Chapter XV

Installation and Maintenance Costs

The decision regarding which Web server, portal engine, or particular technology to use is never an independent, straightforward process. Typically, the manufacturers' recommendations are well founded, and only very experienced implementers, or those who wish to experiment, should mix and match various products. A basic premise can be made (with some caveats) that all major Web/portal products are comparable, although not identical. Current portal implementations do not guarantee compatibility, in spite of the existing standards.

If you had the luxury of building a completely new system, we would recommend to first choose the most volatile (or least compatible) components, such as portal, content and document management, followed by security, availability (more stable and better understood components), ending with choice of operating systems and platforms (the most stable, compatible, and well understood components).

It is very important to remember that the total cost of the installation includes maintenance, ease of deployment, and availability of support services. Of these, the operational maintenance is the most important. Typically, the installation may develop instability and/or performance problems that need to be diagnosed and resolved. It is essential that the installation have access to diagnostic tools that can be used to help assess the following: