



Web-ifying Legacy Applications: Welcome to the 21st Century

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Agenda

- The problem
- The target
- The challenges
- The solution
- Questions and answers





The Problem

- Multiple "systems" to store organization data
 - Data in some systems redundant
- Systems did not talk to each other
 - Data had to be manually moved between them
 - Including: print a report to view/re-enter the data
- Different languages (or dialects)
 - Adabase (Natural), Oracle, DB2, FoxPro, dBase, Access
- Multiple levels and skills for support



The Rest of the Problem

- Each system (and corresponding staff) stove-piped.
- A single requested business change could impact multiple systems and take months to implement and coordinate.
- Cost to maintain the systems: exorbitant!!!
- Information and competitiveness lost
- No real ability to respond to change





The Target

- Integrate the systems
- Clean up the data
 - Identify & reduce redundancy
 - "Active" records versus warehouse
- Add functionality
- Make support (development and help desk) consistent and easy
- Single unified view of their "world"





The Steps — Vowels

- **Account** – explanation of the purposes (how the pieces are supposed to fit)
- **Examine** – what's where, schemas, organization (also identify redundancy)
- **Inventory** – you need to know where you are, before you try to go someplace else
- **Operation** – how does the data get into and out of the system. How will it...?
- **Use** – how is the data used? How will it...?



Also... when, where and expectations



What Doesn't Work...

- Attempt to define (all) requirements
 - Attempt to define requirements too soon
- Failure to prioritize requirements
 - Require everything as a "must-have"
- Assumptions without prototyping
 - Assumptions without known expectations
- No (or minimal) configuration management
 - Even experienced developers need it





What Doesn't Work...

- At the beginning...
 - Failure to obtain a commitment from end-user (customer) management for a real commitment for active involvement
 - Failure to establish a partnership between IT and the "sponsor"
- Failure to validate deliverables against their predecessors whenever there is a change
 - Failure to keep the main thing the main thing





What Doesn't Work...

- Bad idea in the first place:
 - Ambiguous or overambitious
 - No (or questionable) metrics
 - Wrong business drivers
- Overly restrictive or inadequate business cases, requirements, & specs can destroy a good idea
- Poor (sporadic/no) communication with users
 - Vanishing / disappearing users
 - Can we talk about outsourcing...???
- Scope creep
- Agile development when the project manager doesn't understand agile





The Kiss of Death

- No audit trail that demonstrates clear lines of communication with ownership accepted
 - Clear lines of communication enable information to flow effectively and efficiently
 - Ownership prevents confusion or denial over authority and responsibility
 - Both are essential to correct problems
- Missing unambiguous feedback that identifies both successes and misses





Solutions Steps

- Determine the business need...
 - ...and the business drivers
- Craft a conversion strategy
 - Understand the business drivers and the end user expectations
 - Don't assume: only users can supply expectations
- Standard for non-functional requirements
- Do the data model
- Determine the development process model



Determine Business Need

- When do you do it?
 - Before, during, ???
 - Baseline requirements at a high level

- How do you REALLY do this?
 - Stories, use-cases, formal requirements...??

- How do you handle changing requirements?





Craft a Conversion Strategy

- How many old systems will be converted?
- What data is in the old systems?
- How is the old data used?
- How will it be used, what is different in the new system (need, thneed, & expectations)
 - What will change (old data use)?
 - What new data (if any) will be added?
 - What new functionality will be added?

 Anticipate the inevitable



A Word About...

- New functionality
 - Haven't seen a legacy to Web conversion that didn't add capability / functionality

 - If they tell you there isn't any, do NOT believe it!
 - ...or be prepared for, "That's not what I meant."





Craft a Conversion Strategy

- Options: Full parallel operation, partial parallel, no parallel (just do it).
- Drivers: the business need, the data, the user experience
- What type of reliability?
 - Handle 1 million transactions reliably or...
 - Handle 1 transaction accurately and repeat it 1 million times for each "user"
- What type of risk mitigation...?



Conversion Strategy

- Just do it
 - Code and fix as you go
- Plan-driven
 - Predictive – up-front design
 - Delivers the original functionality
 - Modifications add to the cost
 - Can be CMM (Capability Maturity Model)
- Agile
 - Adaptive – evolving design
 - Delivers the needed functionality



Subtle Point

Understand the difference between the
requested system and the **needed** system.





It's Easy...

- NUTS!
- Stuff they think is easy very often isn't
 - ... and stuff they avoid is actually easy to do.
- Quantum nature of development
 - Once you've made a "path" decision, it dictates what is easy and what is hard
 - Most folks don't see it that way, but...
 - Take it one step further... it's too easy to get into the hammer and the nail syndrome





Parallel Operation?

- When does it make sense to use parallel?
- When does it make sense to run in full parallel (complete old and complete new)?
- When does it make sense to run some processes in parallel operation?
- When does it make sense to, "just do it?"





Parallel Operation

- Two types of conversions
 - Single stand-alone system
 - Integrating multiple systems
- Easier to do full parallel operation for the stand-alone system
 - That doesn't mean parallel operation should be ignored for integration
- Big-bang (just do it) isn't the best alternative





Non-functional Requirements

- Replacing existing systems sets a standard
- Reliability
 - 1 million transactions or 1 transaction that can be processed 1 million times.
 - This isn't a "load" issue – at least not yet
 - It is a quality metric!!! How?
- Throughput (and response time)
 - Is the old standard sufficient





Crafting the Data Model

- It's in the business drivers
- Talk to customers!!!
 - Determine how they use the current system
 - Have developers sit with users and actually watch
 - Determine what / how they expect to change
 - What do they expect will change: process???
- The data model is based upon user experience and user expectations
 - The real driver is: Business Need!!!



Crafting the Data Model

- Ultimately, this controls everything else
 - How the users use the system
 - How the developers build the system
- Entity-relationship or Object Model
 - Most legacy conversion should use ER
- Input derived from planning and analysis
- Outputs: ER diagram & data document
 - Data doc describes the details of data objects, relationships, and rules required by the database



The Data Model

- Most labor intensive / time consuming part of the development / conversion process
- Goal: assure data objects are completely & accurately represented
 - Data model expressed in easily understood notations and natural language
 - Reviewed and validated by end-users
 - Sufficient detail to be usable by database developers as a blueprint to define schema





Agile or Traditional (Process)

- If it's mission critical, this might not be the time to "bet the farm" on agile
 - Need a supportive organization
 - Agile is difficult if traditional reporting required
 - Agile can work, **provided** everyone buys in
- Quality metrics
 - Defect count
 - Specification & process compliance
 - Customer satisfaction



Agile and Legacy Conversion

- There usually will be conflicts between agile and traditional project management.
 - Agile: adaptive scheduling
 - Traditional: predictive scheduling (plan-driven)
- Plan-driven development typically focuses on both fully developed architecture and design
- Agile development focuses on a framework architecture and simple design that emerges during development



Technical Approaches

- Two conversions: "Systems" & data
- Keep old data for some period
 - Use JCA for non-relational systems
 - JDBC for relational data
 - Screen scrape???
 - Plug-able wrappers
- On-the-fly conversion as needed
 - With some parallel operation
 - Seamless access to old and new required!



People Approaches

- If all you have is legacy developers...
 - Everything in `main(...)` isn't a good idea
 - Teach them about objects
 - Use Java in-context
 - Don't start with EJB
 - Consider appropriate frameworks (hibernate, spring...)
 - ✓ Remember the driver is business need, not tools
- You need an object-oriented architect
 - Architecture should capture the big picture vision
 - Defines a thought frame(work)





Don't Assume

- Yes, CICS is event driven...
 - ...that doesn't mean CICS developers really understand objects, events, and behavior
- Just because they work on a system, don't assume they understand enterprise data
- Mainframe folks aren't going to be comfortable with toys





Best Practices

- Constant prototyping and testing
 - Prototype everything
 - Waiting to the end to test doesn't work
 - Teach JUnit and friends
- Get and keep users involved
 - Developers and users should be joined at the hip
- Don't define all requirements up front; allow them to evolve
 - Needed system versus requested system



Technical Best Practices

- Don't use SOAP over HTTP or XML between application layers
 - Do use SOAP at the edges – works best for integration
- Use accessor (get / set) methods
 - But not with distributed objects
 - Create a method that returns an entire object (or object set) don't use multiple gets





Best Practices

- You need to show business value to get approval for the project
 - Focus on business needs first, technology should be a distant second
- Most common business need addressed by Web services is **integration**
 - If you haven't considered it to this point, think about it now: a service-oriented approach works
 - But...





Web Services

- Don't do Web services for the sake of doing Web services
 - Needlessly adds costs for a distributed system
- If you don't need to externalize a specific interface, don't do it
 - If you don't have a need, turning it into a service is a waste of time (and money)





Web Services

- Point-to-point works best
 - But... with lots of interactions, the Java client gets very complex
 - Solution – refactor the code and separate the code that figures out how to use the plumbing
 - Consider an enterprise service bus
 - ✓ Similar in concept to the mediator design pattern
- Avoid spending time writing plumbing code
 - Most of it is going to be (should be) similar





Web Services

- Design the Web service to look like the underlying transaction
 - Don't use a "conversation" or "interactive" model
 - Use a forms-based approach
- SOA design patterns – determine granularity of services & business requirements
 - Adapters (for legacy code)
 - Component replacement (change internals)
 - Composition (BPEL *et al*)
 - Unified logical view (façade)



Summary Checklist

- If it connects IT more closely to the business, do it!
 - IT work in/with the business unit

- If it improves communication about IT, continue it!
 - Tough sell, internal marketing

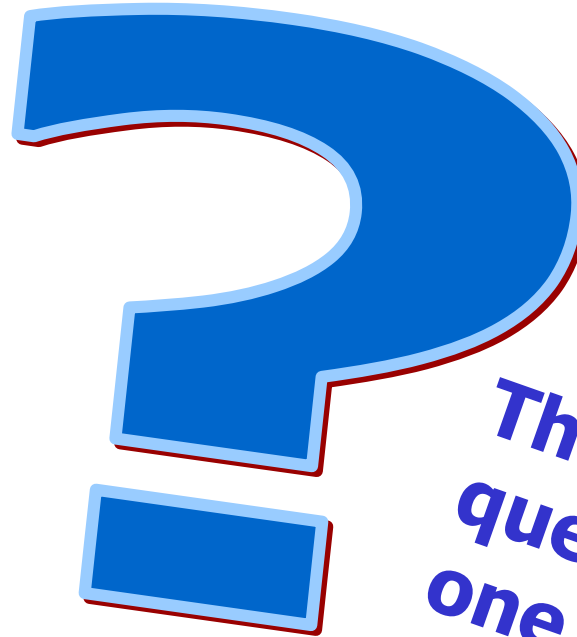
- If it encourages good IT management practices, try it!
 - Hands-off style with smart, motivated staff
 - Small rapid deliverables; prototyping; constant user involvement



Questions ? ? ?

***If you
don't ask,
who will?***

***If not now,
when?***



***There
aren't any
dumb
questions.***

***The only dumb
question is the
one not asked!***





Thank You

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