A Value-Added Approach to Implementing Business Intelligence Solutions

The End of Support for Microsoft Windows Server 2003/R2
Volunteer Leadership

By: Ann Gallaher, COO, Technology First

During the October meeting, new community leaders were elected to the Board of Directors for Technology First. With this change we are pleased to welcome two new Board of Directors to the already active list of community volunteers.

New Board members Gary Ginter from Premier Health and Monique McGlinch from Midmark have been elected by their peers.

We would like to thank Mikki Clancy from Premier Health for her years of service as she moves on to the role of Chief Operating Officer for Premier Health and has resigned her board seat. Mikki served as Board chair for Technology First during her tenure as a board member and we wish her the best in her new endeavors.

Please join me in welcoming our new Board members!

Gary Ginter is currently the System Vice President, Chief Information Officer for Premier Health (a Joint Operating Company comprised of Miami Valley Hospital, Atrium Medical Center, Good Samaritan Hospital, and Upper Valley Medical Center) in Dayton, Ohio. Mr. Ginter has 30 years of Information Systems experience in a variety of industries.

In Mr. Ginter’s previous role, he was the Enterprise Architecture/Analytics Administrator for Premier Health. Mr. Ginter was in charge of the Premier Health Partners’ implementation of Epic; Atrium Medical Center, Good Samaritan Hospital, Miami Valley Hospital, and Upper Valley Medical Center have been approved as being Stage 6 by HIMSS Analytics. In addition to coordinating application implementation, he has led the technical and support of Premier Health Partners’ physician EMR extension program which consists of over 180 physicians. Mr. Ginter is currently on the Board for Central & Southern Ohio HIMSS and a member of the Technical Operations Committee for HealthBridge and Clinical Advisory Committee for CliniSynch (Ohio Health Information Partnership). Mr. Ginter is also a member of CHIME.

Monique McGlinch is a new executive at Midmark Corporation with her promotion less than a year ago to Vice President, Information Technology and Customer Experience. With her broad business and information technology experience, she bridges the gap between industry and technology and is well respected at all levels within Midmark. As a mother of three teenagers, she stays true to her personal and professional values as she balances the needs of her family and the aspirations in her career.

Her management experience spans a full range of operational functions including IT, project management office (PMO), customer service, technical service, sales operations, eMarketing, supply chain and logistics across three main industries of healthcare, building products and transportation. As a graduate of Wright State University, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Management Information Systems and Operations Management, as well as an MBA from the same school.

She is a member of Professional Women in Health Care, a member of National Association of Professional Women, a lector for Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, an active member of Franklin Monroe’s newly formed Athletic Boosters organization and the past president of Darke County Soccer Association for the Youth.

Monique is passionate about teammate development and mentoring as she strives to continually learn, coach and teach.
LEADERSHIP, CONT.

Technology First Upcoming 2015 Events

January 23.................. CIO Forecast Quarterly Forum
                          Presidential Banquet Center
February 17.............. Digital Mixer
                          Wright State University Berry Room
February 26.............. Tech Thursday
March 11.................... 12th Annual Ohio Information
                            Security Conference
                            Sinclair Community College -
                            Ponitz Center
April 17.................... Women in Technology
                            Quarterly Forum -
                            Presidential Banquet Center

Technology First Board of Directors

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diana Bolden</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
<td>Teradata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Hull</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>TDH Marketing/BitstormWeb</td>
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<td>Jim Bradley</td>
<td>Global IT Director</td>
<td>Symmetry Medical</td>
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<td>Scott McCollum</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
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<td>Gary Codeluppi</td>
<td>VP, Marketing and Business Development</td>
<td>The Ross Group</td>
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<td>Monique McGlinch</td>
<td>Vice President, Information Technology and Customer</td>
<td>Experience, Midmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doug Couch</td>
<td>Vice President, Information Technology Services</td>
<td>Speedway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Moorman</td>
<td>IT Strategist</td>
<td>NewPage Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann Gallaher</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td>Technology First</td>
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<td>Dave Rotman</td>
<td>Associate Vice President for Technology</td>
<td>Cedarville University</td>
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<td>Gary Ginter</td>
<td>System Vice President, Chief Information Officer</td>
<td>Premier Health</td>
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<td>Leigh Sandy</td>
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<td>Extra Mile Fiber</td>
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<td>Steve Hangen</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>The Entrepreneurs Center</td>
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<td>Thomas Skill</td>
<td>Associate Provost &amp; CIO</td>
<td>University of Dayton</td>
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<td>Barbara Hayde</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Diana Tullio</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
<td>Standard Register</td>
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<td>Bryan Hogan</td>
<td>President / CEO</td>
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<td>Jeff Van Fleet</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Lighthouse Technologies, Inc.</td>
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<td>David Hoskins</td>
<td>Director of Workflow and Collaboration</td>
<td>CareSource</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Huelman</td>
<td>Director, Business Support Services, Hobart Service</td>
<td>Technology First</td>
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Without question, today’s companies have access to more detailed, rich data sources than ever before. However, the flood of customer, financial, marketing and other information streams can often drown out accurate decision-making, largely because businesses often have trouble separating the important from the irrelevant. Consider these startling projections from Gartner, a leading provider of technology information services. For 2012, Gartner forecast that two-thirds of the top 5,000 global companies would regularly fail to make insightful decisions on handling significant business changes, mainly due to a lack of information. During that same period, the firm predicted that 80 percent of companies that currently deploy business intelligence (BI) programs—presumably to sift data for critical decision support—would fail to reap meaningful benefits from the investments.

Such projections mean one thing: Companies rely too much on BI software and not enough on creating strategies and road maps to use it effectively. The bottom line is that many organizations are data rich, but information poor. While most companies spend a tremendous amount of time, effort and money gathering data, they spend far less time thinking through a strategic road map that helps them filter and analyze it in a holistic, big picture way. That’s where the thoughtful application of business intelligence can add a lot of value.

A Snapshot of Business Intelligence

As defined by Forrester Research, BI is “a set of methodologies, processes, architectures and technologies that transform raw data into meaningful and useful information used to enable more effective strategic, tactical and operational insights.” In shorter terms, BI helps companies convert data into actionable information to improve business decision-making.

In the early years, BI most frequently took the form of technology-driven products, such as large-scale enterprise resource planning (ERP) or data warehousing applications. While those first-generation tools did help aggregate organizational data, the high price tag put them out of reach of virtually all small and mid-sized companies. Even for businesses that could afford the investment, these early BI products often failed to meet expectations. Why? Because the strategy was typically driven by IT management—not overall company leadership—and the available reporting and analytic tools were not designed for nontechnical staff. In fact, companies frequently designated some IT staff as “business analysts,” who were charged with interpreting and reporting BI information to assigned end users.

More recently, the approach to BI has begun to shift from a large, technology first focus in favor of end-user-centered tools that can provide targeted decision support. Due in part to this shift, overall spending on core BI platforms slowed sharply in the last couple of years, from a 17 percent year-over-year rise in 2011, to just 6.8 percent for 2012. While relatively flat global economic demand is part of that trend, Gartner notes that slower growth can also be attributed to cautious business unit leaders, who are increasingly wresting ownership of BI from IT leaders, in order to find more focused, cost-effective solutions to meet specific needs. In fact, Gartner says that business unit leaders now account for about 50 percent of the total BI marketplace, and that the trend of non-IT ownership for such projects is expected to grow.

If you really take a close look at the failures of business intelligence programs, it is because they have been treated as technology projects and not as core business initiatives. We’re now seeing that IT should not be the driving force, and that simply leading with products does not work.

Developing the Value Proposition

While BI applications can add tremendous value at the department or divisional level, it’s wise to first define how any such initiative aligns with an organization’s strategic and performance management objectives. This step helps ensure that a BI tool delivers value-added information that improves strategic execution, enables management to make better decisions and helps motivate, incent and reward staff for measurable performance improvements.

Once the strategic and performance alignment foundation has been established, business leaders can move to a more technical value assessment. This process should review how any BI investment aligns with existing IT systems, since this approach will allow for rapid consolidation of information and more powerful

(continued on page 5)
work flows, ask questions about current issues and desired improvements and use for a BI initiative. This allows project planners to document existing processes and requirements, it's wise to conduct process review meetings with work groups targeted much different user experiences than field employees, vendors or contractors, who users will interact with BI, and how they can make use of the information in their

Understanding How BI Information Will Be Used
Any sound implementation approach, regardless of size, needs to consider how end users will interact with BI, and how they can make use of the information in their day-to-day activities. For instance, corporate staff in a single facility typically have much different user experiences than field employees, vendors or contractors, who often tap into secured networks via portals or extranets. To address differing user requirements, it's wise to conduct process review meetings with work groups targeted for a BI initiative. This allows project planners to document existing processes and work flows, ask questions about current issues and desired improvements and use that collected information to design BI solutions that meet the needs of those end users—while still integrating with the organization's existing IT platforms.

It's really important at this stage to ask end users things like, 'Why does this need to change,' or 'Why will this information make things better?' Many times, business users on the front end of the process will repeatedly talk about the need for new or better information, but when you sit them down and ask why, they often don't have a sound reason for a change. On the other hand, there are things that may come up as critical needs in these meetings that did not emerge in the previous business challenge scan.

Building a Project Road Map
Once the above steps have been completed, it's time to build out a project road map. Typically, this document will summarize business challenges and end-user research, recapture existing processes, evaluate project options and risks, analyze total cost of ownership and provide an implementation plan and timeline. Once approved by senior leadership, this road map becomes the blueprint for BI execution.

Choosing an Executive Sponsor
In concert with getting top management support for the project road map, it's vital to secure an executive sponsor for any BI initiative. This person needs to have a firm grasp of the business challenge, BI objective and end-user priorities. The sponsor should be a C-level leader with business line (not IT) responsibilities, who has strong influence with the senior leadership team. This person will set and maintain project vision, mediate disputes, navigate obstacles and hold people accountable to defined goals.

Creating Proper Oversight
As a BI project moves forward, assess and engage management and staff-level employees who have the right skills to manage various aspects of the initiative. Other than for highly technical tasks, those chosen for oversight roles should also come from the business areas most affected by the BI rollout. This ensures that the implementations will remain focused not just on technology, but on the identified needs of the project area and its end users.

Embrace an Iterative Delivery Methodology
A major reason many older BI programs failed was because they tried to put every last bit of business information into a data bank, with the hope that useful strands could be pulled out. A better path is to take BI in bite-sized chunks, which allows the organization to learn on the go and scale up as business needs dictate.

You don't have to have a 'boil the ocean' approach. By taking an iterative, one project-at-a-time path to implementing BI, you'll not only get better return on investment, but also build confidence among leaders and end users that the refined information is helping people make better business decisions.

As a re-cap for those of you unable to attend this year's conference, Technology First hosted our 8th annual conference and sold out at 200 attendees! Keynotes were presented by Teradata, Microsoft, and Cisco while Dell served as the title sponsor for the event.

Final conference evaluations rated the conference very good or excellent by 83% of those attending. We want to thank all of the sponsors and exhibitors as well as those attending.

Diana Spotting!
Diana Tullio, CIO for Standard Register and Diana Bolden, CIO for Teradata were spotted together at the Taste of IT. Both Dianas brought their teams to the conference and are on the Board of Directors for Technology First.

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<td>Fit Bit</td>
<td>Faruki, Ireland, Cox</td>
<td>Jim Cengia, Hobart Service</td>
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<td>Faruki, Ireland, Cox</td>
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<td>James Alford, Montgomery County</td>
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Thank You to All Contributing Companies and Congratulations to All Winners!
Email Retentions – What to Expect… and Endure

By: Brett Workman, Senior Microsoft Infrastructure Consultant – Microsoft Solutions, SIS

I thought I would compile a list of things I’ve experienced/endured in creating policies around email retention. This would include archive email repository files like MS Outlook PST files and Lotus Notes NSF files.

Selling the idea:
It is paramount that management (from the top down) believe and backup the policies that are developed. IT is only the implementer. Employees will more willingly follow policies developed and enforced by the business leadership.

- Understanding that email is not a permanent repository for data. It’s a communication tool.
- Companies are liable for any data retained.
- Retaining all email data is not sustainable. The longer you wait the more difficult it will become to maintain this data.
- Without retention policies software systems (both internal and 3rd party) will not perform to expectations.

Planning:
The policies that are implemented must be sustainable. Management will look to IT for guidance on what is sustainable in terms of the following:

- Storage requirements and costs
- In-house and available computer based retention and archive solutions
- Implementation timelines
- Optionally, specify a multi-tiered approach. Each tier having different retention policies/limits. Ex: One for management, one for IT, one for general staff.
- Managing user expectations and training. This must be done before implementation phase if there is to be any chance of success.

Implementation:
Implement rollout in phases. Don’t go cold turkey from nothing to lockdown:

- Offline Email data files. Large offline email files like Outlook PSTs or Lotus Notes NSF files are (for all intents and purposes) unmanageable. It should be the goal to eliminate them entirely. However, if push comes to shove allow them to be used/stored locally with the understanding that they will not be backed up by the company.
- Provide the users options/tools on what data they want to keep. This is important because it empowers them to have some control of their data. Any data they keep should be in a common format like PDF, DOC, RTF, etc. This data can be placed on the network for backup per IT discretion. Providing users a window of opportunity to export/retain individual items helps the idea get traction and avoids potential issues if something they wished to keep is deleted afterwards.
  - In relation to the item above, if possible, provide a post-implementation grace period (ex: 30 days) to allow them to retrieve data that was deleted by the retention policy.
  - If there is an IT solution available, provide users a folder structure in their mailbox (or allow them to tag items individually) that exempts those items from the retention policy. NOTE: if possible, try not to allow them to tag/move entire folders. That just promotes circumventing the system.
- Something else to consider is that many of these ideas apply to other data such as files and/or database data.
Nondisclosure Agreements — One Size Does Not Fit All

By: Greg Ewers, Attorney, Coolidge Wall LLP

When do you see a nondisclosure (or confidentiality) agreement, and how do you use it? On occasion, we will be asked to review a nondisclosure agreement ("NDA") that just does not fit. For example, we have had clients who want to pursue a confidential transaction (e.g., joint business opportunity, acquisition, etc.) with another company modify the NDA they use with employees. The NDA may be perfectly good for an employment relationship, but often it is not a good fit for a transaction. While the starting point for either type of agreement is confidentiality and defining confidential information, the nature of the relationship may suggest that you will want to focus on different areas of the NDA depending upon your purpose in signing it.

General Considerations:

Purposes and Parties

The purpose of the NDA and the parties who will be bound by it drive a host of other decisions. In a transaction, it is critically important to identify the correct corporate entity (and corporate affiliates) in order to be sure that the right parties are bound to confidentiality. Language including affiliates, successors, and representatives (like accountants and lawyers) is often necessary or desirable in transactional documents but not necessary in documents solely between the employer and the employee.

Defining and Exchanging Confidential Information

What type of information is going to be disclosed during the NDA's term? How will it be disclosed, and how is it identified as "confidential"? Most NDAs define information and include a list of examples such as business processes, research, business and marketing strategies, potential transactions, negotiations, know-how, software design and code, financial information, pricing security provisions, inventions, ideas, customer lists and customer information, trade secrets, and intellectual property.

Quite frequently, an NDA will include provisions stating that certain information — even if disclosed within the context of the confidential relationship — will not be considered confidential. The primary example is information that is publicly known or discovered by the recipient without any breach of the NDA. Language like this is connected to court decisions and laws protecting trade secrets. As you might expect, a court is unlikely to restrict an employee or a competing business from using (a) information that is available to the public or (b) skills and experience that the employee/competitor have without reference to the confidential relationship addressed in a NDA.

Information can be disclosed on paper, electronically, or orally during the confidential relationship. All types of disclosures can be protected, but identifying the employer's confidential information from run-of-the-mill information is often easier than segregating the employer's confidential information from run-of-the-mill information. As a matter of course, you will not obtain injunctive relief as a matter of course (nor will such relief be denied as a matter of course) merely because the NDA says the relief is necessary.

Employment-Specific Concerns:

In the employment context, confidential information flows from the employer to the employee, and the employee commits to preserving the employer's confidential information during and following employment. This type of relationship presumes one-way (unilateral) information exchanges. Thus, the bilateral agreement you may have used in a transaction (see below) is not typically required or an appropriate starting point in an employment context.

Injunctive Relief

Liti
gation involving NDAs may include efforts to obtain injunctive relief (temporary orders from a court requiring or restraining specific conduct). Injunctive relief can be extraordinarily difficult to obtain, as courts are reluctant to grant it. Such relief may be the only effective way to protect your confidential information, however. Accordingly, many NDAs address the issue of whether injunctive relief will be available for a breach. While such language is not harmful and arguably helps obtain such relief, you should be aware that courts simply are not bound by the language in this instance. As a litigant, you will not obtain injunctive relief as a matter of course (nor will such relief be denied as a matter of course) merely because the NDA says the relief is necessary.

Dispute Resolution, Governing Law, Jurisdiction, and Venue

In general, the law favors alternative dispute resolution ("ADR") methods like arbitration and mediation over court proceedings. ADR is not always favorable to you, but it can be included in your NDA. While the possible choices for governing law, jurisdiction, and venue are more limited in the employment context (and are subject to variation according to state law), specifying each of these considerations can be helpful in the long run.

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file cabinets, using passwords, and limiting access solely to employees with actual need for the information help the employer make sure that confidentiality can be enforced by a court if it ever becomes necessary.

Noncompete Provisions

Many employee NDAs will also include a noncompete provision. Some states (e.g., California) simply do not allow for conventional noncompetes. Ohio, and many other states, on the other hand, will enforce noncompete provisions that are tailored to protect an employer’s legitimate business interests by imposing only reasonable restrictions as to scope, duration, and geographic territory. Given that legitimate business interests and reasonableness of restrictions are fact-specific, efforts to enforce and resist covenants against competition easily lead to litigation.

Noncompetition of Customers and Employees

In the context of a transaction, confidential information may flow from both parties to the other (the information flow is mutual or “bilateral”). Both parties typically commit to preserving the confidential information exchanged in pursuit of the transaction. Transactional NDAs can cover a wide variety of potential situations including negotiation of a sale, joint venture, prime contractor and subcontractor relationship with respect to a particular request for proposal, or licensing relationship. Given that the relationship is based on different footing than the employer-employee relationship and the flow of information is different, a unilateral NDA (like the one you might otherwise use with employees) is probably not the best starting point.

Well-Defined Purpose

In a transactional NDA, it is very important to restrict the use of the confidential information. This is typically done by narrowly defining the purpose of the NDA. For example, the purpose of the NDA may be to negotiate the sale of all or substantially all the company’s assets. Thus, if a deal is not consummated, the recipient of the confidential information cannot use it for their own benefit.

Permitted Disclosures and Duration

Transactional NDAs may also specify certain types of employees that will be permitted to see the confidential information. For example, some NDAs will restrict disclosure to employees who have a need to know. Also, many transactional NDAs will allow disclosure to non-employees who are bound by a duty of confidentiality (e.g., attorneys and accountants) or even other third-party agents (e.g., subcontractors). Even if such disclosure is permitted, the receiving party should agree in the NDA to be liable for breach by any such third-party, because the disclosing party will not have a contractual relationship with the third-party agent upon which to commence litigation.

In many instances the duty of confidentiality will be perpetual in nature. However, with respect to larger companies, it may be appropriate to limit the obligation to three to five years, because employee turnover makes it difficult to track what is supposed to be held in confidence. If a time limit is agreed upon, it is imperative to make sure you limit the information you disclose.

Restrictive Covenants

As a general rule, a transactional NDA will not include a noncompete or nonsolicitation of customers provision. However, on occasion (e.g., prime contractor and subcontractor relationship to respond to a request for proposal) it may be prudent to include a noncompetition provision. For example, the prime contractor would, prior to revealing the information you disclose.

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Whether they’re concerned that they’re not finding enough defects or worried about spending too much on diminishing returns, every IT department wonders if they’re over or under-testing. Whether your testing team is outsourced or in-house, how much is “good enough”?

When it comes to software testing, a lot of IT departments can feel a bit like Goldilocks. Now, don’t go thinking I’m trying to say that the people tasked with testing your software regularly wander into random houses in the forest or anything; rather, they all face the challenging task of trying to find the elusive option that’s “just right”. But instead of choosing between bowls of porridge and the like, they’re faced with determining just how much to test their software projects.

And, unlike the little girl in the fairy tale, your testers have a whole lot more than a mere three choices. The process of finding defects, in a lot of ways, is like trying to find your way through a maze with a blindfold on—you simply won’t know how close you came to the exit (or if you even got there at all) until you take the blindfold off and see for yourself. This presents a huge challenge for IT departments, as it’s really hard to ascertain how much testing really needs to be done—test too little and you’re putting yourself at risk of critical defects making their way into release (leading to costly rework); test too much and you’re potentially wasting money on diminishing returns.

To that end, it’s always important to make sure your testing team (whether they’re in-house, offshore, a rural sourcing/onshore outsourcing model, or a combination) has an accurate forecast of how many defects they should expect to find on any given engagement—without an end-point in mind, your team is still effectively blindfolded. For example, our testers (including our Rural Software Testing teams) use a proprietary methodology to generate a self-adjusting forecast of how many defects we expect to find at various stages in the testing process; but, as the old saying goes, there are many ways to skin a cat. So long as your team’s working toward an objectively forecasted goal, you can work towards whatever defect-removal-efficiency your organization is comfortable with. Remember, though, how much you test is all about risk management; so the more you spend in testing, the less you should be spending on rework.

Uncertainty in testing is completely normal. But, the next time your testers are acting like Goldilocks, try forecasting their exit criteria so everyone has a clear idea of what needs to be done to get the project where it needs to be.

It’ll make testing much more “bear”-able—I promise.
Technology has come a long way since 2003. Today’s operations place heavy demands on servers that are now running mobile applications, social collaboration platforms, streaming video and web hosting on top of all of the other business functions required. The world has changed, too. Looking back at 2003 reminds us of a $6 movie ticket, $0.37 first class postage stamp, $1.72 gallon of gas, under $5000 annual average cost of a college tuition at a 4 year public school … and then the things that haven’t really changed … the invasion of Iraq and the SARS outbreak that spread through 37 countries with 8000 infected and 774 deaths. And, who could forget the Recording Industry Association of America filing a copyright lawsuit against Internet users for trading songs online, the release of the camera phone, iTunes and the Xbox.

And unfortunately, a lot has happened in this past decade around cyber security. When Windows Server 2003 was released, it came with a number of advanced security innovations including Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), Encrypting File System (EFS), Stored User Names and Passwords to enable Single Sign-On (SSO) security policies, and other software restriction capabilities that were leading edge. But, these architectures are no longer enough to provide the security foundations required today.

The end of support for Windows Server 2003/R2 may have a dramatic impact on your business. The last WS2003 Service Pack was released over seven years ago. Standard support was terminated four years ago. There have been nearly 40 critical updates released this year.

Support officially ends July 14, 2015.

Industry experts estimate there are more than 10 million machines still running WS2003 that are soon to be stranded. Those businesses that are regulated will face a severe compliance burden. If you decide to keep running WS2003/R2, you’ll have to pour additional resources into monitoring and protecting your servers and will have to work on separating the data and applications from the operating system so you can flip the server back to the last “good” when inevitable system failure occurs.

No updates. No compliance. No savings. No safe haven. And, this vulnerability affects both physical and virtual servers.

Here’s a great list of 10 steps to consider (from ZDNet Microsoft newsletter) as you plan your migration:

1. Take a server inventory – how many WS 2003 systems are you running now
2. Extract the hardware profile for each system – collect CPU, memory and disk space information
3. Gather utilization data and create a list of those with utilization numbers under 50%
4. Decommission systems that are no longer required for business operations
5. Create a list of services that can be consolidated or moved to newer existing systems
6. Assess the feasibility of moving under-utilized workloads to virtual machines
7. Consider migrating the remaining systems to larger VMs or physical machines
8. Review and plan attaching Storage Area Networks (SANs) to VMs and physical systems so you don’t have to lose any data in the migration
9. Validate services on your new systems and wipe and remove the old systems
10. Take a new server inventory, assess utilization and adjust as necessary

This migration will take some time and requires new hardware, new security models, new management tools, training, licensing, time and personnel. The clock is ticking but there’s still time to make all of this happen.

According to the Forrester report “The Total Economic Impact of Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2,” WS2012/R2 helps improve virtualization and reduce management costs:

- **ROI** – 270%
- **NPV** – $3.9 million
- **Payback** – 6 months
- **Server Management Costs** – down 35%
- **SANs avoided** – 1 to 2 each year

Some of the benefits from the newer technologies provided by WS2012/R2 include reduced license costs, storage savings, cloud integration savings and improved services. A systems engineer from a US university was quoted as saying “The value is in the increased agility: the ability to have a shorter response time to new requests, being able to have this dynamic elasticity and ‘just in time’ approach.”

Plan now and allow the time and funds required for the migration to a newer platform. In working with a number of organizations just like yours, we’ve found that advanced planning and skilled project management of WS2003/R2 end of support (often along with desktop Windows XP migrations) will provide increased security, compliance, cost savings and improved network management.

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Getting the Most Out of User Experience & Design Support

By: Dana Frank, Seque Technologies

In today's world there are always budget restrictions or other limitations like resources or time that prevent a User Interface (UI)/Design team from being fully engaged throughout an entire project life cycle. This can lead to tough decisions being made about cost of UX Design support during project development and estimation, and is one challenge that UX pros are constantly trying to tackle. How do we provide our clients with the best user experience within the time and budget available? One approach is to "cherry pick" components of UX and design and apply them strategically.

User Experience (UX) and Design:

In a perfect "project workflow" world, UX and Design typically touch or overlap all phases of project development from beginning to end. From collecting project requirements (pre-project), to prototyping and design, then testing, and launching the product (post-project)— just to name a few.

User Experience and Design go hand in hand, and typically involvement will vary depending on the type of project. However, you can bet your bottom dollar that most of these items will need to be addressed by a UX/Design hero at some point during project execution:

1. Proposal development and/or project estimation
2. Requirements gathering and fact finding
3. Team kick-off meeting
4. Information architecture and wireframe development
5. Prototyping
6. Front end development (creating working prototypes or fully developed pages)
7. Product QC

Bringing in UX and Design to Enhance Your Project:

Luckily for customers, there are a lot of options on when to bring in UX/Design help and how it can be applied to enhance their projects at any phase. So, if you're late to the game or you just need a little help along the way, here are a few a la carte items you can hire a UX/Design hero to help with. Whether you make use of one or many of these exercises, the finished product will be better all around, and inevitably improve your project from day 1 (or day 50, depending on how far along you already are):

1. Heuristic review— Before you redesign a site, it's worth investing in a heuristic review by a UX professional. In return you will get a list of best practice fixes that should be implemented to improve user experience before you start the redesign.
2. Cardsort exercise— If you're in need of a new menu structure or want to improve an existing one, bring in a UX hero to complete a cardsort exercise. The outcome will determine a good starting point for your information architecture and provide suggestions on how to group information on each page based on user input.
3. Low fidelity wireframes— Get a preliminary wireframe mocked up before you delve into costly development tasks. Use this as a testing (continued on page 13)
tool to get feedback on flow and navigation, focusing on usability, without the design details to distract the user. Wireframes typically help identify issues with the structure of your website.

4. **Mood board** - A mood board is a collage that invokes the styling and design direction for the product in question. It doesn't breakout each design on a page by page basis but it compiles the treatment for the overall design into one document that can be reviewed by the client.

5. **Hi-fidelity design** - Have a designer apply some bells and whistles to your rough mock up to see how it looks and to make sure everything fits as planned. This is also extremely helpful when the design is passed along to development, and should be used as a guideline for how the front facing design will look when it's complete.

6. **Early design testing** - A good usability expert can make some great suggestions on prototype changes after testing as little as 3-5 people. Note: Keeping costs down in this area will require more work on your side like finding the users but will yield very useful feedback that can be implemented before the product is launched.

7. **User best practices** - Bounce some ideas off of a UX Pro to help keep the product in line with where it should be going and to get some valuable feedback or tips on areas you can improve. Sometimes little changes make the biggest difference.

Here are some software tools that can be used on a few of the items listed above:

- **Heuristic review**
- **Heuristic review template**
- **Card sorting**
- **Optimal WorkShop**
- **Concept codify**
- **UX sort**
- **Wireframe software**
  - [http://www.axure.com](http://www.axure.com)
  - [http://www.gliffy.com](http://www.gliffy.com)
  - [http://www.mockflow.com](http://www.mockflow.com)
- **Mood board development**
  - [How to create a mood board](http://www.google.com)
  - **Mood board tool**
- **High fidelity designs**
  - **Adobe Photoshop**
  - **Adobe Illustrator**

The key to getting effective and useful information from your UX/Design hero is to bring them into the project as early and often as possible. There are several tools available online to help with a few of the items above but having a trained professional performing them will yield the best results and get you the biggest bang for your buck!
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Monthly Featured Class

Microsoft SharePoint Foundation 2013: Site User

Learn from the experts and take your career to the next level!

Microsoft SharePoint 2013 is a platform specifically designed to facilitate collaboration, allowing people to use familiar applications and Web-based tools to create, access, store, and track documents and data in a central location. In this course, you will learn about and use a SharePoint Team Site to access, store, and share information and documents. SharePoint is a complex platform with many features and capabilities. A strong understanding of them will allow you to work more efficiently and effectively with SharePoint, and with the documents and data stored in it. Effective use of new social networking capabilities will allow you to identify, track, and advance issues and topics most important to you, and collaborate with colleagues more effectively.

BONUS: This course includes a 6-month Access Pass to a virtual SharePoint 2013 environment where students will be able to practice and experiment without impacting their company’s live environment.

STUDENTS WILL LEARN HOW TO:
- Access and navigate SharePoint content.
- Add, upload, modify, search for, and preview documents in document libraries.
- Add and modify items in lists, configure list views, and filter and group lists.
- Create and update your profile, tag, share, and follow content on your personal sites, and create and manage a personal blog.
- Access, create, save, and manage document versions and synchronize data with Microsoft Office applications.
- Synchronize SharePoint data, work offline, and access data from a mobile device.

TARGET STUDENT: This course is designed for existing Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office users who are transitioning to a SharePoint environment, and who will need to access information and collaborate with team members on a Microsoft SharePoint team site.

COURSE CONTENT:
- Lesson 1: Accessing and Navigating SharePoint Team Sites
- Lesson 2: Working with Documents, Content, and Libraries
- Lesson 3: Working with Lists
- Lesson 4: Configuring Your SharePoint Profile
- Lesson 5: Integrating with Microsoft Office
- Lesson 6: Working Offline and Remotely with SharePoint

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