

Gartner Predicts 2002: Emerging Trends and Technologies

This is a Letter From the Editor for the “Gartner Predicts 2002: Emerging Trends and Technologies” issue of the Emerging Trends and Technologies Spotlight.

The past five years have been a roller coaster in terms of technology planning, with enterprises needing to examine a broad range of technologies with far-reaching implications in application development and in business processes. With the implosion of the dot-com phenomenon, growing economic uncertainty and a profound sense of loss (both personal and as a society) as a result of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the focus is changing from a frantic scramble for “the next big thing” to a period of introspection. However, most of the key tenets of good technology planning will endure, as they apply equally in times of rapid growth and in times of caution:

- Align IT initiatives with key business initiatives, but at the same time help business strategy planners understand the disruptions that emerging technologies may cause in business processes and industry dynamics.
- Use a documented technology prioritization process to decide and explain which technology initiatives will be addressed first, and why.
- Ensure that riskier, emerging technologies are applied only where they will have a significant impact on the business (otherwise, wait for others to learn the hard lessons).
- Ensure that technology initiatives have a clear path from inception to deployment, usually achieved through cross-functional project teams, which foster a sense of ownership by the target organization.

As input into this technology-planning process, this Spotlight provides insights into key trends and technologies that will play a significant role in the next five years (see “Trends for 2002 to 2007: Up the Slope of Enlightenment,” AV-15-1389). Whether the current period of uncertainty continues, or whether society, the economy and IT all enjoy a resurgence of energy, the trends and technologies featured in this Spotlight will play a key role. As with all such predictions, enterprises should examine the general recommendations and evaluate which will be the most significant in their industry, in their enterprise and with their current set of enterprise goals and objectives.

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