Case Study

Icreon

Groupware Manager

Integrated Suite of Web based applications

Our Client planned to develop a groupware of Web enabled applications for information and knowledge sharing between workgroups. Its intended targets were medium & large sized organizations. Our Client required a comprehensive enterprise computing solution, providing multi-platform, multi-protocol support. Icreon developed Groupware Manager* for Our Client., to provide enterprises with high-end tracking and management capabilities, along with the ability to synchronize and manage activities for mobile workers. As an integrated groupware, Groupware Manager* enables workgroups to reduce project costs, improve staff efficiency, and foster an appropriate change in business culture and profitability.

Customer Profile

A leading IT consulting organization based in Japan, Our Client., provides consultancy services to organizations in the field of content management, online education systems, broadband, e-commerce and mobile communication.

Business Requirements

To manage operations efficiently, enterprises require coordination of activities, schedules, and knowledge among team members working on various projects. Our Client, recognized this requirement within medium and large sized organizations, where large teams need to coordinate while working on turnkey projects.

Enterprise Computing for Effective Manageability of Operations

Benefits:

- Enhanced monitoring and management of operations

- Fully customizable

- Cross-platform (Mobile Devices/PC) portability, accessibility and support

- Centralized management driven by reliable & high-speed database access

- Multilingual (English/Japanese)

- Integrated e-mail services that provide multiple POP3 access

Technologies & Platforms:

- PHP

- HTML

- MYSQL

- i-Mode

- EZWeb

- Integrated e-mail services that provide multiple POP3 access

- WAP

- JPhone

- Windows

- Linux

- Solaris

- Macintosh

- Apache Server

- IIS Server

Our Client is a leading IT consultancy services organization based in Tokyo, Japan. The company observed the growing need among medium and large sized enterprises to coordinate and synchronize internal operations among large teams for efficient manageability. The larger the team size greater is the probability of mismanagement and lack of coordination. In its effort to prevent this situation, Our Client conceived the idea of a groupware that would allow team members and co-workers to manage and schedule tasks, proactively. The solution had to be developed as an integrated Web enabled groupware that could be ported on mobile devices as well as PCs. This would allow enhanced manageability of operations through continuous and global data accessibility. Workgroups would be well informed about the regular tasks that they would need to perform. With increased coordination, managers would be able to track and manage projects effectively, at reduced costs.

With these considerations, Our Client., ventured with Icreon to develop a comprehensive groupware to perform enterprise critical operations. The objective was not only to develop an integrated groupware, but also to make it accessible over multiple platforms.

During the initial stages of the project, we at realized that data was required to be accessible over public channels or the Internet. Consequently, security was a major concern for this project. Besides this, we had to ensure that Groupware Manager* was customizable by end-users to suit their business requirements. For us, the key areas of focus were:

- Seamless and secure data access

- Multi platform support

- Multi lingual and multi terminal support

- Net-ready mobile phones support

- Highly secure & reliable data access

- Customized and user-friendly front-end

After extensive research on the technology alternates, the teams at Icreon and Our Client decided to setup a 3-tier architecture for Groupware Manager* using HTML, PHP and MySQL to retrieve, store and present data.

The front-end is the HTML presentation layer and the backend is the open-source MySQL database. PHP is the business logic control unit layer, which is the middleware used to control the request-response functionality. The PHP business logic control unit includes the PHP extension "mbstring" for multi-byte string support. Multi-byte string enables Groupware Manager* to support Japanese characters and alphabets. In addition, Groupware Manager* employs the IMAP extension for supporting a Web based e-mail client, used to access the POP3 server.

We developed Groupware Manager* to be compatible with PCs as well as mobile phones, providing similar level of security and interoperability. Groupware Manager* can be accessed using 'Net-ready' mobile phones like i-mode, jphone, WAP and EZWeb. These phones are developed exclusively for users in Japan only. Groupware Manager* can be easily deployed within disparate operating system environments like Windows, Linux, Sun Solaris and Mac using Web servers such as, Apache, IIS or Xtami.

Groupware Manager* comprises of two modules – Administrator and User. The administrator creates users, assigns rights and privileges to each user, and manages the overall activities performed by users, who work on the Groupware Manager* user module. The User module provides tools that allow users to:

- Schedule Tasks

- Track & Manage projects

- Store Contact Information

- Manage Files & Folders

- Setup To-Do Lists for Personal Use and for Others

- Save Useful Weblinks

- Setup Bulletin Boards and Conduct Polls

- Create Forms & Questionnaires for Defining Workflows

The modules available in the Groupware Manager* user interfaces are:

- Scheduler

- Project Management

- Address Book
- Mail

- Private Groups

- Workflow

- To Do List

- Weblinks

- Whereabouts

- Announcement

- BBS

- File Manager

- Polls

The modules available in the Groupware Manager* administrator interfaces are:

- Holiday Manager

- Facility Manager

- Address Book Manager

- Message Manager

- User Manager

- Templates Manager

- Rights Manager

- Weblink Manager

- Whereabouts Manager

- Announcement Manager

- BBS Manager

- File Manager

- Poll Manager

Summary

Enterprise computing is a concept that is increasingly gaining the attention of top managements for managing business-critical operations. The idea is to exploit technology to develop an integrated repository of proven business value. Groupware Manager* has been developed with precisely these considerations & parameters. The concept and design of Groupware Manager* has been directed to allow medium and lower level managers to supervise, monitor, and coordinate day-to-day operations of enterprises along with secure and seamless data access of multiple platforms. Streamlining organizational procedures, Groupware Manager* ensures the technical edge that enterprises require to administer tasks proactively without incurring extra costs for managing internal operations.