

# BoardVantage NextGen Architecture

## A model for the normal social functioning in the modern workplace

Joe Ruck, BoardVantage CEO

**N**o doubt the most exciting Internet strategies today rely on leveraging the trust relationships that exist within groups of people, be it for social, commercial or educational purposes. The concept jumped on the scene only a few years ago but has quickly gone mainstream, shape-shifting to suit ever more purposes and expanding far beyond what was originally thought possible. The technologies underneath go by the umbrella term of social networking and Facebook is considered the standard bearer.

Corporate America has been quick to embrace this trend *externally*, primarily for marketing purposes, but has been noticeably slower in their adoption *internally*. That dichotomy is understandable. The security of these networks is broadly regarded as weak and the potential for leaks of confidential information is great.

But what hasn't been talked about to the same extent, and what is an equally grave impediment to broad adoption, is the simplistic relationship model embedded in those networks. Without a richer model to address role complexity of the typical professional in the modern workplace the value of social networks as a collaboration tool is dubious at best.

It is this latter aspect that was foremost on our mind when we set out to reach beyond our traditional board market and build a collaboration platform for leadership teams. Reconciling the needs for security and simplicity is a technical challenge for many engineering teams but, for BoardVantage, with our extensive experience in the board portal market, it is a core competency. The greater difficulty lies in the proper capture of [multiple roles](#) which are needed to support the normal social functioning of the workplace, and which are routinely combined in a single person (e.g. direct report, peer, manager, etc.).

We viewed enriching the model as the central architectural challenge, one that could only be addressed with a reinterpretation of established concepts. However, if successful, it would be the keystone to fulfilling the requirement of capturing multiple roles. Below I will delineate the five key elements of the architecture we developed.

## 1. TeamSpace-Driven Content and Communication

In our model TeamSpaces are shared environments that function as the focal points for confidential collaboration. They form the backbone of our architecture, permeating every aspect of our design. Individual spaces are configurable with a rich functionality to support a range of knowledge worker roles and workplace process. Since knowledge work commonly relies upon a combination of content, process and communication, TeamSpaces are equipped as such.

Team	Attribute	Functionality
	Content	Document Management, Group Calendar, Directory
	Process	Workflows, Approvals
	Communication	Walls, Feeds, Conferencing

## 2. User-Driven Content and Communication

The architecture also designates a class of content as being user-driven. This class represents any content under the exclusive control of the user. Among others this class includes such items as an alert inbox, a document 'briefcase' and status information.

Personal	Attribute	Functionality
	Content	Syncing Calendar, Briefcase
	Process	Inbox, Chat Messaging
	Communication	Presence, Status Updates

This distinction allows a user to maintain exclusive control over private information even while working in a shared-content space. User-driven content is portable so it's at the individual's disposal at all times, irrespective in what TeamSpace the user resides at any given time.

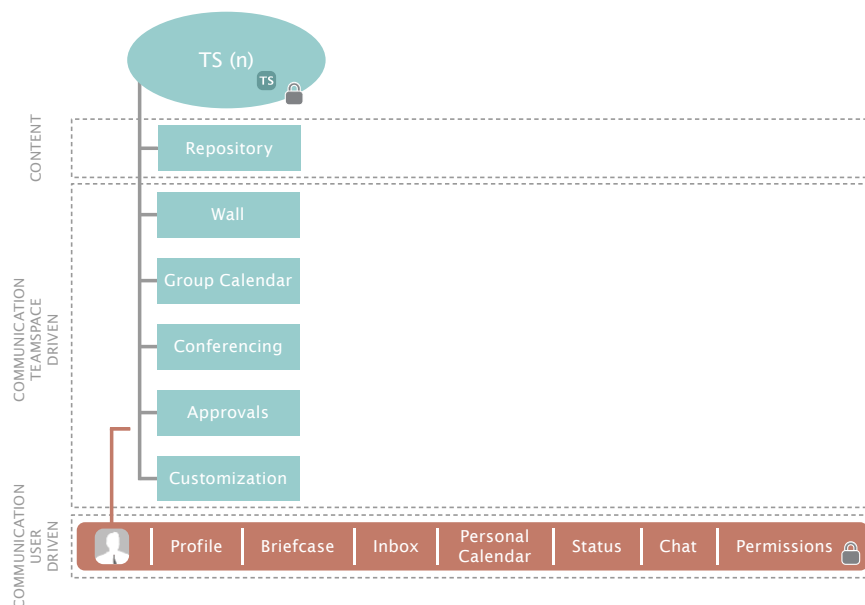


Figure 1

### 3. TeamSpace Arrays

TeamSpaces are often networked. They can be snapped into a collection of spaces, creating a TeamSpace Array. This permits segregation of the roles which users play across the various groups in which they collaborate. Because spaces are ring-fenced, the role played in one TeamSpace does not spill over to the role played in an adjacent one.

### 4. TeamSpace Backplane

A TeamSpace Array can serve as proxy for the multiple roles a professional plays in the modern workplace. But this concept only works if a user can navigate between multiple spaces — swiftly. That’s why the architecture deploys a secure backplane. Controlled by permissions, this model lets individual users jump back and forth between spaces quickly and securely.

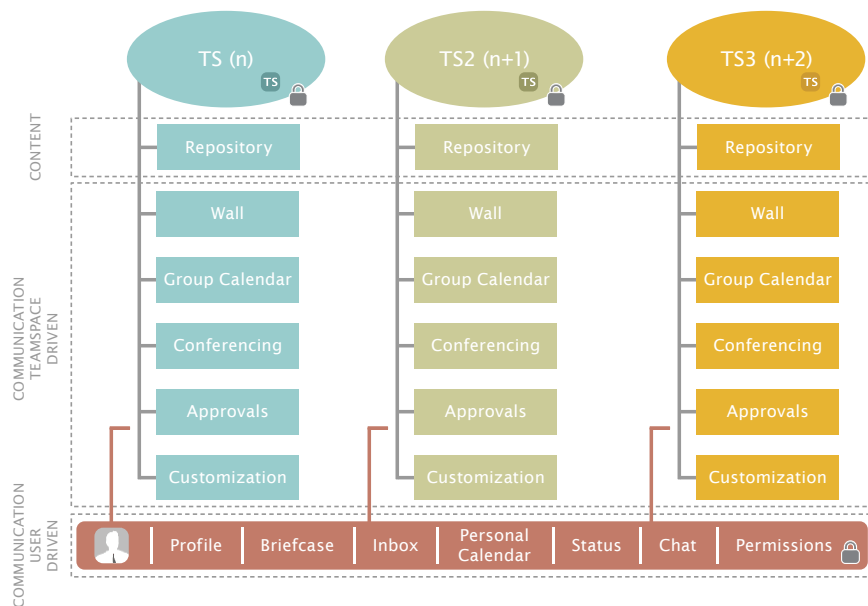


Figure 2

### 5. Permission Model

TeamSpaces are access-controlled, but that does not mean that should be one-size-fits-all access, once inside. Consider the example of a calendar schedule. Even if a schedule isn’t confidential, it is generally considered to be privileged to the individual. While every TeamSpace is ring-fenced against intrusion by outsiders, within the space any asset, whether a document, event or otherwise is access-controlled under a permission model. The model is flexible enough to support real-world cross-hierarchical use cases.

Using this framework the NextGen architecture has proven to function in a range of collaboration initiatives by different types of knowledge workers. The model balances the concerns of confidentiality with the real needs to share. Equally important it addresses the need for multiple roles in the modern workplace in an effective and elegant manner.

**Joe Ruck** is president and CEO of BoardVantage. He has led many high-technology companies through successful growth to IPO or acquisition. Prior to joining BoardVantage, Joe was senior vice president of marketing at Interwoven and part of the team that drove the company through one of the most successful IPOs of 1999. Previously, he held sales, marketing, and executive positions at Sun Microsystems, Network Appliance, and Genesys Telecommunications, subsequently acquired by Alcatel. Joe holds a BS in engineering from Oregon State University and an MBA from Santa Clara University.

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