

The Benefits and Infrastructure of *ENTERPRISE INFORMATION DELIVERY*

Introduction

All organizations depend on information to flourish. Therefore, proper information management is needed everywhere. Information is a powerful weapon. It must be shared properly in order for your organization stay competitive, grow and continue to be profitable. Information Technology plays a crucial role in the process – the technology provides mechanisms as the repository for all of your business information – and it provides the tools by which you facilitate rapid analysis of that information. The concept of managing information is about having the right information delivery to the right people at the right time, in order to improve performance for your business. The building blocks of information management are, of course, information, and the systems that you use to harness, analyze and deliver this business information. There are many aspects to building an effective information management system within your organization. One of the most basic is the DBIG Enterprise Information Delivery (EID).

EID is a part of the foundation upon which DBIG's Solutions Framework, allowing your organization to take advantage of an evolving virtual global business world. It is essential to have the ability to combine aspects of operational systems, decision support systems, legacy systems, new systems, both internal and external and data warehousing and to ensure successful information architecture deployment strategies.

All information must be managed properly in order for it to be exploited to its maximum potential. In today's business environment, the information you gather and use will be crucial to the success of your company. It is essential that it be managed correctly for you to succeed.

In addition, all organizations are trying to utilize their information in order to gain a strategic advantage over competitors. With diminishing time-to-market and increased competition for customers -- even the slightest delay can impact your organization's profitability. Information must be delivered and communicated in a timely manner, and it must be constantly re-evaluated and defined. What good is a quick response if the quality of the information is poor?

The goal of EID is to leverage your existing IT capabilities to support the business by building an overall information framework and capability so that you will be able to define or refine all elements of your organization's information – sharing, integrity, storage, accessibility, security and delivery with a better approach to the integration of information in order for you to succeed.

What Will EID Do For You?

Corporations today are a multi-faceted enterprise. Any corporate information technology that is to be effective must be organized in such a way to assume lines of business counterparts know their business operations and needs better than their corporate IT brethren. Many government agencies and leading Fortune 500 corporate leaders appreciate this, and know on this point the traditional corporate IT organizations have failed miserably. Many IT leaders of these organizations such as The Pentagon, BP PLC, Eli Lilly and Company, Johnson & Johnson and United Technologies Corp. have gone further by adopting a new form of IT organization, call it Federalized Planning. These advocates of a federalized planning IT can point to several obvious benefits of such an organization. Every line of business wants a say in its own IT capabilities. It can also provide each line of business with a decisive say over matters that concern only that one line of business. By doing so, federalized planning IT can foster participation at the line of business level. And in doing so, it can also create a counterbalance to an overweening corporate IT.

DBIG's EID starts where you are and develops information delivery systems that balance the advantages of centralized and distributed approaches. To that end, EID is the Federalization of Information critically and highly beneficial aspect dimension of Federalizing Planning IT. DBIG has helped many major corporations and government agency (e.g., Verizon, GEICO, the Pentagon) deploying their information delivery systems and IT infrastructure using DBIG's repeatable framework solutions, which include EID.

EID is a process -- a precise and cost effective way to collect, organize, manage and share all levels of your company information within your corporation. The goal of EID is to provide various constituencies within any organization with one integrated, consistent and useable way to view all of their business information.

EID will allow you to:

- Establish a Federalized Business Enterprise Information Model (FBEIM) if one does not exist
- Become an integral part of the existing FBEIM serving the enterprise and its lines of business information needs
- Monitor actual and planned performance
- Predict business trends
- Create alternative business strategies
- Identify new business opportunities

Why Do You Need EID?

The eBusiness environment has created entirely new sets of rules regarding the management of information, as well as your interactions with customers, business partners, and regulatory agencies. The quantity of data and business information available to and needed by any enterprise is growing exponentially. Typically this includes internally generated information and externally generated sources of data. Internal information includes everything from historical information from legacy systems, through information from current operational systems to anticipated information from new applications. External sources of data cover a wide range from internet, supplier, outsourced vendor and collaborator data to regulatory data to demographics data purchased from third party vendors.

Additionally, “information” is no longer just something fixed – a customer’s name, a product, or a service – information now includes variables, such as customer value (how much a customer invests with you per year) or estimates for future customer purchases. Organizations have realized the importance of this information intelligence in the on-going competition to win new customers and retain legacy customers. Organizations have also realized that the information they use must be high-quality, accurate, current and readily available in order for it to have value.

Clearly, there are a number of challenges associated with the collection of, and management of large quantities of information. For example: information validity. Some threats to information validity include:

- Is the information consistently being generated using agreed-upon business rules?
- Is the recipient using the information as it was intended to be used or has the recipient modified its meaning before forwarding it on?
- Is any recipient receiving overlapping information from multiple sources or even perhaps from a single source?
- Is the information complete – a formidable challenge in a decentralized environment?

An organization can resolve these issues and more, by setting in place the correct procedures needed to transfer, validate, scrub, locate and store all information. The end goal – that of clean, consistent, valid information can be accomplished by implementing and supporting this process -- EID -- across an entire business enterprise.

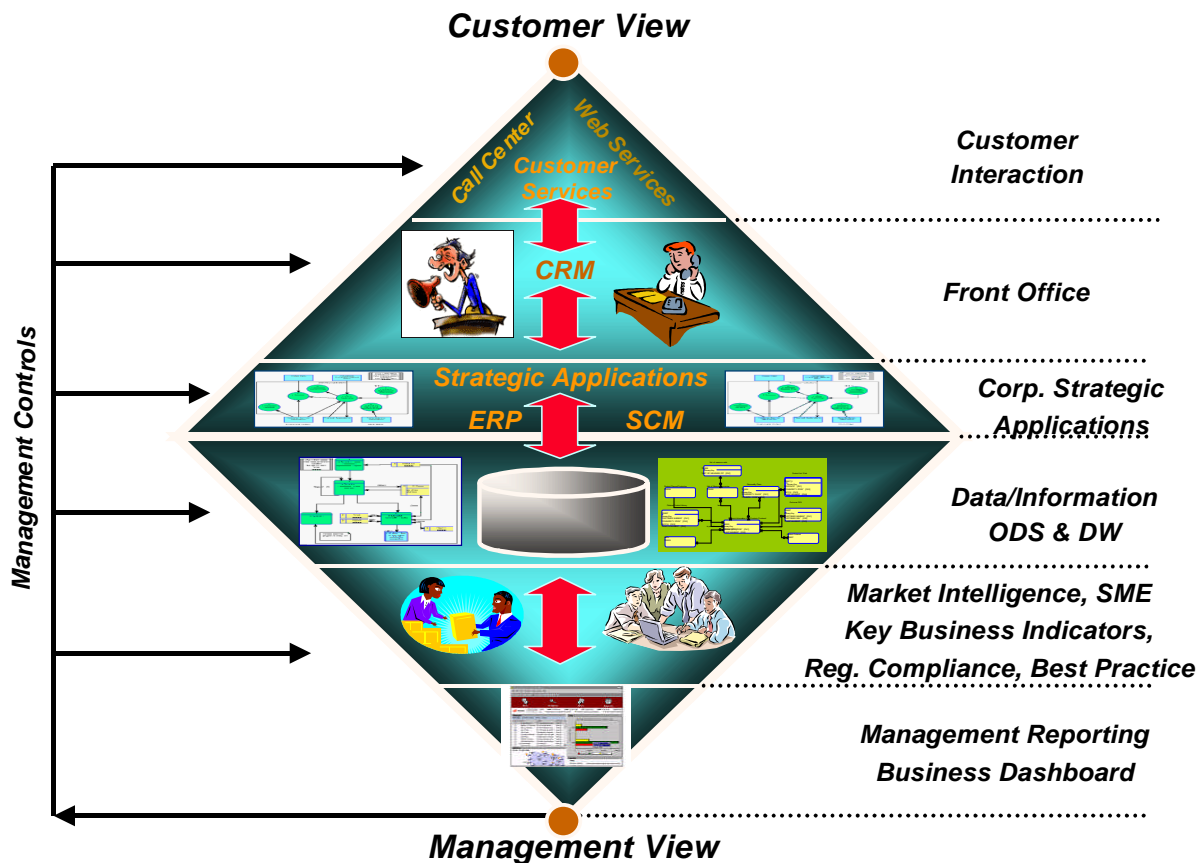
Information exists in various places and various formats within your organization. Each of these various formats might provide a different answer to the same question. In many cases, it is left open to interpretation what the correct answer might be. Implementing DBIG’s EID process will help eliminate these situations.

What Are The Business Benefits Of EID?

You can count on immediate benefits after implementing EID (see figure-1 below):

- All information is made generally available and accessible to whomever needs it
- There is one consistent meaning of information across the business enterprise, allowing for consistent answers to business questions
- Your business will be able to rapidly exploit corporate knowledge for better business decisions
- The correct information will be accurately captured at the source and stored for use by the rest of the business enterprise
- It will no longer be necessary for labor intensive collection and reconciliation on all levels in your enterprise, or each time one part of the business needs new information
- The mechanisms are in place to identify information still needed

Figure 1 – EID Implementation Benefits



Efficient Flow of Information Through The Enterprise Provides Clear Management View and Agile Management Control

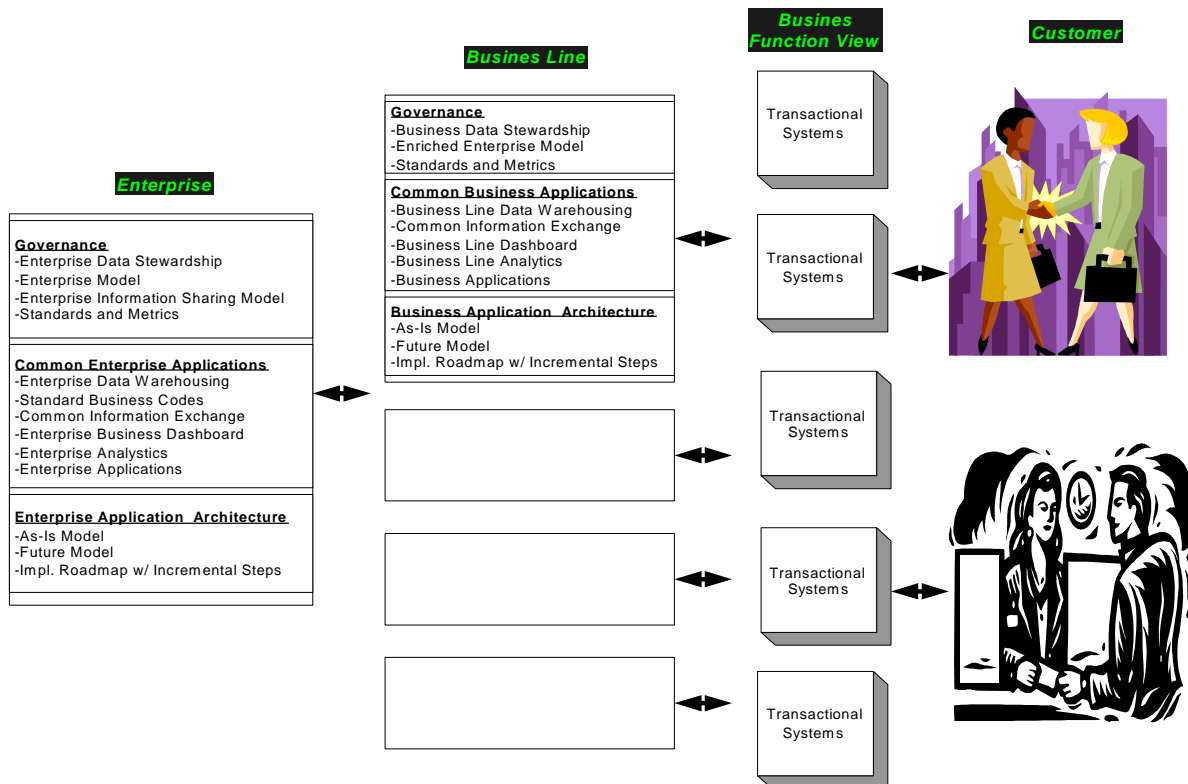
DBIG’s EID, What Is It?

Reaching the ultimate goal of providing business users with consistent, accurate information that will enable them to make informed decisions and recommendations requires a commitment from your organization. Case in point, a business’ customers can be either People or Organizations. Both of these business entities have a number of parallel characteristics. One of them, for example, is Address. The Enterprise Stewardship Teams will work together to develop a common representation of such characteristics. In order to serve the Enterprise, experts in Address may join the Enterprise Stewardship Teams in this discussion. In this example, the business line associates who are experts in managing People and Organizations can hardly be expected to know the ins and outs of postal schemes around the world, or the business mailing policies and practices. But the final solution will be shaped and supported by the Enterprise Data Stewardship Teams.

Therefore, one of the most important aspects of successfully implementing EID is having support and endorsement from executive management and affected business areas. For some organizations, EID can significantly change how information is used and therefore how people work. In order to get to this point the following intermediate goals need to be realized (see figure 2 – BID Elements)

- Tailored Governance
 - Enterprise Data Stewardship – Alignment of Federalized Responsibility
 - Federalized Business Enterprise Information Model
 - Standard Business Codes including Chart of Accounts
 - Standards and Metrics
 - Information Sharing Model
- As-Is and Future Application Model
- Implementation Roadmap with Incremental Steps
- Business Information Delivery Phased Deployment
 - Common Information Exchange
 - Data Warehousing
 - Analytics
 - Management Dashboards

Figure 2 – BID Elements



How Will DBIG Support Your Organization?

Many corporations currently expend significant resources to broker information. Finding the correct sources of information and moving, transforming and integrating this information is both time consuming and costly. Each time a new project is begun, the same steps must be repeated. Additionally, projects may interpret and transform any given information element in a different way. This leads to a lack of consistent information within an organization. And, there may be no process in place to ensure that projects are using the information as originally intended and that efforts are not being duplicated many times over. These oversights have significant impact to both organization effectiveness, and to your bottom line.

Given the significant implementation challenges facing any corporation, we believe leveraging your existing IT framework and capabilities coupled with DBIG's Enterprise Information Delivery and recommendations will provide you the means to quickly establish an efficient flow of information throughout the business with a well-defined path to transition to a full-scale Federalized IT capability.

The launch of this critical process - as well as its on-going information system maintenance and development – are best done with the breadth and depth of expertise and experience that DBIG can offer. Our information delivery consulting team is the vanguard of an organization offering truly comprehensive information delivery systems, available as discrete or bundled offering, so that our clients can better focus on their core business goals.

DBIG has rolled out successfully extensive information delivery systems at very large and complex business and government organizations. We are supporting these organizations with our Solutions Framework and EID. Each of these repeatable processes – aimed at the Federalized Business Enterprise Information Architecture and the Software Development disciplines – provides a proven framework that our consultants tailor to each client's needs and realities.

About The Author

Larry To is an executive principal for DataBase Intelligence Group (DBIG), an IT consultancy focusing on all aspects of knowledge management, database technology, and E-Business Intelligence. Specializing in large scale mission-critical and decision based systems, Larry has 20 years of hands-on technology and senior management experience across the strategic, architectural, and tactical IT levels. Mr. To has a strong Fortune 500 background and a variety of business concentrations including health care, finance, transportation, telecommunications, pharmaceutical, and manufacturing. He can be reached via the following contact information.

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