Minitrack on Novel Information Systems for Business to Business Electronic Commerce

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The purpose of this minitrack is to provide a forum for researchers and practitioners to discuss novel information system technologies, and to assess their impact on intra- and inter-organizational (businesses, public institutions or others) forms, interactions and coordination and their implications on the supporting information infrastructure.

Contributions of interest are those that describe novel business interaction and coordination models, which support information systems in general and enable new forms of business-to-business relationships in particular. We envision an interdisciplinary gathering, which brings together participants with both business and technology backgrounds, to discuss and to evaluate the technologies supporting developments in Business-to-Business Ecommerce and their applications.

We received 10 submissions. After a thorough review by up to 5 experts, 5 papers were deemed of sufficient quality for publication in the proceedings and good fodder for discussion. The contributions covered the following topics:

• Analysis of Ecommerce business models and assessment of security requirements to guide the development of security models.

• Use of semantic data integration techniques in the design of virtual Ecommerce catalogs.

• Use of process integration techniques, based on the publish-subscribe paradigm, to support the integration of legacy systems.

• Analysis of transactional properties in data replication techniques used in the integration of ERP systems.

• Combination of document and communication management concepts to support B2B negotiations.

Clearly, all the contributions address in one way or another the problem of integrating business systems at different abstraction levels, in different phases of business processes and along different technical dimensions. They reflect well many of the situations prevailing today around successful information system implementations of Business to Business interaction, where the concern is primarily on the availability of semantic integration tools rather than on the technical aspects. An advanced technical infrastructure is assumed. Integration issues in this case include data semantics, as required for example in catalogs, common models, as required for an agreed-upon security model, and common communication primitives, as required for negotiation and process integration.

Interestingly, none of the papers addressed a specific application. This may be partly due to the fact that we are still at an early stage of system building and experience in Ecommerce. Lessons learned from successful as well as failed stories will probably the ones serving as the guideposts for the future. Nevertheless, we feel confident that this particular minitrack will contribute to the debate towards understanding the system integration problems in this area and the viability of some solutions.