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## CORPORATE PORTALS – SUCCESS KILLS THE MARKET

Corporate portals or “enterprise information portals” (EIPs) have grown to be wildly popular over the last few years. Even before businesses were asking for them, vendors and analysts had realized that the inevitable takeover of the browser as the almost-universal interface to corporate information would open up new opportunities for information sharing. There were Intranets, *etc.* first, but “portal” was a more accessible and appealing term, and had the advantage of not being perceived as limited to Web content. Businesses were drawn to the simple yet powerful idea of a corporate Yahoo. It was, conceptually, an easy sell.

Given this popularity, why is it so difficult to find a vendor whose main business is selling a corporate portal? What happened to all the portal vendors? Why is the portal market essentially non-existent? And if it is non-existent, why can you buy reports that talk about its \$2 billion +/- size? Finally, what does this mean and why should you, as an IT strategist, care?

The short answer is that the concept of a corporate portal has become too successful to be owned by specialist vendors. Almost anyone will sell you a portal today. Your job is to determine which set of technologies will translate into what your customer’s expect from a portal, without the benefit of a well-defined market. This month we look at why this has happened and what it means to you.

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