



Information as a Service

One of the more significant gaps facing IT organizations today is "information on demand". Most IT organizations have typically inherited an information repository approach that has been built in silos. This typically is exacerbated further with an infrastructure that is not well designed to either gather or move information to the appropriate destinations – combined with the appropriate entitlement of access.

In our experience, we took a top down approach to mapping business "information demands" with relationship and dependency of "information resources" correlated against "infrastructure qualities" to visualize, capture and isolate how to enable the right information be delivered in the right format, at the right time. We called this strategy "Information as a Service" and funded it under a data framework program as part of service oriented architecture strategy.

The strategy helps to...

- eliminate dedicated silos of data, systems and infrastructure as they exist today
- reduce the time it takes to build and deploy new information services
- implement and sustain predictable qualities of service around information delivery at runtime
- leverage and extend legacy information resources & infrastructure immediately thru data and runtime virtualization

The three core building blocks of this strategy are:

1. Virtual Data Access & Federation – Data virtualization brings together data from multiple, disparate sources--anywhere across the extended enterprise--into a unified, logical virtualized data layer for consumption by nearly any front-end business solution including portals, reports, applications and more.
2. Virtual Data Placement & Management – fast and reliable access to frequently used data. By automatically and dynamically partitioning data in memory across multiple servers, creating continuous data availability and transactional integrity, even in the event of a server failure. As a shared infrastructure, combines data locality with local processing power to perform real-time data analysis, in-memory grid computations, and parallel transaction and event processing.
3. Virtual Runtime Management – runtime control and execution enforcement of ensuring the right work gets done at the right time with the right resources – virtual data, virtual access, distributed availability, etc... are matched as infrastructure services with client and applications sessions based on policy and entitlement.

The bottom line from our experience is IT takes enough bad raps from the business and operations. Firms that are motivated to transform IT into a dynamic service provider of high value portfolio of services – should implement "information as a service" offering ASAP. The value of this strategy for our team resulted in greater increased revenues, high user satisfaction scores and new innovation opportunities.

In closing, we found Forrester's take on this quite accurate and provide some good food for thought...

An information fabric presents a business-friendly virtual view of diverse information. Information is provided in the form that applications and users need, hiding the complexity of the underlying sources. Information is accessed through the fabric, enabled by distributed middleware."

Posted by Tony Bishop on March 10, 2008 (http://weblog.infoworld.com/real-time-enterprise/archives/2008/03/information_as.html?source=rss)

