THE GILBANE REPORT

Content, Computing, and Commerce – Technology & Trends

UNDERSTANDING WEB SERVICES

Many of the goals of Web Services have been around since long before the Web. *Distributed object computing*, *object-oriented programming,* and related efforts were aimed at more efficient ways to share code and content across networks (although "content" was not an "in" term then, the code still had to act on something). It now seems hard to imagine that those early goals could ever be achieved without *at least* the Internet infrastructure we have today combined with the phenomenal success of XML. Not that we have everything in place that we need, but widespread sharing of code and content is now easily conceivable and in some cases practical.

The easiest way to convince yourself how important web services will be is to think about them in the context of the computing and communication. Web services will eventually be revolutionary because they will do for communication between computing applications what the Web has done for communication between applications and humans.

While the ultimate effect of Web Services will be profound, there will not be an overnight revolution. As you will see in this month's article by Sebastian Holst (now a regular contributor) there are still some barriers to widespread adoption. At the same time, you need to understand the impact Web Services will have, and can have, on your IT strategies. Sebastian's article will help you understand enough about Web Services to start planning.

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