
HCL Nomad

My Thoughts on HCL Nomad



HCL Nomad in one form or another is not a new thing, this has been around as a concept way before HCL purchased Domino (and many other products) from IBM but IBM never did anything with it or even released it to the general public as was the way with IBM, great ideas, great developers but not deemed suitable to be brought to market. Step in HCL, when HCL purchased the product stack from IBM one of the first things they did was to release Nomad. In this form, it was a mobile app downloaded from Apple's App Store or from Google's Play Store onto your Mobile Device or Tablet. Once downloaded you give it certain details about your Domino server and your authentication and boom you are looking at native Domino Applications on a Mobile Device. No re-design of the Apps (some minor tweaks had to be made sometimes but very rarely) and you could fill out an expense claim or a CRM Activity from anywhere (as long as there was external connectivity back to the Domino server in question). It's worth noting that it is only Domino Applications that Nomad Mobile can surface it will not allow you to open your Mail-in it but then there is the HCL Verse Mobile Application for that.

This in its self was a landmark and a huge tick in the box for HCL's intentions. Massive development investment (Millions of pounds), 24 x 7 Development teams working tirelessly to update, add content and all in all get people talking about Domino again, press the pause button on that migration strategy to MSO365 just to see what else HCL could do.

Nomad today (or when Domino 12 is released) is now split in two. We have HCL Nomad Mobile, this is the Mobile Application I referred to above. Still works in the same way, is still being worked on all the time and just works as it did on the day of its general release. We then have Nomad Desktop (sometimes referred to as Nomad Web). This is what ***I consider** to be HCL's future, Nomad Desktop is a Web Browser based Application, the Application its self is best described as a cut-down version of the Notes client running natively in a Web Browser. It works (even now at the time of writing this in beta) with most Web Browsers. You go to a Web Address, you log in using your normal Notes credentials, this downloads the Web Application files and then you are greeted with a Welcome Page, which is a bit like the Discovery Page in your Notes client. From here you have the same familiar functions and menu items you do in a Notes client right down to the Workspace. You can go to File — Application — Open to open a Domino Application or even use the short cut keys, Ctrl O. The Nomad Desktop client behaves the exact same way a Notes client would, you can even open up your mail file if you want to. When you do open your mail file it does, however, open the Basic Notes client Template and anyone that remembers Notes 6 will be greeted with that version and look and feel so not great but it does work and is functional for the times you may need it.

Not only can you access any Domino Application through Nomad Desktop but you can do this from

anywhere as long as you have Internet access (as long as you can get Network Connectivity to the Domino servers from outside the company). The next trick up HCL's sleeve is as this is a Web Browser Application you also get the choice to install this as a Desktop Application. Most Web Browsers when dealing with a Web App give you the option in the address bar as an Icon to install a desktop app. If you choose to do this what happens is a container version of the App using the Web Browsers own software is installed to your machine. You get a Start Menu shortcut and a Desktop Icon like any other Application you install. When you then launch Nomad Desktop from this it opens in its own Application Window independent of your Web Browser and also without having the limitations set on it that when running it just in a Web Browser does (when a Web App runs in a web browser certain things like Memory usage limits are placed on a web site this is so that when running multiple tabs in a browser the browser should always be able to function by spreading the Memory resources between the tabs. When you run a Web App in its own Application Window these limits are gone so in theory it should function much much better when in its own Application Window).

This is the future part, In my opinion, the Verse Web Browser Mail Client is much nicer to look at than the native Notes Client and has some really great functions. I also see it as being one of the best browser-based Mail and calendaring only clients out there. It also means that as new versions of the client are released an Admin updates the Server and a Verse user gets the new version of the client instantly. We all know that in most companies upgrades of the Notes client are a chore and we as Admins usually find end users on different versions of the client which gives them a different experience... Not great. Verse also has the same ability, same party trick as Nomad Desktop does you can install it as a Web Desktop App in exactly the same way. At this point then a user has an App on the Desktop for Mail and an App on the Desktop for Applications. When a new version of either of these clients are released and you are using these Desktop Apps you get a nice little pop up that says there is a new version of the client, you click OK the screen refreshes and that's it you are running the latest version, takes seconds. The next thing then is as another plus you don't need to install a big heavy Notes client so the footprint for this is tiny and can run on any machine that can run a web browser.

For me, the future of accessing Domino Apps and Mail is not in the Notes client. I also get the feeling that this is true for HCL, however again this is all just my opinion I do not have any secrets to tell here. In the future of accessing Domino Apps and Mail for end-users, Business Users will be in Verse for Mail and Nomad Desktop / Nomad Mobile. It is a continued experience if you are sat at your desk or out and about using a Mobile / Tablet.