

Chapter Seven Conclusions

7.1 Concluding Remarks

Today's organizations embrace the global marketplace and face Internet speed competition. Their customers are now more sophisticated than ever, and they want to stay informed in real time that means it is critical, which translates into an accelerated pace of business and decision-making processes. Finally, business relationships have become highly dynamic, and new customers and partners expect businesses to adapt to the changing relationships quickly. To effectively compete with other companies in today's market, process-level application integration can maximize the interoperability and flexibility, but it is very challenging and time-consuming. Facing and challenged by these research issues, we aim to tackle the problems by a solid, systematic, and methodological approach.

1. A process-centric and integrated system can maximize the interoperability and flexibility of B2Bi.

Process-level integration can maximize the interoperability and flexibility, but it is very challenging and time-consuming to define a public process model. In this research, we apply a consistent modeling methodology UMM to analyze business process and use ebXML Business Process Analysis Worksheets as the modeling aids to record and represent analysis results of global logistics industry.

2. A common, agreed-upon and domain-specific process model is directly beneficial and vital to collaborative commerce.

In the construction of a collaborative commerce environment, a correct common process model of an industry will help business quickly define its public processes. In this research, the common process model as a whole is validated by domain experts and literatures. It is correct, comprehensive and reusable.

For both the analyst and designer who want to define their public process in ocean freight forwarder industry segment, the model can be used as a reference for understanding the detailed public process and an instrument for B2B process analysis.

3. A B2B integration system which can scale as business grow and adapt quickly to changes is needed.

Recently, Internet and EC provide a completely new infrastructure to do business

in a new manner where companies try to leverage new technologies to enable a set of complex cross-enterprise business processes allowing entire value chains to share decision-making, workflow, capabilities, and information with each other (Deloitte Research, 2001).

In this research, we develop a prototype system to simulate B2B transaction scenario based on the common process model mentioned above. It is a process integration framework which enables the integration with the widest variety of business partners and applications. Such a B2B process integration system can be quickly deployed and configured. It integrates existing application systems and preserves existing IT investments.

7.2 Future Research Efforts

This research has formulated a common process model and built a simple prototype implementation of B2B process integration. It can be extended in the areas of scope, scale, and capacity as described in the following points:

1. To extend the scope of the common process model.

There are other interesting businesses such as multiple countries consolidations and sea-air combined transports worthy to be discovered and analyzed in ocean freight forwarder industry segment.

2. To improve the flexibility of the architecture in our prototype implementation.

If the shipper and the forwarder sides can use different platforms including different business process engine and different messaging server, this would reach more flexibility and interoperability in B2B Process integration.