

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Services Backgrounder

Integrating the Internet with business systems to reduce costs, increase efficiency and make a difference to the bottom line.

#### ■ Our Philosophy

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##### **Integrate the Internet:**

The Internet represents a fundamentally new channel for the conduct of human interaction and business. Its technologies and standards are the platform on which the world will conduct its business over the coming decades. Its impact will be long-term, evolutionary and fundamental, and has very little to do with dotcom hype, scams and online storefronts of the last five years.

It is as important as speech, the written word or the telephone.

Over time, the fundamentally new modes of interaction that the Internet enables will become standard ways of conducting any business transaction or form of communication. A business that doesn't use the Internet as part of its business and communications infrastructure is going to find it as hard to survive as a company that tries surviving without a phone handset or pen and paper.

This is because the Internet is becoming one of the most important ways that businesses can interact and communicate - whether that be internally, or with their customers, suppliers and businesses partners.

In our view, having a public Web site on the Internet but not using the Internet "internally" is somewhat akin to being a book publisher but refusing to use the written word for your corporate communications. At itechne, we don't believe in building Web sites - we believe in integrating Internet ways of working throughout your organisation and its culture, and tying them deeply to your internal systems and procedures.

##### **The Web as a UI to your Business**

A Web site should be the user interface for all the key audiences who deal with your organisation. This applies to not only customers dealing with your organisation over the Internet. It should also become the user interface for suppliers and business partners, and key stakeholders including your own staff. For all three audiences (customers, partners and stakeholders/staff) it is the interface that they use to interact for:

- Conducting information transactions (content publishing, data source manipulation and querying).
- Commercial transactions (ecommerce).
- Relationship interaction activities (customer relationship management).
- Over time, it should also become the interface that your employees use for their internal work - collaboration, knowledge management and enterprise resource planning.

This might make it sound like your Web site needs to be extensive and complicated from day one. But this isn't the case. Your Web site can start simply and grow over time - initially an interface to a couple of key features, but growing over time to incorporate multiple audiences and features. The challenge is to develop a site architecture, navigational structure, back-end data architecture, and business logic layer that supports the gradual extension of your site to include additional features and audiences over time.

The real key to successful e-business implementation is to prioritise those critical features that deliver the greatest organisation benefits and integrate them deeply early on. You can then extend the integration and number of features supported organically and dynamically over time.

A Web site only needs to deliver one or a few key benefits to your customers to be successful. But what is critical is that it needs to be designed, built and implemented from first principles based on the fundamental precept of deep integration; cultural, intellectual and technological.

It is better, therefore, to start with a few key functions that are well integrated with your business - for example, publishing fresh and dynamic marketing and promotional information that is well integrated with your offline marketing and promotional activities - rather than building an extensive but poorly integrated or supported feature-set online.

The beauty of the web is that your corporate presence can grow organically overtime. You don't need to launch everything on day one. The challenge is to design the overall architecture and integration early on, and then work at synergising the Internet with the rest of your business.

### **The Internet as Infrastructure**

Successful e-business is not about putting up public Web sites or corporate brochure-ware; it's about using the Internet as standards-based technology infrastructure and a channel for conducting business interaction.

There are four broad guiding principles that should be used to evaluate all of your activities and whether there are long-term opportunities that arise from using the Internet as infrastructure and as a channel for the conduct of business:

- Operational efficiencies from the use of Internet technologies as infrastructure
- Enhanced channel for the conduct of communication and interaction between:
  - (a) Customers and audiences.
  - (b) Business partners, suppliers and associates.
  - (c) Corporate stakeholders: staff, human resources, management, the board and investors.
- A platform for recasting or more efficiently delivering existing products and services.
- A long-term platform for developing and delivering entirely new classes of products and services.

## **■ Development Methodology**

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### **The itechne Development Model**

itechne prides itself on its partnership approach. We believe that Internet solutions work best when they are built by a cross-organisational team of members from all key stakeholders, including the itechne project team, key divisions within a client's organization, and any external partners. We provide a heavy "on-the-ground" presence and foster close client relationships.

We also believe in the importance of strong inter-personal relationships between members of the team, and cradle-to-grave involvement of team members. The itechne project team that starts a project is always wherever possible the team that finishes it. We believe this is especially important in an industry infamous for transience and inconsistency.

Rather than assigning one or two developers to a project, itechne builds a team of people with “primary focus” roles and responsibilities. This team combines its competencies and “role ownership” to make sure every element of a project is completed successfully. Where additional expertise or supplementary skills are required the team is extended with partners and specialist experts from our extensive pool of agents.

The key roles of an itechne project team are:

- **Product Management:** Product Management is focused on looking after your interests, managing the liaison between key stakeholders within your organisation, and the itechne project team. It is Product Management’s responsibility to ensure the solution we deliver matches your needs and desires from every perspective. Your account manager will work closely with you, managing the flow of information, agreements, and documentation.
- **Build Management:** The build team comprises software development, content creation and delivery, user interface and graphic design, and imagery. We believe that programmers program, writers write, and designers design. To support this the build team comprises a team of experts focused on building solutions.
- **Education and Training:** We believe training and learning by all stakeholders in a project is critical to its success. Staff within your organisation will be extensively trained on how to use the systems and technologies we provide. Additionally, all key audiences, including customers, partners and staff, are provided with detailed online help systems and documentation.
- **Quality Assurance:** We work with you closely to extensively test our solutions for usability, user-centric design, and technical performance, including platform support, scalability, reliability and performance. We are committed to the highest production values of consistency, quality and correctness and follow detailed checklists developed with you and customised for your project.
- **Logistics and Rollout:** Working with your IT department and web staff to develop a strong rollout and implementation plan is critical to a successful project. itechne has an especially strong set of competencies in technology systems integration. We are a Microsoft Certified Partner, IBM Business Partner, Oracle Development Partner, and Adobe Solutions Network partner. We also offer a detailed and comprehensive set of options for project-based service level agreements, and ongoing support and maintenance agreements.

### Key Project Stages

Itechne projects follow a detailed documentation, process and risk-management based methodology. To support this any itechne project is divided into four key stages:

- **Vision Development.** We don’t believe that any developer can truly understand an organisation’s objectives from a brief or pitch. We feel strongly that getting everyone “on the same page” with the vision for the project is absolutely critical. While we try in our proposals to deliver a framework for the possibilities of the Internet for a company, the first and most important stage of a project is working extensively and in detail with you to articulate its vision and precisely define its goals and objectives. We will consult extensively with key staff throughout the different divisions of your organisation and with key partners if required, as well as other relevant stakeholders such as the board, general management and IT, to develop a long-term vision for the project and its goals and objectives.

- **Planning.** Once the vision for the project is established, we move onto a detailed specification process. This is a significant project in its own right and normally requires a significant part of the project's time. But we aim at the end to deliver a document that any good development company could use.

**The planning process has the following elements:**

**Functional Specification:** This is a highly detailed description of what the project will build, describing it from an end-users perspective in clear plain English terms. It includes a scoping document describing explicitly which features you want to include, broad site navigation and structure.

**Technical Specification:** Includes the technology infrastructure, platforms, data architecture, business logic and user interface required.

**Project Management Plan:** Includes the project schedule, key milestones, testing plan, rollout plans and other key monitoring devices.

- **Build:** Only once the plans and scope for a project or project phase have been completed will we commence the build. The build phase includes design (imagery and interface), development (coding and programming) and population (content).
- **Deployment:** The deployment phase includes the technical rollout of the site, integration with any existing internal or external data sources, and putting in place key support and maintenance infrastructure for your Internet initiative

### The Importance of Standards

To give you the best long-term return on your investment, itechne always:

- Recommend using the most popular platforms and technologies - in particular tools and technologies from IBM and Microsoft.
- Uses open standards for everything we do, in particular the family of standards based around XML.

This guarantees that whatever we build for you will be re-usable and extensible by any development company, staff member or other agent competent in the world's most popular platforms and the most important data standard in the world - XML. Our own tools and technologies, including our flagship edDesk system are based on exactly this approach.

We guarantee not to leave you high and dry with proprietary or not-widely-supported systems.

Everything we build for your organisation will be based on XML and XSLT. We will actively research and endeavour to use any public DTDs or schemas (industry data definitions essentially) already in existence for your industry sector, and will build your site and systems from day one so that you can easily exchange data based on these open standards with other organisations as easily as possible. Where we develop new DTDs or schemas where they don't already exist, we will work with you to post these as open standards so that other organisations with which you work.

Similarly, we will encourage you as part of any project to move away from the use of proprietary systems internally and towards the use of Internet technologies pervasively throughout your organization for network infrastructure (Internet protocol everywhere), user interfaces (Web interfaces to human readable information everywhere) and machine-readable data interfaces and exchange (XML everywhere).

We will analyse your existing IT infrastructure and e-business readiness as part of this project, and give you a migration path to e-business enable your entire organisation, not just build a website.

## ■ About itechne

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### Company Background

itechne is an Australian-owned and operated software development and Internet services company. We specialise in building cost-effective, client-driven Internet solutions that integrate with your existing offline systems, especially knowledge and content rich sites. Plus, we can help you use the Internet as infrastructure to save costs, work more efficiently, and really help your business.

Our flagship product is edDesk™, a publishing and content management solution, an end-to-end publishing system for content from concept to publication designed from the ground-up to make production for multiple media easy.

itechne focuses on cost-effective, functional, easy-to-update and stylish sites. Our philosophy is to hand control of Web content over to our clients, allowing them to control and update their own content and integrate their Web content with the rest of their business processes.

## ■ Affiliations and credentials

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itechne has close business and development partnerships with some of the world's leading technology companies:

- **Microsoft Certified Business Partner:** Techne-Ventures is a Microsoft Certified Partner, and edDesk™ is has been tested and certified as a Microsoft Windows 2000 compatible product and Designed for Windows XP.
- **IBM Business Partner:** Techne-Ventures is an IBM/Lotus Business Partner, and a member of IBM Partnerworld for Developers and Partnerworld for Software, and can provide technology products, support and services in affiliation with IBM.
- **Adobe Solutions Network Partner:** Techne-Ventures is also part of the Adobe Solutions Network (ASN) as a recognised developer for Adobe products. Techne-Ventures applied for this partnership to develop the integration of edDesk™ with Adobe technologies, specifically InDesign, InCopy and PDF technologies. As part of this program, Techne-Ventures has access to beta software, SDKs, documentation and support from Adobe.

### itechne edDesk Recognised by IBM

itechne has extensive experience consulting, developing and implementing e-business initiatives, especially for media and media-related enterprises. As a testament to our commitment and success, edDesk, our flagship product was a finalist at the prestigious IBM Lotus Beacon Awards.

## ■ Achievements

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itechne has extensive experience consulting, developing and implementing e-business initiatives, especially for media and media-related enterprises. edDesk, our flagship product was a finalist at the Lotus Beacon Awards 2002. Our clients include many of Australia's best-known companies and media brands, including:

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Australian Consolidated Press  | ■ LG Electronics      |
| ■ Allen and Unwin                | ■ Murdoch Magazines   |
| ■ Australian Women's Weekly      | ■ Ninemsn             |
| ■ Britannica                     | ■ Telstra             |
| ■ Department of Treasury (Axiss) | ■ The Bulletin        |
| ■ Gilbert+Tobin                  | ■ Toyota              |
| ■ IDP Education Australia        | ■ Universal Magazines |
| ■ Huntleys                       | ... and many more.    |