Rarely are corporations afforded the luxury and time of developing an enterprise-wide information system from scratch. Rather, most companies must integrate various heterogeneous applications across their entire enterprise. This issue is becoming increasingly rampant with the increase in mergers, acquisitions, and off-shore outsourcing. The need to understand the proper method by which to integrate information systems across an enterprise is the underlying premise of this book. The purpose of this book is to provide a practical, step-by-step guide for the integration of applications, information, and business processes across an entire enterprise. It draws on a series of case-studies, business models, as well deep technological exploration.

Given the inherent complexities in integration across an entire enterprise, the authors can only offer the tools for beginning to compose an integration strategy and methodology. Thus, while the text serves such a purpose effectively, it also requires the reader to apply a great deal of domain and organizational specific knowledge to reap the full value of the authors’ guidance.

The book is divided into three sections. Part I focuses on closely linking enterprise integration initiatives to business strategy and goals. It begins with a discussion of the changing business climate, and therefore the importance of enterprise integration in order to create agility and manage the business in real-time. The following two chapters decompose the enterprise integration process into two high-level categories: business drivers and architecture concepts. Examples of specification documentation, as well as templates for such documentation are included throughout the entire text, as well as in the appendices. In addition, many short case studies are included that provide a useful complimentary resource to the main text. Part II focuses on the creation of the enterprise integration architecture, through the application of the principles introduced in Part I. Each of the chapters in Part II contribute to a structure aimed at guiding the process of architectural design. The authors do a good job of delineating the various components that make up an enterprise integration architecture. Many enterprise integration projects fail because companies do not take a detailed assessment of their current integration environment, thus the authors explain...
how to perform and document such an evaluation. Part II concludes with four chapters, each of which provides guidelines and standards for building a: (i) technical integration architecture; (ii) service integration architecture; (iii) information integration architecture; and (iv) process integration architecture. Best practices, for the creation of each integration architecture, are included. Part III builds upon the enterprise architecture specifications of Part II. It defines different types of integration solutions. The four types of integration solutions detailed are: (i) application integration; (ii) information integration; (iii) composite application integration; and (iv) process-driven integration.

The authors conclude with best practices for maximizing return on investment. They stress the importance of thinking of enterprise integration from an organizational perspective, such that integration solutions are aligned with the organizational tactics and strategies, and allow for business agility. In addition, aligned with classic database design theory, they reiterate the value of reducing redundancy, in both the infrastructure and in personnel training; this can be facilitated in the infrastructure through the adoption of standards.

This book is intended for business and IT directors, project managers, architects, business and strategy developers, technical staff, and others interested in understanding the pieces of enterprise integration. It of course references the online portal of one of the authors, ebizQ, which feels slightly more like an advertisement than a source of knowledge. However, having then visited the website, there is a wealth of information to be had. The authors do clearly state that their focus is on small case studies, example documentation, and mapping of business processes to application architecture, this focus consequently limits the book’s appeal to practitioners seeking basic knowledge, rather than researchers or experience enterprise integration specialists. However, for such practitioners, it can serve as a good introduction and reference to the area of enterprise integration.

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