Chapter VII
The Changing Nature of Business Process Modeling: Implications for Enterprise Systems Integration

Brian H. Cameron
The Pennsylvania State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Business process modeling (BPM) is a topic that is generating much interest in the information technology industry today. Business analysts, process designers, system architects, software engineers, and systems consultants must understand the foundational concepts behind BPM and evolving modeling standards and technologies that have the potential to dramatically change the nature of phases of the systems development life cycle (SDLC). Pareto’s 80/20 rule, as applied to the SDLC, is in the process of being drastically altered. In the past, approximately 20% of the SDLC was spent on analysis and design activities with the remaining 80% spent on systems development and implementation (Weske, Goesmann, Holten, & Striemer, 1999). Today, with the introduction of the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMI), Web services, and the services-oriented architecture (SOA), the enterprise SDLC paradigm is poised for a dramatic shift. In this new paradigm, approximately 80% of the SDLC is spent on analysis and design activities with the remaining 20% spent on systems development and implementation. Once referred to as process or workflow automation, BPM has evolved into a suite of interrelated components for systems analysis, design, and development. Emerging BPM standards and technologies will be the
primary vehicles by which current systems portfolios transition to Web services and service-oriented architectures (Aversano, & Canfora, 2002). The Business Process Management Initiative’s business process modeling notation (BPMN) subgroup is currently finalizing a standardized notation for business process modeling. Although the notation is still in working-draft format, system architects and designers should consider incorporating the concepts of BPM into their current and future systems analysis and design procedures.

**Background**

Adaptive organizations want to be able to rapidly modify their business processes to changes in their business climate including competitive, market, economic, industry, regulatory and compliance, or other factors. Meanwhile, enterprise architects within IT organizations have long dreamed of a repository for models that are interconnected and extend to support application delivery. No single tool exists that enables enterprise architects to connect the dots between high-level models geared toward a business audience and executable code to instantiate the vision (Carlis & Maguire, 2000).

Business process modeling (BPM) is both a business concept and an emerging technology. The concept is to establish goals, define a strategy, and set objectives for improving particular operational processes that have significant impact on corporate performance. It does not imply reengineering all business processes; rather, the focus is on business processes that directly affect some metric of corporate success. Business performance management and measurement emphasize using metrics beyond financial ones to guide business process management strategies (Delphi, 2001). Metrics related to customer value or loyalty are examples. Business process modeling is becoming the central point of organization for many systems. BPM as a concept is not new; multiple process management methodologies such as six sigma and lean manufacturing have existed for years. However, new BPM technologies are fueling a renewed interest in process thinking (Ettlinger, 2002). New BPM technologies promise business modelers and managers a visual dashboard to manage and adjust, in real time, human and machine resources, as well as information being consumed as work progresses.

The business and IT worlds are taking more strategic and holistic views of IT and how it supports the business. IT strategy, business process improvement, and IT architecture are experiencing a renaissance. Enterprise architects have tackled the technical architecture effectively. Now, enterprise architects are looking to expand their efforts into the business architecture space. Enterprise business architecture (EBA) is the expression of the enterprise’s key business strategies and their impact on business functions and processes (Adhikari, 2002b). Business architecture efforts in most organizations are limited to thematic project-level initiatives. Thematic business architecture artifacts generally fail to evolve once the projects are complete because little perceived value exists for keeping business architecture content alive. However, emerging standards show promise in keeping business architecture and associated artifacts alive to serve as key business strategy enablers.

The IT world is moving more toward a model of integrating pieces or components vs. building from scratch (Adhikari, 2002a). Organizations are looking to strategically optimize, automate, and integrate key processes to provide seamless service to more demanding customers in a mul-