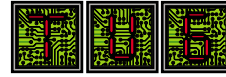


– TUG MoM Review –

The November 2002 Meeting of Members

By *Eveline Gaede*



I have a confession to make! I am a wireless junkie. I can't believe I'm actually admitting to this – but this summer, I answered email on the golf course! Working for a transportation company, we've been interested in wireless for years – our first foray was back in 1988 when we installed 10 units with two-way satellite tracking.

You can only imagine how excited I was when TUG had two great speakers in November on wireless – Jim Balislie, Chairman & co-Chief Executive Officer of RIM; and Eden Watt, Services Director at Lansa. The attendance confirmed that there is lots of interest in wireless as the count was close to 100.

BlackBerry

“RIM's philosophy is push architecture – Always On, Always Connected®.” With that statement, Jim Balislie shared with us the past and future of the BlackBerry. The BlackBerry is a totally integrated, secure wireless solution for corporate environments and are used in over 15,000 organizations worldwide, 400,000 subscribers and over 1,000,000 radio devices sold.

“People will trade access over features” Jim said. Basically, BlackBerry has a very limited e-mail application, but people love it – because of the access. Wireless is about immediacy, the value proposition is push. As an example, Jim asked what use is a cell phone if you have to dial in to see if anyone wants to talk to you? Now with

the 2.5G and 3 G networks on the horizon, the features will come available as well. In Jim's opinion, 2.5G is being called “3G phase A” because the true essence of 3G is not ready yet. Now with a packet overlay on a cell phone network, cell and data can be put on one device. The new model of the BlackBerry has just that. Some of the feature expansions are:

- wireless synchronization of

everything *Eveline Gaede*

(message activity – read, delete, file and PIM (calendar, contacts, tasks and memos))

- increased manageability and control for IT (push upgrades from central location, integration with network and systems management applications)
- attachment viewing (support for Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, HTML, WordPerfect)

Besides the access, other keys to wireless handhelds are size, cost, long battery life and an issue that is becoming more important daily – security. “Don't bet your career on: ‘It's secure, trust me’... Remember your company's secrets are at stake!” Security doesn't win you accounts but lack of it will stop you from getting some.



Jim Balsillie

So when new things came on the market, I try them. When text messaging first was available on cell phones – I tried it. I was less than impressed. Not so with my BlackBerry pager. Not only can I read and answer e-mails, I also have access to my contact and tasks lists so I have all the information at my fingertips to conduct business anywhere (yes, even on the golf course!)



Eden Watt

Photos by Léo Lefebvre



Eden Watt

eCommerce Evolution

After a very good dinner of stir fried chicken and vegetables, Eden Watt followed with an information-packed presentation. Starting with a brief discussion of the “eCommerce Evolution”, Eden followed with an in depth discussion on “Wireless Technology” and finished with some examples of how to tie it all together – “eBusiness Application Integration”.

Eden took us through the 6 steps of evolution, of which a lot of companies are in the first two – establishing a web presence and adding some basic intelligence. The next step is adding some e-Business and e-Commerce functionality. More sophisticated web interfaces and eCRM techniques are the next step. By

adding 2-way XML and EDI over the internet, we move into developing data interchange solutions. And the last step is the one we all wanted to here about, deploying wireless offerings of B2C and B2B.

Wireless Technologies

Describing the current environment, Eden talked about the wireless data services now available, the LAN's and PAN's (personal Area Networks) and the devices that are being used. According to IBM, over 1 billion wireless devices will be in use by 2003. In another statistic by Forrester, in 2001 only 3% of the 111 million mobile phone subscribers used a wireless data service. By 2006, Forrester predicts 65-70% of 180 million users will rely on data services. What will drive this growth are applications, devices, connectivity and enablement software on the servers.

Eden shared some things to think about before you design your wireless applications: “Make sure you understand the device you are going to be using – what is the screen size; will the user be using a keyboard or pen; will you be using any other features like scanners. Consider what the user's environment will be like as well. As far as controlling costs, be aware that most services charge by character.”

eBusiness Application Integration

In closing, Eden went thru some of the components that can mean success or failure of your wireless projects. Effective eCommerce requires integration with your core legacy systems. To be successful it is imperative that you integrate with key business systems. Effective e-commerce requires direct access to these databases and reuse of existing business logic. As we all now, why re-invent the wheel? Eden finished with some illustrations of a non-integrated solution, depicting several stand-alone solutions with some connectivity between a few. Her next slide showed a centralized host with the applications all connecting to the host. Some of the “best” practices to keep in mind are:

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“Well, this is festive- a miniature intranet amidst a swirl of Java applets.”



Photos by Léo Lefebvre




Jim Balsillie

Richard Dolewski with Jeannine Hooper-Yan

- avoid creating duplicate copies of databases
- develop e-business applications that directly access your corporate database whenever possible
- determine how transactions should be processed, and
- reuse your key logic components, as this will reduce dual maintenance

Sounds simple? The components are all available – enablement software, wireless networks and sophisticated, affordable devices. The recurring themes are – efficient, timely access to information, immediate transaction processing within and external to the organization, accuracy and efficiency in trading partner relations, browser interfaces both PC and Wireless and dynamic data interchanges using XML, web services and Interned-EDI.

Need more information? Make sure you plan on attending TEC 2003 on April 22nd and 23rd. The price is still an unbelievably low \$695.00 and as always, we guarantee to bring the top industry speakers. Mark your calendar now! 

Eveline Gaede is a TUG Board Member and is also Manager, Information Technology Group at Challenger Motor Freight Inc., in Cambridge, Ontario. She can be reached at evelineg@challenger.com or (519) 658-5154.

