

Accenture Technology Vision 2008



Technology Labs



Accenture's Technology Vision is a comprehensive analysis of key technology trends that will impact Accenture and our clients over the next three to five years. Refreshed each year, the Vision helps organizations set their IT strategy and investment priorities. This year's Vision identifies eight trends:

1. Cloud computing

The rapid advancement of hardware virtualization, intelligent networks, utility computing, software-as-a-service (SaaS) and Rich Internet Applications (RIAs) will make the location of computing less relevant and visible. "Computing in the cloud" presents businesses with the opportunity to access a bulk of their IT capabilities directly from third parties over the Internet as needed. The increasing availability of this option can lead to a faster IT response to changing business needs and will likely redefine the role of IT departments and CIOs.

2. Systems integration—regular and lite

Two distinct yet complementary application development scenarios are emerging. Service-oriented architectures (SOAs), built on Web services standards, are used to build process-intensive, mission-critical applications. In contrast, mashups and widgets are a lightweight approach for user-driven data integration and rapid prototyping. With the wide adoption of simple standards such as REST and mashup development tools, the lightweight approach will likely grow at a significantly faster pace, and increasingly make its way into enterprises. For CIOs, effectively balancing these two integration approaches will be a major challenge.

3. Enterprise intelligence at scale

With more IT functions being migrated into the cloud and data integration done directly by enterprise user groups, data will emerge as the most important asset of IT departments and enterprises. The combination of sheer volumes of data, the need for mining across different, new data types and the demand for real-time response will require a new kind of business intelligence that encompasses scalable, statistical algorithms and massively parallel approaches.

4. Continuous access to people and content

The increasing availability of powerful, easy-to-use mobile devices, coupled with software-as-a-service, will lead to the ubiquity of communication and access to applications and data anywhere, anytime. This continuity of usage will allow service providers to more easily track and profile users, and deliver highly personalized information and advertising. For CIOs, the increasing adoption of advertising supported applications means more resources for other strategic projects. It also presents new challenges in data privacy and security.

5. Social computing

Just as the Web is evolving from being primarily a transactional medium to a communication and social medium, social computing is moving away from structured collaboration and communication to social networking. Major enterprise software vendors are following a similar path, incorporating social computing capabilities such as unified communications, content sharing and social networks into their enterprise software suites. At the same time, consumer-oriented social network sites continue to evolve into platforms where user experiences are further enriched through applications from third parties. Eventually, these social platforms will become the next-generation portals of people, information and applications. For many enterprises, social computing could represent a major disruptive force because it breaks down the traditional hierarchies and organizational boundaries, leading to more open, dynamic collaboration.

6. User-generated content

The explosion of user-generated content in the form of videos, photos, blogs, podcasts and social tagging will likely continue to grow, transforming the individual experience with media, entertainment and learning. With it, there will be a power shift from traditional distribution channels such as television networks and classrooms to content aggregation players like YouTube, and the emergence of a new consumption

model. Since expertise is no longer location bound, a few experts can truly dominate an area even if they don't have the backing of a powerful institution. At the same time, the need for esoteric content will also likely be met by members in a global peer community.

7. Industrialization of software development

Progress continues to be made in creating better software at lower cost and with better predictability, especially in the areas of tools and environments. Most of today's integrated data environments now have built-in capabilities to support large, distributed development teams. Tool suites are also emerging to support the development of Rich Internet Applications and user-generated applications like mashups and widgets. Agile development methods, widely used by online companies, are gradually gaining acceptance as a preferred development approach in traditional enterprises.

8. Green computing

Skyrocketing energy prices, tightening government regulations and growing shareholder pressures are just a few factors making green and sustainability major boardroom issues. IT will play a vital role in the green movement by substituting energy-intensive activities with information-intensive activities, including creating energy efficient data centers, reducing commuting and travel through electronic collaboration and optimizing energy-intensive business processes.

About the Accenture Technology Vision

The Accenture Technology Vision is a comprehensive analysis that looks past today's business horizon to identify the major technology trends that will have a significant business impact on Accenture and our clients in the next three to five years. Conducted annually, the Vision helps businesses discern, anticipate and adapt strategically to the shifting risks and opportunities that lie ahead.

About Accenture Technology Labs

Accenture Technology Labs, the dedicated technology research and development (R&D) organization within Accenture, has been turning technology innovation into business results for 20 years. The Labs create a vision of how technology will shape the future and invent the next wave of cutting-edge business solutions. Working closely with Accenture's global network of specialists, Accenture Technology Labs helps clients innovate to achieve high business performance. The Labs are located in San Jose, California; Chicago, Illinois; Sophia Antipolis, France; and Bangalore, India. For more information, please visit our website at www.accenture.com/accenturetechlabs.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. With more than 175,000 people in 49 countries, the company generated net revenues of US \$19.70 billion for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2007. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

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