
Industry Direction

During the last seven years, the World Wide Web has emerged from its obscure origins in the academic community to become part of everyday life for every employee and client of your business. Because it uses a ubiquitous piece of software, the browser, and a universally accessible infrastructure, the Internet has provided a ready-made platform that serves as the foundation for tremendous innovation in technologies, services, and business models. Once this process got underway, it became self-reinforcing: An increasing user population attracts new content and services to the Web, while the increasing benefits to be gained from Web access in turn attract new users.

In addition, the world of telecommunications has gone down the path that computing has been traveling for the past 30 years. This path can be characterized by new providers entering an industry that previously had a few, well-established carriers; accelerating technology innovation, causing development cycles to decrease by an order of magnitude; and a wave of new products and services. Progress in this industry has introduced new issues and challenges to the business as it continues to define standards and provide support to its clients. Perhaps the most significant development over the last few years has been the convergence of computing and telecommunications technologies in the form of mobile devices. The ability to deploy computing power in a wide range of mobile devices that go far beyond the desktop and server has had a tremendous impact on the business's infrastructure requirements. From the use of powerful digital signal processors for the next generation of wireless communications to navigation systems that get their location from orbiting satellites, the combination of computing power and communications capability in mobile and intelligent devices rapidly will become common in every day life.

The ability of applications to communicate and work with each other combined with their portability has taken on new momentum as the trend toward more diverse types of client devices such as cell phones and toward thinner clients such as PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) have gone hand-in-hand with renewed interest in platform-independent software via a web services model using development and mark-up languages such as Java and XML and in browser-centric (internet) computing. The focus of sharing of information, however, has been shifting from the platform level – being able to transfer files and exchange e-mail between systems – to the application level. The entire industry is pursuing the goal of distributed object computing – the ability to have one application invoke services from another application on a different platform in a standardized way. The business has realized the importance of applications communications and portability as it continues to implement a series of significant enterprise systems.

To achieve the benefits of these new technologies there has to be an emphasis on information management – the ability to capture and reuse the collective experience and knowledge of



150 MacLaren Street, Suite 1206, Ottawa, ON K2P 0L2 • Telephone: 613 565 3717 • Mobile: 613 720 5734

employees of the business, including the use of search and filtering tools to extract information more efficiently. This focus underlies all of the applications and solutions that clients have in progress.

This focus is integrally linked to the harmonization of business processes. The key today is the integration of business drivers translated into harmonized business functions linked to their data and information through business applications.

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FooteWorks Inc.

5 Frank Street, Suite 402

Ottawa, ON

K2P 0W8

T: 613 565-3717

F: 613 565-9971

W: www.footeworks.ca