

Enabling the Real-time Enterprise

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E-commerce competition for customers has accelerated the need for immediate decision-making. From loan applications to online auctions, the need for real-time response to questions will continue to grow.

— AMR Research on eBusiness Infrastructure, 2000

The Internet continues to transform every aspect of business—company structures, processes, economics and cultures. As the requirements for enterprise software continue to evolve, prepackaged, stand-alone applications are failing to meet the demands of the Global 2000. Determined to maintain their market leadership, these companies are grappling to keep pace with the punishing rate of change.

Applications must enable business processes that let customers, partners, suppliers and employees access data—product information—and each other, in real time. Processes once held close to the corporate vest are now extending out over the Internet.

Today's businesses have hundreds (or thousands) of disparate applications, systems and processes—from department to department and/or country to country—that have been built out over decades. Millions of dollars in IT investment and corporate data are resident in packaged applications across the enterprise. The successful businesses of tomorrow will harness that data with customized business processes that span the extended enterprise in real time.

In fact, the silos now identified as Internet, intranet and extranet will go away. The next wave of business transformation will be the emergence of a highly flexible, extended, global enterprise called the Real-time Enterprise.



Today, CIOs are asking:

“How can I increase customer service levels while reducing IT expenses?”

“Can our customers access real-time order status and data easily from multiple devices?”

“Can my sales team provide configured solutions on the fly?”

“Can my suppliers identify supply gaps?”

“Can my CFO produce quarterly financials in hours, rather than days?”

The Real-time Enterprise facilitates spontaneous transaction flow and information transparency throughout the extended enterprise, minimizing latency and labor. The Real-time Enterprise:

- Provides 24x7 availability, flexible demand-driven scalability, security and administration.
- Enhances revenue through superior market access, intelligence and time-to-revenue.
- Reduces costs by streamlining every process using the Web.
- Decreases excess inventory through improved analytics.
- Enables device-independent mobile commerce.
- Makes its information transparent.
- Assumes a dynamic network, enabling instant collaboration and low-cost, real-time interaction.
- Uses a distributed architecture that works with the applications, systems and processes a business already has in place.
- Allows non-intrusive customization and configuration, enabling businesses to better differentiate their brand.
- Is highly adaptive—because change is constant and it happens fast.
- Integrates data, applications and workflow.
- Gives customers a single-user interface across disparate applications.

“Traditionally, the processing of business transactions has been optimized for the technology infrastructure. To take advantage of processing capabilities and avoid scalability issues, business transactions were bundled together and processed in batches. This works well for internal back-office processes such as exploring a bill of material or processing financial transactions. However, with more outward facing processes that have a more immediate impact on the business, the batch process is not as effective. A customer who wants to see product availability is not going to wait until there are enough other customers asking a similar question to make the processing of that transaction cost-effective.”

— Goldman Sachs Internet B2B e-Commerce Report, 2000

The Advantage of the Real-time Enterprise

The Real-time Enterprise will provide 24x7 availability, flexible demand-driven scalability, security and high-level administration.

It will enhance both top-line and bottom-line growth through superior market access, intelligence and time-to-revenue utilizing business processes that are customized to business needs and irrespective of organizational or departmental silos.

The Real-time Enterprise will dramatically reduce costs by streamlining every process using

the Web. It will greatly decrease excess inventory through improved analytics. The emerging enterprise will enable device-independent mobile commerce and will make its key information transparent (to entitled users), allowing customers and suppliers to access easily, quickly, and conveniently, what they need—when they need it. The company that can facilitate spontaneous transaction flow and information transparency throughout the extended enterprise will minimize latency and labor while improving revenue and customer satisfaction.

In short, every batch process, every manual process and every phone call to check order status, represents a separate IT “system” that is costly in time and money and reduces the level of customer service at the same time.

Leading companies now implementing Real-time Enterprise initiatives are positioning themselves for significant differentiation from their competitors and global leadership.



“Although it offers high rewards, application integration middleware comes with more than its fair share of risks. The major strategic risk is underestimating application integration. A proper application integration infrastructure is a key enabler of whatever new eBusiness initiative an enterprise undertakes, from customer relationship management (CRM) to supply chain management (SCM), or from business-to-consumer (B2C) to business-to-business (B2B) initiatives. All of these efforts require massive integration. Thus, enterprises should recognize the critical role of application integration and not consider it a ‘bug’ to fix.”

— Gartner Group, Research Note, January 31, 2000

Web-centric Architecture Built for Many to Many

At the core of the Real-time Enterprise is an architecture built to support highly customized business processes. Following an open systems design, the platform and development environment assumes a dynamic network, enabling instant collaboration and low-cost, real-time interaction.

The distributed architecture of the Real-time Enterprise works across the software applications, systems and processes a business already has in place. It facilitates non-intrusive customization and configurations—thereby enabling businesses to better differentiate their brand.

The new architecture is built with the assumption that no two companies are running exactly the same software applications. By integrating

data, applications and workflow, this emerging technology offers businesses the security of entitlement and authentication while giving customers a single view (or common user interface) across various applications.

A software architecture for multi-architectures makes possible highly customized business processes, built in part from existing applications and ultimately delivering significant competitive advantage to early adopters.

eBusiness projects today can't be like ERP projects. It's much more effective when implementing Internet business solutions to focus on small amounts of functionality, implement quickly and then grow from that success. Many companies are looking at eBusiness as a huge initiative,

developing 1-, 2- and 3-year plans, but there's a different approach. With a highly flexible architecture built to scale and to fit in today's environment, small amounts of functionality can be implemented and, when successful, expanded.

Equally important, this emerging software architecture assures that the Real-time Enterprise is highly flexible, since innovation and change are fundamental processes inherent to doing business on the Web. Because the ability to change strategy and technology (or both) has become a critical factor for establishing market leadership, this new architecture is designed for endless cycles of changing markets, shifting strategies and fast implementations.

Asera Enables the Real-time Enterprise

A new software architecture from Asera enables enterprises to build and run their business with custom business processes, called composite applications, that can be implemented quickly. Asera creates composite applications by disaggregating packaged software applications into business objects and then reassembling data along functional lines. Along with Asera's suite of Sell-Side commerce applications, Asera's platform integrates best-in-class software and specific internal applications from multiple sources into a tightly coupled, high-performance solution.

The Asera Platform™ enables companies to disaggregate applications into workflow components and create customizable flows with XML-based business objects.

These business objects are then reassembled into composite applications. Asera adheres to all major XML standards and is closely linked to UDDI and SOAP standards development. The Asera Platform also serves as an information backplane connecting composite applications with information residing deep in the enterprise including metadata, EAI, translation and messaging.

Asera allows all internal and external users to tap the same system and applications available throughout an organization with different levels of entitlement. Through its open systems design, Asera protects companies from the deteriorating products of software providers who have fallen behind by enabling upgrades to stronger, more strategic applications with minimal disruption to business.

Asera ties customized, composite applications to enterprise data and opens the environment to the user through a tailored portal framework. Data then flows in real time and applications are reconstructed according to business processes. The strategic function of the enterprise is strengthened, as it becomes a more critical force in the larger value chain. The net effect—faster time-to-market, convergence of wide-ranging digital initiatives, real-time updating and dynamic linking of partner and client systems and substantial reduction in total cost of ownership.



“The single biggest obstacle to delivering on the promise of eBusiness and B2B is integration. The fragmentation of internal ERP, CRM and SCM systems across sites, departments, and business units, will prevent companies from reaping the benefits of cross-enterprise integration and unified relationships with key customers. Thus is the potential power of Private Trading Exchanges (PTXs). And the Asera eBusiness Operating System,[™] more than any other system serving the sell-side, is the purest, most ideal commerce platform model meant for this market. The platform brings together the entire foundation layer, including an integration framework, management and infrastructure; much of the transaction layer through its order management product and relationships with E.piphany, Selectica, and Moai; and nearly all of the components of the value-added services and collaboration layer. The real strength of the platform is an application development environment that lets users define processes, workflow and business rules, while simultaneously letting users configure and customize it for the business environment.”

— AMR Breaking News, February 23, 2001

The Asera Difference

To the Global 2000, customization is king. Despite the software industry’s claims that customization and configurability present a forbiddingly difficult undertaking, Asera recognizes every company’s uniqueness—and every company’s business processes must comprehend and enable those differences as central to their strategy and differentiation. Asera deploys a flexible, highly configurable solution in three months. Asera and its affiliate partners, including Accenture and Cap Gemini, ensure that the Real-time Enterprise is up and delivering value in 90 days or less.

Asera has moved data integration and federation to the next level.

For market leaders it’s not enough to integrate data. The next generation of business leaders will be the ones leveraging technology innovation, streamlining efficiencies and striving to constantly improve their customer’s Web experience.

Businesses must integrate processes, security and portals, while providing a single, user-friendly view into their company. Asera enables our customer’s customer to interact with the company in the manner they prefer—not the way the company’s software applications insist they interact. Asera also eliminates the delays typically associated with globalization. The manner in which enterprises store and present data must be readily available in each user’s preferred language.

Some companies will discount the power of innovation. They will rely on one vendor for technology advances and differentiation. They are, in fact, sacrificing strategic opportunities and economies of scale. Asera provides a single, browser-based user interface that serves as a personal portal for each user’s information and preferences from all enterprise systems—external and internal, custom or standard, current and future. Asera enables the Real-time Enterprise. One that is customer-driven. Not application-driven.



eBusiness Operating System

600 Clipper Drive

Belmont, CA 94002

Phone: 650-769-1234

Fax: 650-769-1200

www.asera.com

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