

*Enterprise Need*

*Information integration and Management*



## Information integration and Management

For the last several decades, Enterprises have been adding disparate functional silo'd systems according to various demands of business. Each system was built with its own information repository. Business has now started to recognize the value of breaking down such functional silos and adopting a more Customer-centric and cross-functional approach.

Companies now are also confronted with the challenge of increasing volumes of data. Some studies show that world-wide data volumes are increasing 80% on a year on year basis. This data again might be residing in one of the silo'd databases in an enterprise. Instead of silos of data, enterprises need data integration across silos. The silo'd data needs to be pulled out from its silo and be made available on a consistent basis across the enterprise so that business can act on it. The challenge for IT departments has been to develop an integration strategy which can integrate and consolidate the required information across the many disparate systems.

Enterprises have been sponsoring Information Integration initiatives for several end goals:

- Provide consistent information across enterprise. Nothing can be more frustrating to business than having to deal with conflicting information from disparate systems. An effective Information integration strategy can help keep data across systems synchronized and also build aggregate repositories which can be used for Business Intelligence
- Keeping the legacy systems alive. Many legacy systems have rich functionality and have more or less been adequately serving their function. There might not be a good justification either to replace them or upgrade them. Yet these systems need to be integrated with and information exchanged with systems built on newer generation platforms and technologies. Information integration infrastructure will help overcome the technical complexities and extend the value of legacy systems
- Reduce complexity. This problem does not come about because of huge volumes of data, but because of lack of data standards. A properly designed Information integration strategy enforces data standards and formats thereby reducing unnecessary complexity.

- Enterprise Agility. A well thought-out Information integration strategy can enable data agility which can, in turn, enable operational agility by allowing loose coupling of various enterprise systems.
- Reduce IT maintenance costs and improve productivity. IT executives are pressed to reduce the amount of dollars spent on maintenance costs and invest them on projects that add business value. A robust and scalable Information integration strategy will increase productivity by providing common data definitions to various project teams and by allowing all developers to use a common set of tools and best practices, and by leveraging development work from project to another.
- Knowledge management. An effective information metadata management strategy can allow organizations to hire consultants, move work offshore but still be able to retain control over critical business and IT information
- Regulatory compliance. Considering the silo'd nature of most of the systems within the enterprises and the number of regulatory changes in the most recent past such as the Sarbanes-Oxley act, the Patriot Act and various consumer privacy protection acts; enterprises are looking at enterprise Information integration strategy to address the changing regulatory landscape

Enterprise information integration serves as a foundation for many initiatives within the enterprise:

- Data warehousing. Data warehousing projects gather present and historical from multiple data sources, reconcile that data and provide it for reporting and analysis. Typically 50 -75% of Datawarehouse project time goes in setting up the data integration infrastructure.
- ODS. ODS projects gather current or near current data and provide it for tactical queries. An ODS will perform numerous quick and simple queries on small amounts of data, whereas a data warehouse will perform complex queries on large amounts of data. An ODS contains only current operational data while a data warehouse contains both current and historical data.
- Data migration. Data migration is the process of moving data from one system to another with the intention to retire the old system. Data migration projects may also be referred to as Legacy migration projects.

- Single view of a “subject area”. This project entails creation of a central source of reconciled data or “single-view” of subject areas such as – “Customer”, “Product” etc.
- Data Synchronization. The objective of data synchronization initiatives is to keep data generated by two or more systems in synchronization with each other.
- Business Activity Monitoring (BAM). BAM projects typically combine the strengths of a data integration and business analytics platforms in order to monitor in real-time the business metrics of the enterprise.

At the core of any Information integration solution is the traditional Extract, Transform & Load (ETL) process. ETL enables enterprises to source data from multiple source systems, cleanse the data, transform the data into the required format and load the data into the target systems.

Realizing the strategic nature of Information integration and management initiatives, enterprises are establishing Information competence centers (ICC). ICC’s are typically a top down approach and blessed by the Executive management of the enterprise. While ICC’s may vary on scope, they establish best practices, define architecture and technology standards, create a shared pool of integration specialists and promote cross-project reuse and collaboration.

This white paper is part of a series of papers addressing the topic “Enterprise Needs – 2006-2010. To view other papers, please visit [www.valuemomentum.com/WhitePapers/index.htm](http://www.valuemomentum.com/WhitePapers/index.htm)

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