Java and XML: A Foundation For e-business

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When you get right down to it, e-business is a simple concept. An e-business is an organization that connects critical business systems directly to key constituencies (customers, employees, suppliers and distributors) via the Web (Internet, intranet and extranet). But this simple concept becomes powerful quickly. As customers, employees, suppliers and distributors are all connected to the business systems and information they need, e-business actually transforms key business processes.
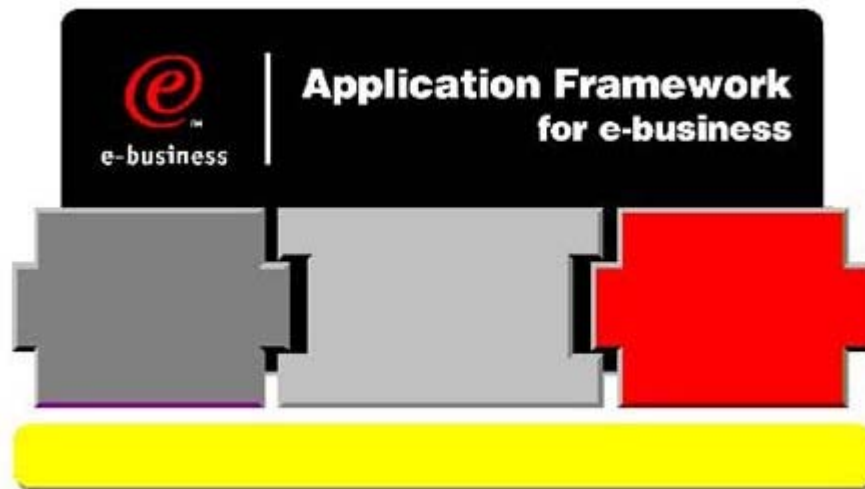
Most companies have begun the transition from traditional businesses to e-businesses. They have established Web sites and have begun to Web-enable core processes (e.g. self-service applications) to strengthen their customer service operations, better connect with their supply chain, and reach new and existing customers with electronic commerce. IBM has helped thousands of companies reach out to use new technologies, not only to solve business problems but to extend their reach to new customers.

To transform traditional business processes to become an e-business, you're going to need a foundation for developing new business applications. IBM's answer is the Application Framework for e-business, a comprehensive, scalable platform that supports all the services you'll need to develop and deploy e-business solutions. The benefits of developing applications using the Framework are illustrated by the key principles that have guided the Framework's development.

Key Principles of Framework

The key element is the support of open standards, such as Java™ and XML. XML is a key technology that will facilitate both information exchange and e-business transactions. Java is the key technology to leverage legacy applications and create new exciting business logic. So XML is to the data as Java is to the business logic. Use Java to build applications that handle XML's extensibility. Together they form the foundation for the IBM Application Framework for e-business.

This framework has additional considerations. To maximize ease and speed of development and deployment, the new tools enable server-centric, Java-based component models to be rapidly developed by people ranging from non-technical graphic designers to professional programmers. Though the browser is popular today, the ability to accommodate any client device is an important consideration. Browser technology went from zero to 10 million users in just 10 short months. Other technologies like the pager took 40 years to reach 10 million users. Pervasive computing is now a reality. Support of Internet standards and a server-centric model expands access to your e-business applications to a broad range of client devices. A Framework must ensure portability across a diverse server environment to allow movement to higher levels of server, if the demand calls for it.

Application Framework for e-business

Support of the open, unifying Java platform makes it easy to deploy your e-business applications on the systems that best meet your scalability and quality-of-service requirements. To improve time to market and reduce cost of development, e-business applications must leverage and extend the reach of secure, reliable and scalable applications that are the core of many business processes.

The future of e-business is a network of connected businesses, offering an integrated solution that spans multiple systems and multiple enterprises. This solution will give customers what they want without the expense of traditional business operations (i.e. multiple intermediaries, warehouses of inventory, etc.). Having realized the need to integrate business processes, customers quickly move to a single first question ... HOW? They recognize that their new solutions must leverage existing systems and investments because they can�t afford the time or expense associated with starting over. Thus, they want to partner with a vendor who can deliver a broad portfolio of hardware, software and services to integrate over multiple platforms. The IBM Application Framework for e-business provides the technology, development guidelines and products to develop solutions based on open Internet standards such as Java and XML.

Fernando Lopez will talk more about IBM�s e-business solutions at this TechCon99 session. Fernando joined IBM in 1968 and has held numerous management and leadership positions, including international assignments. His technical and marketing expertise include Operating Systems, Network Operating Systems, System Management, Java, Object Technology and e-business Application Development tools. He has worked with Fortune 1000 companies in many technical and marketing areas and is a frequent speaker at national and international industry events, customer briefings, user groups and technical conferences.