Designing E-Commerce Portal for an Enterprise—A Framework

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Abstract

Portals have become the Web interface of choice for providing business users with rapid access to the information and services they need to help them do their jobs more efficiently, make better informed business decisions, and enable their organizations to become smarter, thus more competitive. Appropriate deployment of portal, content management, and collaboration technologies is essential to business success. Integrated e-commerce portals let organizations reach out to customers around the globe—inexpensively and around the clock. Integrated e-commerce portals deliver industry-leading tools for building sales, reducing costs, and making companies more efficient in a Web-enabled world. This chapter suggests a framework for developing an enterprise-wide integrated e-commerce portal for evolving organizations. The proposed framework
would help to design a distributed, extensible, cross-platform, collaborative, and integrated e-commerce portal.

**Introduction**

Currently, customer expectations are increasing at the same rate as information and communication innovations in the marketplace. The traditional organization structures and business models are no longer sufficient to deliver products and services. Organizations are changing enormously in their design, business models, and strategies to reach global customers (Wingenroth, 1999). Today, enterprises are challenged to do things faster, better, and more cost-effectively in order to remain competitive (Hoven, 2001; Spring & Sweeting, 2002). As a result, there is a strong need to share knowledge in a way that makes it easier for individuals, teams, and enterprises to work together to effectively contribute to an enterprise’s success in an increasingly global and competitive economy (Goldman, Nagel, & Preiss, 1995; Hoven; Reich et al., 1999). Current market trends, global competition, and technological innovations drive enterprises to practice the concept of real-time enterprises. These are organizations that enable the automation of processes spanning different systems, media, and enterprise boundaries.

Real-time enterprises provide real-time information to employees, customers, suppliers, and partners and try to make sure that any piece of information is always current. Real-time enterprises represent the future of knowledge-enabled business processes wherein digitized organizations interact with increasing and relentless speed and any specific “event” results in a real-time “response.” For this purpose, enterprises of all sizes have invested heavily in a variety of e-business initiatives, including informational Web sites, transactional e-commerce sites, Web-based applications, and partner- and internal employee-facing portals. In doing so, enterprises have successfully expanded the number of channels through which they can sell their products and the number of modes used to interact with customers, partners, and employees.

Multiple locations, mobile employees, and increasing use of portable devices such as PDAs and cell phones lead to demand for anytime, anywhere access to enterprise information. Enterprises are deploying enterprise portals to improve employee productivity. A structured commerce Web portal enables secure access to information and provides a broad array of modular resources.
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