

Panel Session

What Are the Characteristics of Systems That Make Them Amenable to Web Services?

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Web services are currently enjoying a lot of media attention. There are a plethora of articles in the trade press covering all aspects of Web services. Many of these articles espouse the virtues of Web services to the point that it becomes difficult to separate marketing hype from business reality.

At the same time, academics and practitioners with extensive experience in the underlying technologies that constitute Web services (e.g., middleware, remote method invocation, data modeling, interchange formats, and networks) realize that Web services may be new—but not all that new. The fundamental capabilities offered by Web services have been around in one guise or another for many years. In some ways, just the buzz words have changed; the essential features remain the same.

Nevertheless, Web services do seem to offer the promise of novel and truly useful forms of enterprise computing. The key question is when to use Web services, and when to use another type of software solution. This is particularly true when using Web services to modernize legacy systems.

This panel will focus on which types of systems are most amenable to modernization through the judicious use of Web services. Some of the issues that will be discussed include:

- What are the salient features that existing systems should exhibit to make using Web services a better choice than, say, CORBA, or some other middleware technology?
- What are the system characteristics that would make it difficult to use Web services? For example, stringent performance requirements in a transaction processing system.
- Security issues related to reengineering previously isolated systems across a network via Web services.

The basic question the panelists are addressing is when to recommend the use of Web services, and in what context, and when to recommend some other solution. Hopefully the discussions that arise from the panel session will go some way towards answering this essential question regarding migrating to Web services.