

Are your IT Systems Future Proof?



Choice is a wonderful thing... except that it can commit you to a course of action for many years to come. That's fine if the choice is the right one, but without the benefit of hindsight, you can never be sure – especially when you are a healthcare professional planning your organisation's Information Technology strategy. Yet, with a little inductive reasoning, it is possible to minimise the chances of making poor decisions.

Know what you want

We start with the single assumption that sooner or later the market delivers what people really want. Then we list those features that healthcare decision-makers crave incessantly from their IT systems:

- You want to be freed from having to track which make of PC, running on which operating system, sitting on which desk is attached to your network. You want an architecture that allows not just PC's but different devices, possibly even medical equipment, to talk to each other with the minimum of fuss. **You want open network architecture.**
- You may have some complex requirements but you want an environment that permits you to develop and maintain your systems cheaply and quickly. **You want a RAD (Rapid Application Development) environment.**
- Often overlooked when budgeting for systems is the cost of deployment. With traditional client-server systems this means running round your organisation installing software on every desktop and then

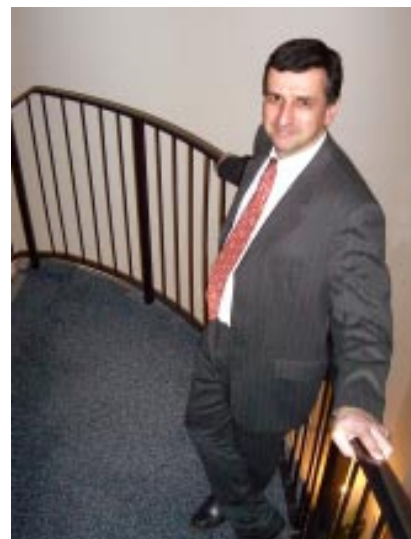
reinstalling it whenever a new release comes along. You want your users to switch on their machines and have the software and upgrades install automatically. **You want to eliminate your costs of deployment.**

- Maybe you have users in various locations. You have heard that it is possible to run a wide area network using the infrastructure of the internet without compromising security and performance. All you need now is someone to explain how easily it can be accomplished. **You want to slash your network costs.**
- Having everyone plugged into your network does not necessarily mean they all see the same version of your organisation's data. But you want them to. The most cost-effective way to achieve this is to have your data stored in just one (virtual) location and served up on demand. This has to happen quickly even when transferring such bulky data items as x-rays and photographic images. **You want fast, multi-site data access.**
- You want applications that can be delivered smoothly to a multitude of users and not just a few. Ideally, as the number of users of your systems increases, you want to maintain a constant level of service by simply plugging in new servers. **You want fully scalable systems.**
- Lastly, you want secure access to information while on the move, possibly overseas. You may even need medical data to be delivered to a mobile phone or PDA and not just a remote PC or laptop computer. **You want portability of data and code.**

Know how to find it

Fine, you know what you want, but you have painful memories of traditional desktop applications that have only partially cured the ailment. Many too were accompanied by unforeseen and costly side-effects. Luckily, relief is now at hand in the form of "Web-oriented Applications". Despite being delivered over a web infrastructure (i.e. the Internet or an intranet), Web-oriented Applications offer the full functionality normally associated with desktop applications, including a sophisticated graphical user interface, security, and fast performance,

Now it's time for a confession. My interest in this subject is not entirely academic. Mart Technology not only has expertise in diary, patient records, patient relationship management and procurement systems, we have also developed the tools and skills to build advanced Web-oriented Applications.



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We know how to deliver them



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