

Chapter 6.1

Enterprise 2.0: Collaboration and Knowledge Emergence as a Business Web Strategy Enabler

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ABSTRACT

The Web is becoming in many respects a powerful tool for supporting business strategy as companies are quickly becoming more and more reliant on new Web-based technologies to capitalize on new business opportunities. However, this introduces additional managerial problems and risks that have to be taken into consideration, if they are not to be left behind. In this chapter we explore the Web's present and future potential in relation to information

sharing, knowledge management, innovation management, and the automation of cross-organizational business transactions. The suggested approach will provide entrepreneurs, managers, and IT leaders with guidance on how to adopt the latest Web 2.0-based technologies in their everyday work with a view to setting up a business Web strategy. Specifically, Enterprise 2.0 is presented as a key enabler for businesses to expand their ecosystems and partnerships. Enterprise 2.0 also acts as a catalyst for improving innovation processes and knowledge work.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the Web is in many respects a powerful tool for supporting business strategy. Emerging Internet technologies continue to enable businesses to expand their ecosystems and partnerships. This, however, introduces additional managerial problems and risks that have to be taken into consideration to avoid being left behind.

This chapter explores the Internet's present and future potential in relation to information sharing, knowledge management, innovation management, and the automation of cross-organizational business transactions. It points out how a business Web strategy that takes into account this potential will help not only to improve the existing information sharing and knowledge management processes, but also to protect investments in technology that would otherwise have resulted in expensive failures and severe losses. The suggested approach is based on the emerging Web 2.0 vision and will help to minimize the risk of key information and knowledge being lost or simply not being available on time for the stakeholder, projects started and never finished, worse time-to-market, results not meeting expectations, failure of global, cross-organizational IT integration processes, or even incoherencies between technology and company strategy or structure and so on (Argyris, 1998, pp. 98-105). All managers, and particularly IT leaders, must be aware of this new potential and its implications in order to come up with innovative and effective answers to both known and new problems related to information sharing and knowledge management within their organizations (McAfee, 2006).

The chapter's contents are designed to guide entrepreneurs, managers, and IT leaders through the adoption of the latest Internet technologies, such as Web 2.0, Enterprise 2.0, and the global service oriented architecture (SOA), and their application to their everyday work with a view to setting up a business Web strategy. Musser

and O'Reilly (2006) claim that by defining and following a set of architecture building blocks, architectural design decisions, and normative guidance, they can build flexible, extensible, and reusable solutions for exploiting the best features of the emerging Web 2.0 technology suite to achieve the best return on investment (ROI) by leveraging the upcoming Web of user-centered services.

BACKGROUND: THE ADVENT OF ENTERPRISE (WEB) 2.0

There are several different definitions of Web 2.0 (a.k.a. *social networking*) that mostly only describe certain aspects of the overall concept. Tim O'Reilly (2007), who originally coined the term, initially identified seven major characteristics inherent to the Web 2.0 concept. First, the Web is considered as a platform for building systems that do not necessarily have a specific owner and are "tied together by a set of protocols, open standards and agreements for cooperation." Harnessing Web users' collective intelligence represents the second major paradigm. This promotes architecture by participation and democracy and encourages users to add value to the application as they use it. The ownership of mission-critical data is regarded a further cornerstone of numerous Web 2.0 applications. Fourth, O'Reilly propagates the end of the software release cycle as another central paradigm. The use of lightweight programming models that allow for loosely coupled systems and applications, the provision of software above the level of a single device, and the realization of rich user experience represent the last major paradigms inherent to the Web 2.0 concept. Besides such analyses that properly describe parts of the super-ordinate concept, there are only very few comprehensive scientific definitions available. An in-depth investigation of numerous different, successful Web 2.0 applications conducted by Högg, Meckel, Stanoevska-Slabeva, and Martignoni (2006) condensed the respective characteristics

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