Study and creation of B2B and B2C portals

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1 Summary and Introduction

We are in a changing world. We still see the debris from the crash of the «new technology companies» from early 2000 years. The traditional companies have survived but are still asking themselves whether they will survive in the forthcoming years despite the disappearance of many technological companies.

After 5 years of apparent tranquillity, and with the perspective of the experience gained during the difficult years, it is really difficult to think that new technologies will not change the way we interact with traditional enterprises. But a more interesting idea is to believe that new companies completely sustainable and productive can be born based uniquely on new technologies. Now is the moment where new technologies will enter into the landscape of traditional companies with the guarantee of success:

«New technologies have landed into the companies completely transforming the existing rules of engagement. They impact all internal functions: commerce, marketing, information technologies, human resources, finance, and also logistics. Data processes and interfaces accelerate and are everywhere. Today’s reality remembers us that week after week that the traceability of aliments, nuclear disposals, or even the industrial materials will make the critical preoccupations of XXI century leaders in regards to the logistics in the 2000s»


Today, the technologies enter into companies with the strength of something that really works and also provides tangible benefits without any fear
to the unknown. It's not a blindfolded bet but the only option for innovation that will keep companies ahead of their competitors.

1.1 *B2B and B2C portals*

The B2B and B2C theme is born with the idea to represent the companies that, by using new Internet technologies, enable them to directly interact with their clients, either personnel or other companies:

- **B2B**: Business to Business
- **B2C**: Business to Consumer

These new technologies must enable that the company interacts directly with the person that will buy the product from the company or that will buy the product offered by the company. However, the direct contact is not achievable without the interaction of a technology that is accessible by everybody. This technology is effectively the Internet; we have seen during recent years that the Internet has gained massification and is now available in developed countries to in the home and professional environment. For a traditional local company, with its regional clients, connecting through a B2C Internet portal opens the world of possibilities to an unlimited number of customers, but also to an unlimited number of competences.

Also, it's not only a question about opening to new markets, but it is also a question about accelerating the speed and customer service. But more importantly, the company becomes more flexible, enabling a much faster reaction to the changes from their competitors. This speed of reaction derived from the speed of technical change is essential in the new complex world.
1.2 Mobility

It is not only the growth of the Internet usage and presence, which is becoming a standard in the developed countries, but also the increase of portability and mobility devices that have access to internet. For example, today we can envisage to work based on a PDA, mobile, etc.

For the companies, it's always an added value to offer their employees. But also it's a way to offer your products to a whole new range of products through the use of B2C portals adapted for mobile devices.

1.3 Is Windows the only option?

We have the habit of using the Windows environment (operative system and associated applications). But for every day that passes by, a new system is born to create some competition with the software giant.

It’s in this case that the free software arises, providing a zero-cost alternative with services that are more and more closer to professional usage. The effort in the large communities of free software have changed the dynamic led by Microsoft, specially in the case of SourceForge.net with its eGroupWare solution but also by programmers that publish their work such as MyReview to the whole world for free.

1.4 The project

The project consists of the analysis and re-design of two portals to meet the requirement to perform a Conference in La Havana (Cuba):

1. B2B portal for the presentation and gathering of business into a conference (eGroupWare)
2. B2C (MyReview) to perform the submission process of articles, its review and the publication of the final report with all articles presented during the conference.

3. The reason why the project has focused on those two solutions (eGroupWare and MyReview) is because they offer an alternative to the Windows family at no cost, which was one of the requirements of the conference – keep organisational costs to the minimum.

The key part of the project was dedicated to gathering of requirements and interaction with the conference organiser, which was based in Paris. Once all business requirements were analysed, we proceeded to perform the installation of both software and its re-coding to fulfil the requirements.
1.5 Business process

Although both softwares met the majority of the requirements, the core of the project was to adapt the MyReview software to adapt to the following flow, including the automatic assignment of papers to review to the list of reviewers according to their preferences and knowledge on the field.

1.6 New proceedings creation procedure

The core part of the project was the codification of a new PHP procedure that would generate a printable-friendly proceedings book with a complete list of all articles submitted to the conference.
In order to do that, I programmed a new application that would read the entire database of submitted, reviewed and approved articles from MyReview and would create a PDF file containing a pretty-format download of the database.

The solution built is completely adaptable and contains many different parameters and configurations to ensure that each conference proceedings book is different.

The full procedure is available in the appendix of the full project.
2 Project Conclusions

The idea behind performing my project in a foreign country was for me to grow my personal relationships whilst also being part of one of the most reputed universities in Paris. However I must admit that after six months being part of the laboratory, I have been able to more than fulfil my initial objective.

This project has given me true technical competencies (PHP, MySQL, Apache, server domain configuration) that I can add to my future professional career. But also more important than the professional and technical competencies I’ve gained, like interacting with foreign people (Cuban) or talking about business requirements with the conference organisers, this project has enabled me to work collaboratively with true professional people. This first taste treating with professionals will be definitely the most important experience I will take back home.