy Community - Connecting People, Ideas and Solutions. Our user discussions and social media are intended for members to share information, post questions, discuss IT related topics and Alloy's products, and simply network with our community.



Alloy Navigator 6 Beta Program

Join the AN6 Beta Program in order to get a first glimpse at the new version and offer valuable feedback. We encourage all customers to take part in helping us make Alloy Navigator 6's release a success. We truly value your feedback.

Contact [support](#) for more information.

Public Relations

Contribute to public relations and case studies. By participating you will have the opportunity to showcase your leadership skills in finding a successful and effective resolution to the unique challenges your business was facing. Your participation raises awareness of Alloy Software and our products — and we appreciate it.

Contact [Springboard PR](#) for more information.

Company News

Alloy Software Ranked on Inc. Magazine's Inc. 5000 List for Second Consecutive Year

Alloy Software was officially selected for Inc. Magazine's 2009 list of the 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in America for the second consecutive year. Based on remarkable growth, Alloy Software ranked number 3,104 on this year's list.

"As we continue to push out products to the market that will enhance our customers' businesses, we are honored to be part of the Inc. 5000 ranking for the second consecutive year," stated Vladimir Vinogradsky, President and CEO at Alloy Software. "This ranking validates the worth of our products and services, and it is a true indication of the hard work of our employees, continued product enhancements and loyalty of our customers."

The Inc. 5000 is ranked according to percentage revenue growth from 2004 through 2007. During this period, Alloy Software grew its revenues by 86.5%, while growing its client base from approximately 2,500 to 4,000 companies.

Key drivers for Alloy Software's growth included the maturity of its flagship product – Alloy Navigator - as well as its Alloy Discovery product. Other factors that contributed to Alloy Software's growth include continued business with existing customers, professional and personalized customer service and product support, and a strong marketing program.

"...a true indication of the hard work of our employees, continued product enhancements and loyalty of our customers."

Vladimir Vinogradsky

Reseller Corner

Reseller Hosted Webinars

As part of the Reseller Program, resellers are now able to host webinars presented by Alloy Software. This program makes it easier for resellers, world-wide, to convey product knowledge and industry education to their clients. Topics include product overviews and specialized sessions focused on various IT management areas, such as change management and problem management.

Contact [sales](#) for more information on how to set up a hosted webinar.

Reseller of the Quarter



[Helpdesk Software Europe BV](#)

(HDSE), established in 2005, provides affordable, accessible and user-friendly helpdesk software in

Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux).

Service Management and Asset Management

[Alloy Navigator](#)[®]: enterprise-level IT infrastructure management suite based on ITIL principles.

- Incident, Problem, and Change Management
- Knowledge Base
- Computer Asset Management
- Network Inventory
- Software Licensing Compliance
- Workflow Management
- Self-Service Portal for end-users and Web Portal for technicians

Help Desk and Asset Management

[Alloy Navigator Express](#)[™]: tightly integrated IT Management solution for small and medium businesses.

- Help Desk Ticketing
- Network Inventory
- Computer Asset Management
- Automatic Email Notifications
- Self-Service Portal for End-Users

Network Inventory and PC Audit

[Alloy Discovery](#)[®]: comprehensive network inventory solution for system administrators and IT service providers.

- Computer Discovery
- Network Inventory (Windows, Linux and Mac OS)
- Agentless On-Demand Audit
- Smart Data Filtering
- Reports and Charts
- Integration with external tools for computer management



They are committed to providing quality software and support services to companies from various sectors.

Alloy Software acknowledges HDSE for their outstanding efforts in marketing and showcasing Alloy Navigator to scores of customers throughout Europe. We look forward to a long-lasting partnership with HDSE.

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