

Attachmate Buys Novell, Microsoft Helps

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Attachmate is a winner as it walks away as the new owner of Novell, after a \$2.2 billion buy-out. Attachmate, a smaller software company than Novell, is owned by *Francisco Partners, Golden Gate Capital and Thomas Bravo*



It was Microsoft who opened the door for the \$2.2b sale by organising a consortium to add \$450m cash into Novell's coffers in return for surgically removing some of its IP rights portfolio. This was not generosity on the part of Microsoft (did you think?) but an action to keep trolls out of specific software patents that Microsoft values from a cross-licensing deal in 2007.

Microsoft's preemptive action enabled a deal held up for months over the complexity of Novell's collection of rights and therefore an evaluation of its business.

Novell played a central part in the Linux rights struggle and Europeans will wonder about **Suse**, the German brand acquired previously by Novell. Attachmate says Suse will run as a separate business unit, prompting some analysts to consider if Attachmate might flip this unit to VMWare or another interested party for more cash to make this whole deal easier to swallow.

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