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Information Technology for Enterprise Integration

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PANEL 19

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION

Panel Chair: Michael J. Shaw, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Panelists: Andrew B. Whinston, University of Texas, Austin
Benn R. Konsynski, Emory University
Robert Blanning, Vanderbilt University
David King, COMSHARE

The ability to streamline cross-functional business processes and make managerial decisions integrating multiple perspectives of an enterprise has become increasingly the core competency at which many companies are aiming. This panel will survey the information technology for coordinating the complex array of decision and business processes in today's enterprises. Information Technology has played an important role in the effort to make organizations more productive. With the capability of computer software, hardware, and network communication growing rapidly, the technological bottleneck has gradually shifted from end-user computing to enterprise integration and inter-organizational coordination.

In view of the importance of this emerging trend and its likely impacts on the development of the next generation of information technology, this panel is to serve as a forum for researchers and practitioners in related areas to address the issues involved, share their viewpoints, and describe the state of the technology and its future trend. Multidisciplinary perspectives will be emphasized. A number of topics will be included in the discussion by the panel: (1) collaboration technology, (2) cooperating knowledge-based systems, (3) EDI for inter-organizational coordination, (3) multi-agent groupware, (4) organizational modeling, (5) business process reengineering, with an emphasis on enterprise integration, and (6) IT for system integration.

In addition, the panel members will provide their insights into the research issues important for enterprise integration and the current practice of applying information technology in the area. Some of the issues that will be discussed and debated include:

1. Are research results implemented in practice? If not, where do the ideas for practical applications come from?
2. Is information technology enabling too much coordination and stifling initiatives aimed at enterprise integration? What can we do about this?
3. What are the limits of EDI in organizational coordination and integration? Beyond a certain point, we need unstructured communication for enterprise integration. Is EDI approaching this limit?
4. How substantial is the shift from end user computing to enterprise integration? Is enterprise integration a form of end user computing in which senior management is the end user?
5. What is the impact of the information superhighway on enterprise coordination? Is the architecture for integration an internal information superhighway?

Andrew Whinston will look at the research issues and their importance for enterprise integration; Benn Konsynski will look at information technology for inter-organizational coordination; Robert Blanning will address the information technology infrastructure for enterprise integration; and David King will examine the practice of applying information technology to enterprise integration.