Chapter 12

Mobility and Enterprise 2.0

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of Web 2.0 and its rapid adoption by the corporate world, known as Enterprise 2.0, has radically modified access to tacit knowledge and significantly reduced business latency. Meanwhile, technology for wireless LAN and mobile communication, combined with advances in handsets, has allowed for superior quality of experience with acceptable productivity level. Combining mobility with Enterprise 2.0 is the next big step in evolution. This article presents the drivers for Enterprise 2.0 and the challenge of tapping tacit knowledge and, in parallel, the evolution of wireless and mobile technologies. The era of mobile broadband life is made possible, creating new ways of use and expectations for Millennials. The next business generation will be able to unleash the full potential of mobility and Enterprise 2.0. Three scenarios selected from different vertical domains—healthcare, education and emergency services—illustrate the benefits of mobility and Enterprise 2.0 in action. With the expected continued strong growth of wireless access, mobility support is one, if not the, key success factor for Enterprise 2.0.

INTRODUCTION

Many factors are aligning for significant change in communication and collaboration in the corporate world. At a time when competition is global and fierce, IT and communication tools are expected to be a real vector for differentiation. The objectives to thrive and survive include superior customer care, cost efficiency and ultimately innovation.

The constant and fast pace of change brings challenges to corporations which have to understand, deploy and massively adopt new technologies. At the same time organizations themselves are changing, moving from a strict and formal hierarchical model to ad-hoc virtual teams and networked communities. This task oriented, problem solving quest for knowledge approach is
greatly facilitated by the emergence of the Web 2.0 in the corporate environment. For early adopters Enterprise 2.0 is already demonstrating its value.

On the infrastructure side, progress of wireless technology (WLAN, mobile) combined with advances in handsets has allowed for superior quality of experience with acceptable productivity level. The next business generation issued from the Millennials has always known Internet, cell phones and wireless connectivity. Mobility is an integral part of Web 2.0 and ultimately of Enterprise 2.0. The new era of “mobile broadband life” will impact most homes and corporate environments in ways we can only start to imagine.

This article is comprised of five sections and is organized as follows. Web 2.0 and Enterprise 2.0 is presented in the next section. The second section discusses the importance and the challenge of accessing tacit knowledge in corporate environments. The third section presents the technological trends and evolutions of wireless LAN and mobile communication. Section four motivates the role of mobile broadband life and the Millennials in the development and use of Enterprise 2.0 tools. Using selected examples from different domains, section five illustrates the potential of Mobility and Enterprise 2.0 in action. Summary and conclusions are contained in the final section.

In an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge”

The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (Oxford University Press, 1995)

WEB 2.0 AND ENTERPRISE 2.0

The Financial Times on June 17, 2009 stated “a request by the U.S. State Department asking Twitter networking Web site to delay a planned break in service has highlighted the vital role social media are playing in protest against a middle east country’s election result.” Not only Twitter, but also other social networking sites were blocked. Beyond the political meaning of the U.S. State Department request, it dramatically highlights that Web 2.0 tools have become a key information conduit.

Let’s step back to the mid-1990s to the Web 1.0 time before it was called 1.0: connecting to what was simply called the “the Web,” allowed users to surf through Web pages, sites, hyperlinks of which almost all the content was produced by the computer elite. It was a one way flow of information, read only material and only a few million people were on line—about 45 million—nevertheless it transformed the way users accessed the information. A new type of platform which was fundamentally communications oriented was created (Berners-Lee, 1989). Twenty years later, it is about participation and collaboration: publish, share, comment, and connect to networks. Blogs, wikis, social networking platform are flourishing and now used by a billion people online at home and at work. They have transformed the way of communicating and working together, while the core principle often cited is harnessing collective intelligence and network effect. “Web 2.0 is ultimately about understanding the rules of business in the network era … Web 2.0 is the design of systems that harness network effects to get better the more people use them, or more colloquially, as ‘harnessing collective intelligence.’ This includes explicit network-enabled collaboration … but it should encompass every way that people connected to a network create synergistic effects” (O’Reilly, 2008). There is a rich and diverse field of study and practice which concerns itself with “collective intelligence” and since the 1990s, a lot of definitions have flourished. One the earliest was given in 1994 by Pierre Levy, French philosopher and professor, “Within the space of Knowledge formed by cyberspace, a virtual world, individuals