

Business Interoperability

Perspectives, Requirements, Theories & Models

Workshop 6a: 11:00 Thursday 20 October 2005

Abstract

“Interoperability of systems” is often cited as an example of common problems in the deployment of ICT-based services. Since the advent of ICT, numerous attempts have been made and are continuing in defining and reaching agreement on technical protocols that would facilitate the interconnection of networks and the interoperation of software, applications and services. Many interoperability activities make assumptions about businesses but such assumptions are rarely articulated. The business aspects of interoperability are little addressed and not visible in research or practice.

The purpose of this workshop is to explore the concepts and perspectives of the business aspects of interoperability (“business interoperability”) and share with the audience some preliminary European research findings to date. The workshop aims to kick-start a broad debate on the practical benefits of interoperable solutions that are quantifiable, measurable and verifiable, within wider strategic considerations of the contribution of enterprise interoperability to competitiveness, innovation and growth.

Description

The workshop is organised by the FP6/IST ATHENA Integrated Project (www.athena-ip.org), a comprehensive European research initiative in IT to remove barriers to interoperability and foster new networked businesses.

There is a substantial and growing body of research concerning the various aspects of interoperability. However, interoperability frameworks tend to start from technical perspective. Networked organisation analysis and value modelling does not specifically focus on business interoperability and often lacks the supporting management tools and techniques. Research into the socio-economic aspects of ICT rarely specifically addresses business interoperability. Ongoing industrial work concerning interoperability-related issues such as digital productivity is not visible in the public domain.

This workshop seeks to provide a public forum to explore business interoperability issues. The discussion focus will be on identifying the business aspects of interoperability, relationships between the business and technical aspects of interoperability, possible approaches and models that could be applied for addressing and assessing business interoperability. The relevant initiatives in Europe and internationally will be referenced.

Objectives

The workshop seeks to bring the nascent subject of business interoperability to a broad audience and help catalyze a European debate among the key constituencies of enterprise interoperability. The long term impact of interoperability in the market requires long term investment by businesses as end users of IT. Therefore, a specific objective of the workshop is to help bridge the gulf between the technology and business domains of interoperability, between research efforts and market expectations, and between business development, market capitalisation and policy framing. The workshop is intended to be first in a series of public events in mainstreaming research efforts and actual practices in business interoperability.

Target Audience

The workshop is targeted at the full spectrum of stakeholders in interoperability, including researchers, vendors, solution providers, enterprises as users of IT, standardisers and policy makers.

Programme

Chair: Man-Sze Li, IC Focus, United Kingdom

Business Interoperability Analysis of Networked Organisations

Paolo Pagnelli, Gruppo Formula, Italy

This presentation proposes a feature-based framework for analysing networked organisations in terms of interoperability and a model-based approach for supporting this framework. The framework is illustrated using some examples of networked organisational approaches.

Economic Theories of Interoperability

Peter Mayer, SAP AG, Germany

This presentation applies Transaction Cost Economics, Resource-Based View and Porter's "five forces" framework to interoperability and draws conclusions on how interoperability may influence industry structures and business strategies. Further research questions are formulated in the context of Coordination Theory and Network Economics.

Business Models for Interoperable Products and Services

Man-Sze Li, IC Focus, United Kingdom

This presentation examines business modelling issues for interoperable products and services in the business-to-business software market. It addresses the key issues concerning the supply side and the demand side. The presentation proposes that the commoditisation of IT products and services, induced by the trend of interoperability, increases the overall value of IT over time as an economic activity.

Enterprise Interoperability Centre

Man-Sze Li, IC Focus, United Kingdom

This presentation will provide an overview of the Enterprise Interoperability Centre, an open, neutral and independent not-for-profit organisation, serving as a common and inclusive platform for advancing interoperability issues through collaboration and consensus building. Membership of the EIC is open to all stakeholders in interoperability. The EIC will be formally launched towards the end of 2005.