

The 10 Most Important Technology Areas for 2008, a Gartner View

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Green IT initiatives, unified communications and business process modeling will be hot areas next year, according to a list of the top 10 strategic technologies from Gartner.

The research house defines strategic technologies as those with the potential to significantly impact corporations in the next three years. Also ranked among the top 10 were metadata management, virtualization 2.0 and mashup applications. Service-oriented architecture (SOA) software development wasn't on the list, but was included as part of other trends the research company spotlighted.

Here's a look at the top 10 tech trends, and what Gartner had to say about them:

Green IT: Companies should be mindful of potential regulations that could limit the building of data centers, and should be prepared with backup plans for handling growing data demands.

Unified Communications: Gartner says that over the next three years the majority of corporations will migrate to Internet Protocol telephony.

Business Process Modeling: As companies continue to look for ways to improve their business processes, the key to success will be an organization's ability to bring together enterprise architects, senior developers, process architects and process analysts. Gartner also expects business process management software suites to better complement SOA applications development.

Metadata Management: Over the next three years, companies working to integrate both customer data and product data will link these master data management efforts together in an overall enterprise information management (EIM) strategy. Metadata management, Gartner notes, also extends into SOA software development projects with service registries and application development repositories.

Virtualization 2.0: Virtualization has improved server utilization, but with the addition of automation technologies—with service-level, policy-based active management—even greater improvements are possible. "Resource efficiency can improve dramatically, flexibility can become automatic based on requirements, and services can be managed holistically, ensuring high levels of resiliency," Gartner says.

Mashup and Composite Apps: In three years, Web mashups will be the way companies create composite enterprise applications, Gartner predicts.

Web Platform and Web-Oriented Architecture: Software-as-a-Service, in which applications are available on-demand over the Web, is becoming a real option for many companies. And emerging Web platforms, Gartner says, will provide service-based access to information, applications, and business processes through Web-based "cloud computing" environments.

Computing Fabric: Gartner says the next phrase of server computing will be technology that allows several blades to operate as a large single system. "The fabric-based server of the future will treat memory, processors, and I/O cards as components in a pool, combining and recombining them into particular arrangements to suit the owner's needs," the research firm says.

Real World Web: Gartner defines the real world Web as a place "where information from the Web is applied to the particular location, activity or context in the real world." It gives the example of a navigation unit that adjusts the information it delivers as a car or boat moves around. Gartner sees real world Web application improving many business processes and creating new revenue streams.

Social Software: The Web 2.0 market will go through a lot of changes between now and 2010, Gartner says, with considerable vendor consolidation. However, the research firm does see social networking being adopted by many enterprises to augment traditional collaboration.

How Prospect City is addressing the most important technology areas for 2008, in 2007:

Offsite hosting on shared servers consolidates equipment and eliminates the need for in-house equipment for our clients. Less equipment now = less dump-fill waste later.

Our VoIP phone systems integrate email, vmail, IM and our recruiting database technology, Velvet.

Our systems are based on business processing analysis and improvement modeling provided to our customers in executive recruitment.

We offer EIM products and services that integrate our customers' internal operating technology with external, market-facing technology such as client and candidate worksites.

Our services target the virtualization beyond server utilization to include people services virtualization too, creating a holistically managed enterprise operation.

Software-as-a-Service is the central focus of our technology platform – everything is designed to be available via the web, including phones, research, database, accounting and more.

Our blade server architecture allows the separation of data while sharing the use of key components such as memory and processors in a pool, ensuring high user demands are met without sacrificing speed.

Our real-world web designs include information resources dedicated exclusively to executive search, and specifically to an industry focus if applicable. The result is a pool of resources delivering information exclusively for our clients.

Obviously social networking is a growing trend and of significant value in executive search. Our architecture of customization allows our tools to integrate and highlight the network fabric of your database, LinkedIn and industry associations.