



WEB COLLABORATION TOOLS GUIDE

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This Web Collaboration application and tools guide provides you with views of:

Tools of this nature

Practical examples of use

Suggested Developments

When it comes to using support tools for your project, there are a whole array of useful functions that you could adopt. For example, a timesheet system for consistent time recording, a common template for tracking project cost or even a shared calendar system.

However, integration of all these systems can often be difficult as not every has the same standards or its just difficult to schedule connectivity. That's where collaborative environments are very useful. Future tools will include what is described as: World Class collaborative environments. They'll need to rely on on-the-fly translation technology and consider the time implications of working globally. It also relies on the availability of information in electronic form. For example, when working on a project or management specification, it could have been developed from a number of sources (handwritten notes, post it notes, http:// or URL references (including intranet links) procedures or diagrams developed by 3rd parties or partners).

The basic definition of collaboration in the context of management is: people working together. Tools are required to for them to easily share and communicate information about their common goals. e-collaboration is defined as technology that allows companies to share data from both sides of the trading relationship.

1. Categorisation

Collaborative tools can be categorised as follows:

1. International Chat rooms
2. Shared document repositories
3. Audio Visual tools

The Internet provides a great platform to share information but where do you gain access to files and how can they be secured? It can also be applied to all three categories.

e.g.: International chat rooms relying on instant translated text entry

e.g.: Using Microsoft exchange as an email platform to connect teams and distribute documents and ensure that a common location is flagged for their review and management.

e.g.: Running live webcast meetings to save travel costs.

1.1. Suggested issues with establishing collaborative environments

However, there are those that have suggested that collaborative environments are:

Complex to set-up

Difficult to navigate to access information

Reliant on the speed of network connection.

In need of common consistency or ground rules, e.g.: Shared templates, terms and standards.

In need of escalation procedures to achieve effective service levels.

In need of more security statements and



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associated reassurances.

We recently had a chance to meet-up with the MD of projectplace.com: Dak Liyanearachchi and their International Business Manager: Mathias Malmgren. The Projectplace platform is an ASP solution, therefore, your data is both secure and easily accessible remotely. In addition, the call for their services had been very popular with useful and practical features.

Fast Access

Well integrated to a Microsoft Exchange backbone

Allows Tasks to be allocated.

Easy to navigate using a comprehensive toolbar

Contains a extensive document repository.

Track project files

Use Project templates.

Centralised ASP Solution

International support & systems coverage

Dak & Mathias agreed that common templates are useful but each industry: Construction or IT software development has its own.

Summary

Projectplace have summarised this environment into 3 C's: Communication, Collaboration and Control. Each area has its own disciplines and dependences:

Communication : The need for a consistent & reliable platform.

Collaboration : The need for team spirit and shared goals and associated operating disciplines.

Control : The need for standards, in terms of sharing information and managing the escalation & change issues.

Any tool that can provide savings, efficiency and effectiveness but more importantly is able to provide support that can improve organisational linkage,

both internal and external must be an essential element to any project.