

Exploring IBM Accelerators for WebSphere Portal

How to Drive Better Business Outcomes with Exceptional Web Experiences



Jim Hoskins

Exploring IBM Accelerators for WebSphere Portal

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Exploring IBM Accelerators for WebSphere Portal

How to Drive Better Business Outcomes with Exceptional Web Experiences

Jim Hoskins

Version 1.0e



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About This eBook

This MaxFacts™ interactive ebook explores the IBM accelerators for WebSphere® Portal software offerings. These pre-integrated collections of software “snap in” to IBM WebSphere Portal, adding functions that meet a wide range of business needs. This ebook contains information and graphics gathered and adapted with permission from multiple IBM and non-IBM sources. Also, there are embedded links to more detailed information and news available on the Internet, so you always have the most current information at your fingertips. We are confident you will find this a useful reference tool. As we are always working to better help you succeed, please forward any comments or suggested improvements to this ebook to info@maxpress.com.

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Portals and Business

In this chapter we take a look at what portals are and why they are important to business. We also explore IBM WebSphere and IBM WebSphere Portal.

What Is a Portal?

Every business has a past, a present, and a future. Businesses that have a long past typically have accumulated a portfolio of separate business application programs (i.e., applications) over time that they use day in and day out to conduct business. Many of these “legacy” applications are still vital to the business operation. As for the present and the future, businesses continue to deploy Web content and applications that increasingly leverage the Internet.

So what is a portal and how is it valuable to today’s businesses? Think of a portal as a collection of “win-

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dows” into various applications that can be seen by employees, customers, and business partners. Depending on how the portal is set up, the applications that are available are specific to the needs of the person who is using the portal. These applications can be a mix of older, legacy applications, Web 2.0-based applications, and other business-specific applications. One way to view the difference between a portal and a Website is as follows: Think of a portal as providing convenient and consistent access to a collection of applications and applicable Websites, whereas a traditional Website can be thought of as a single destination for a specific set of content.

Portals can be personalized based on a user’s selected preferences, history, or assigned role within the organization—for example, customer, employee/manager, partner/supplier. Roles are typically set by the site’s administrator. Site personalization presents users with the tools they need, reducing information overload and increasing productivity or efficiency. For example, a customer who showed previous interest in a particular set of products or services could be presented with more relevant content, a manager would have access to personnel applications regard-

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ing employees, and a supplier would have access to an ordering and requisition application. By using a customizable portal, businesses can customize each user’s “window” into vital company applications and information. Portals can help a business’s IT department reduce application-development resources and the time it takes to deploy a new Web application, enabling the business to be more responsive to changing needs.

More on the Web

- [A Portal as Described on Wikipedia](#)
- [Portals 101—A Portal Guide on IBM.com](#)

IBM WebSphere—A Brief History

IBM WebSphere Portal is IBM’s entry into the portal software marketplace and a part of the broader IBM WebSphere family of middleware products designed to help businesses develop and deploy applications that leverage the Internet and the emerging service-oriented architecture model. To better understand the role of WebSphere (and thus WebSphere Portal and IBM accelerators), it is useful to take a quick look at some history... so let’s briefly take a step

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back to the heyday of the Internet and see how things unfolded.

The Internet frenzy of the mid-1990s spurred many businesses to begin experimenting with ways to leverage this new phenomenon. It was a Wild West show of many ideas—some brilliant, some not so brilliant, and some just crazy. For many, the boundaries between fantasy and business were increasingly becoming blurred. But for those who could see through the madness, it was clear that the Internet was becoming something very big for real business. By 1996, shipping companies like Federal Express and UPS were already adding Web interfaces to their existing enterprise applications so that customers could track their packages online without having to make a phone call. And hotels were allowing their customers to book rooms over the Web. People were able to get information anytime they wanted, 24 hours a day... and they were liking it... and they were wanting more.

Steve Mills, then general manager of IBM's Software Solutions Division, could see that something very big was underway and that the market was shifting. Things were moving fast and an opportunity was

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clearly at hand. So in January 1998, Steve called Chris Wicher, then director of the IBM Software Development Lab, and said, “Go figure out what’s happening on the Internet and tell me what you think we need to do.” So Chris’s team of 19 people (an unusually small team for IBM) began to explore, think, and experiment at their development lab in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Internet was driving a fundamental change in the business world—and IBM needed to become a leader in this new arena.

They took a careful look at the types of Internet-oriented (or “Web” application) programs that were being deployed and thought about how IBM could best help businesses deliver more value to their customers over the Web. There were long meetings during which many ideas were bandied about. As a result of this work, the team decided to recommend the development of a software product that would reside between the operating system and Web application programs that would allow businesses to deploy Web applications more efficiently. That is, IBM would develop a “Web application server.” The project, code-named “Hurricane,” was given the green

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light and was subsequently announced as IBM WebSphere Application Server on May 5, 1998.

Once WebSphere Application Server was in the marketplace, it began to evolve quickly based on feedback from users. With the launch of WebSphere V2 just four months after the initial launch, WebSphere became much more than a Web application server—it was an integrated solution for e-business. IBM made WebSphere “The Internet Brand,” and it would soon become the centerpiece of IBM’s sweeping service oriented architecture (SOA) initiative announced in September 2005. SOA is an emerging software architectural style that provides agility and efficiency by allowing businesses to easily change their business processes in response to market needs, thus creating a competitive advantage. The WebSphere brand now encompasses over 200 offerings, including many that are central SOA, making it the brand of choice for many businesses.

Soon after the launch of WebSphere Application Server in 1998, IBM began to work with several large WebSphere clients; IBM realized that all of these clients were facing the same problem. They all really liked WebSphere Application Server... but

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they struggled with how to enable users to get from one Web application program to another. They also wanted to control which applications each user was able to use—that is, they wanted access control. Several groups within IBM had discovered this customer need at around the same time. In fact, there were seven different IBM organizations that had each started their own development effort to address this very need. So, late in 2000, Steve Mills had his team combine the best ideas from the different efforts into a single product... and that product was WebSphere Portal Server, announced in January 2001.

More on the Web

- [WebSphere info on IBM.com](#)
- [WebSphere Revolution \(coffee table book covering WebSphere history\)](#)

About WebSphere Portal Software

As the industry's leading platform for composite applications, the WebSphere Portal software family of products provides a foundation for proven, extensible, standards-based solutions for integrating legacy applications, Web content, and new Web 2.0 applications

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with rich security and scalability. WebSphere Portal software is built on top of WebSphere Application Server and provides access control and a consistent way for users to work with multiple Web application programs at the same time, thereby significantly improving user productivity. With specific products designed for organizations both small and large, WebSphere Portal software provides access to Web content, back-end legacy systems, and new business application programs all on one screen—complete with unified security and a consistent user interface.

WebSphere Portal software makes it easier for programmers to build a set of Web applications that look and feel consistent to end users, even if the supporting back-end applications are different. This helps businesses control the user experience from a branding standpoint. WebSphere Portal software is also an open portal platform for delivering content to device- and network-independent applications and services known as portlets—simple Java servlet applications that live inside a user’s portal space. In many ways, WebSphere Portal software is to Websites and Web applications what Microsoft Windows is to PC applications.

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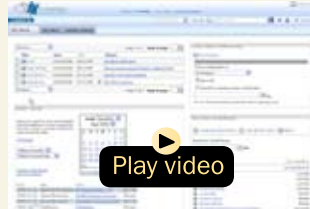
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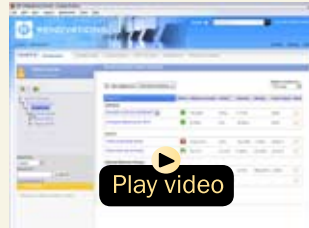
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More on the Web

- [WebSphere Portal Info on IBM.com](#)
- [WebSphere Portal Family Brochure](#)
- [WebSphere Portal Reviewer's Guide](#)
- [WebSphere Portal Wiki](#)
- [Case study—NFL](#)



WebSphere Portal Demos
(multiple videos)



Enterprise of the Future
(50:25)

Today, WebSphere Portal is a key element in how IBM can help your organization achieve smarter collaboration to connect, collaborate, innovate, and optimize.

- Connect is about deepening relationships for differentiation.

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- Collaborate is about enabling productivity through real-time business processes (collaboration in the way we work).
- Innovate is about increasing participation and cost-effectively driving new ideas.
- Optimize is about building a cost-effective way for people to work.

What Is WebSphere Portlet Factory?

One powerful feature of WebSphere Portal software is its ability to include “portlets” in a user’s view of a business’s Website (internal, business-to-business, or public). A portlet is a specialized mini-application program that can be “snapped in” to a Website offering its users additional function. Based on Java, these portlets can be written to do almost anything. Portlets can exchange information with other application programs (e.g., back-end systems, legacy systems, other portlets, WebSphere Process Server, etc.), resulting in composite applications or “mashups.” To a large extent, it is these portlets and the functions they provide that make the difference between a traditional Website and a WebSphere Portal Website. WebSphere portlets


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can be developed using the powerful tool provided with WebSphere Portal known as the WebSphere Portlet Factory or with other programming tools.

WebSphere Portlet Factory is included with WebSphere Portal and provides a robust selection of builders that supercharge the portlet development process without writing code. WebSphere Portlet Factory's rapid application-development technology enables portlet creation 40 to 70 percent faster than using traditional J2EE development methods. With WebSphere Portlet Factory, you can rapidly develop and deploy custom service-oriented portlets and rich, interactive Web 2.0-style applications with features like drag-and-drop, in-line editing, type-ahead search, and intelligent page-refresh functionality. WebSphere Portlet Factory transforms operational data into high-value business information by integrating data from a wide variety of packaged enterprise applications, repositories, and data sources—including SAP, Siebel, PeopleSoft, Lotus Domino, Web, and REST services and leading relational databases—via a rich, prebuilt connector library. Native WebSphere Portal integration enables creation of composite applications with em-

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bedded collaboration features that facilitate real-time problem resolution.

Using WebSphere Portlet Factory's patented dynamic profiling functionality, developers can easily empower business-user-led portlet customization via personalization and can create dynamic, micro-targeted applications that vary portlet content based on user role, geography, and more. Applications built with WebSphere Portlet Factory can be deployed to multiple run-time environments to provide the right user experience based on target audience, including WebSphere Portal, IBM Mashup Center, Lotus Notes, Lotus Expeditor, and WebSphere Application Server.

More on the Web

- [WebSphere Portlet Factory info on IBM.com](#)
- [Builders for WebSphere Portlet Factory](#)
- [Listing of Builders](#)
- [WebSphere Portlet Factory Redbook](#)
- [Rapid Portlet Development with WebSphere Portlet Factory: Step-by-Step Guide for Building Your Own Portlets](#)
- [WebSphere Portlet Factory Wiki](#)
- [WebSphere Portlet Factory Trial](#)
- [WebSphere Portlet Factory Forum](#)

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What Are IBM Accelerators for WebSphere Portal?

So now that we have a better understanding of the IBM WebSphere family, WebSphere Portal, and portlets, let's turn our attention to the IBM accelerators for WebSphere Portal depicted in [Figure 1.1](#). IBM accelerators for WebSphere Portal were first introduced in



Figure 1.1: IBM accelerators work in conjunction with IBM WebSphere Portal to speed the implementation of needed business functions. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

2007 as a way for businesses to more quickly implement WebSphere Portal solutions to address common business needs. Current accelerators include IBM Content Accelerator, IBM Dashboard Accelerator, IBM Collaboration Accelerator, IBM Business Process Accelerator, IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator, IBM Learning Accelerator, and IBM Mashup Accelerator. The IBM accelerators can consist of a combination of IBM software products, templates, custom portlet builders, and other elements that help businesses speed solution development and implementation, thereby seeing a quicker return on their WebSphere Portal investment. The resulting solutions inherit the robust, enterprise-class functions of WebSphere Portal such as a unified security system, scalability, roles-based personalization, and more.

Here are some quick benefits provided by IBM accelerators:

- Highly flexible, configurable, and scalable accelerators that help businesses achieve goals

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- Help dramatically speed time-to-market and reduce the cost of deploying portal-based business solutions
- Shorten implementation cycles, providing quicker ROI on portal investment.

The rest of this ebook provides a closer look at the family of IBM accelerators for WebSphere Portal.

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IBM Accelerators

In this chapter, we take a quick look at some IBM accelerators for IBM WebSphere Portal and how they help customers solve today's business problems. This will provide the background for understanding how to use the IBM accelerators to more quickly implement needed business functions.

More on the Web

- [IBM Accelerator Overview on IBM.com](#)

IBM Business Process Accelerator

Every organization performs a wide range of tasks also known as “business processes” to conduct business—day in and day out. Tasks such as opening a new customer account, paying an invoice, performing a quality inspection, completing an order form, or writing a contract are all examples of typi-

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cal business processes. As the number, diversity, and complexity of business processes implemented across an organization increase, so does the need for structured and efficient management of those processes. When combined with a process engine, IBM Business Process Accelerator provides this type of business process management capability along with important benefits such as increased efficiencies and reduced costs.

Business Value

IBM Business Process Accelerator helps a business improve efficiencies through automation of a wide range of repetitive tasks that are performed in the course of doing business. By automating forms-based business processes with electronic versions of paper forms (eforms), users can extend core business processes to customers, employees, and partners via the Web. Eforms (like the example shown in [Figure 2.1](#)) provide and capture the information that can be routed by a process engine through a predefined series of steps and approvals known as a workflow. By leveraging the power of eforms in a portal environment, Business Process Accelerator provides the tools needed to help organizations more easily capture forms-based

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The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "IBM Lotus Forms Viewer" displaying a ZetaBank eform. The form is titled "Step 1 - Personal Information" and includes the following fields and sections:

- Legal Name:**
 - First Name*: Albert
 - Middle Initial: [Empty]
 - Last Name*: Morris
 - Suffix: Jr
- Residence Information:**
 - Country*: United States
 - Are you a Citizen or a permanent resident?: Yes (selected)
 - Current Address 1*: 123 Easy Street
 - Current Address 2: [Empty]
 - City/Town*: Austin
 - State/Province*: Texas
 - Mail/Postal Code*: 78714
 - Time at Current Address*: 5 Years
 - Housing Status: Rent
 - Monthly Housing Payment: \$600.00
 - Other Monthly Expenses (Total excluding Monthly Housing Payment): \$600.00

Navigation buttons "Previous" and "Next" are visible at the bottom of the form.

Figure 2.1: An example eform created using IBM Lotus Forms. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

information and automate business processes through a process engine such as IBM WebSphere Process Server or IBM FileNet P8 Business Process Manager.

Significant productivity gains, cost savings, error reduction, enhanced data security, and improved customer satisfaction can be derived by combining

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eforms, business process automation, and back-end system integration in a portal environment. By automating core business processes with electronic forms based on open standards, businesses across numerous industries including government, banking, and insurance can help improve response times and customer satisfaction by rapidly building and deploying customer and partner facing workflows in WebSphere Portal.

Industry analysts note that more than 80 percent of business processes are forms based. By helping customers and line-of-business users gain efficient access to electronic forms, organizations can improve the efficiency of their business processes, reduce costs, and benefit from better decision making.

IBM Business Process Accelerator helps organizations with the following:

- Accelerate business process automation efforts and speed time to value


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- Help improve efficiencies and increase end-user productivity and satisfaction through a richer desktop-like application interface
- Rapidly integrate data with existing infrastructure and applications
- Help a business reduce costs and take quick action in decision making and business process implementation
- Help organizations address regulatory and compliance concerns.

More on the Web

- [Business Process Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Business Process Accelerator Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

How It Works

IBM Business Process Accelerator consists of IBM WebSphere Portal and IBM Lotus Forms. [Figure 2.2](#) shows the internal structure for Business Process Accelerator. At the bottom, the Process Engine function controls the execution of the many business processes used to conduct business. Business Process Accelerator includes the integration software layer needed to use either WebSphere Process Server or

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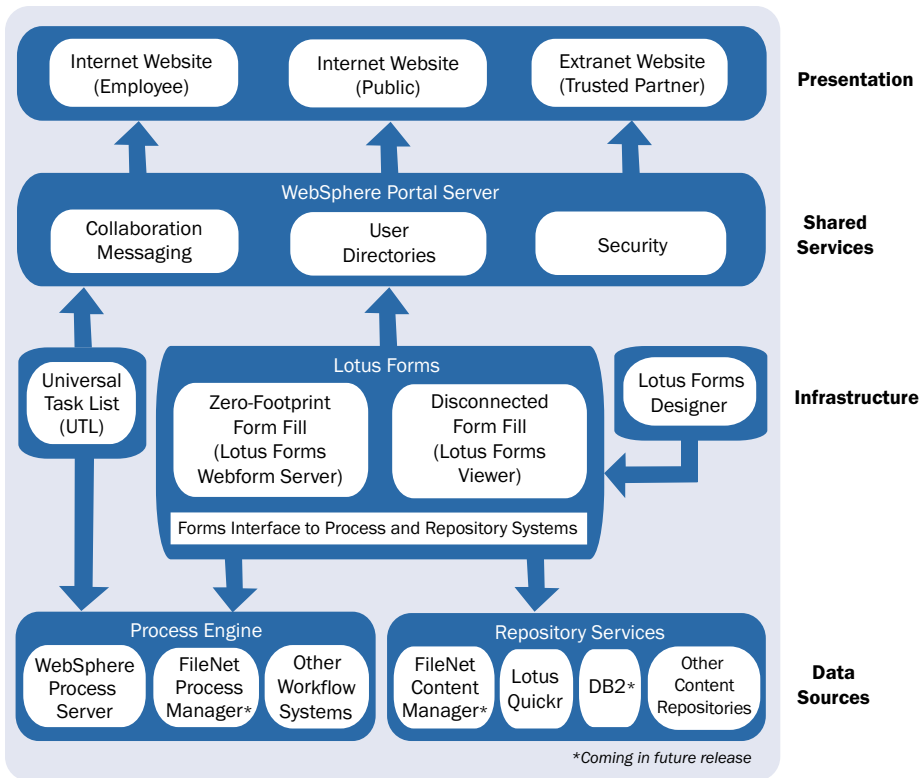


Figure 2.2: Internal structure of the IBM Business Process Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

IBM FileNet Business Process Manager as the process engine. Other process engines can also be integrated and then used through the published API.

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If WebSphere Process Server is the process engine, then a business analyst might use WebSphere Business Modeler to define the detailed steps of a business process. Once the business analyst has defined a business process in WebSphere Business Modeler, that information is passed to WebSphere Integration Developer, which is the tool that is used to generate BPEL (Business Process Execution Language) used with WebSphere Process Server (shown in the figure). Then, the Universal Task List (UTL) portlet provided with Business Process Accelerator queries the process engine and presents portal users with the list of tasks each needs to complete in order to advance the various business processes that are currently underway.

The execution of some UTL tasks may involve a person using one or more online eforms provided by Lotus Forms. These eforms, designed using Lotus Forms Designer, can provide and gather the information needed to execute the UTL task, thereby enabling the business process to proceed. As depicted in the figure, Lotus Forms can be accessed online over any Internet/intranet connection or offline using the Lotus Forms Viewer client. The Repository Services func-

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tion provides a structured and secure storage place for all forms and data used in the various business processes for record-keeping and compliance purposes. Again, Business Process Accelerator includes the integration software layer needed to use various software products as the repository, including Lotus Quickr, DB2 Content Manager, and FileNet Content Manager. Other repository software offerings can also be integrated and used through a published API.

Above Lotus Forms we find the WebSphere Portal Server layer common to all accelerator offerings. WebSphere Portal Server provides the collaborative messaging, security, and user directory functions needed to support the portal through which users interact with an organization's business processes. Using the Portlet Factory provided with WebSphere Portal Server, portlets can be developed to customize the users' experience such that all needed information is presented in context and when needed. These portals may be for public use over the Internet, for employees to access over a company intranet, or for use by trusted business partners via an extranet.

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To facilitate common needs, IBM has provided some sample eforms powered by Lotus Forms for things such as a “Job Applications” portal, which allows job seekers to fill out an employment application online. A sample “Patient Portal” eform shows how individuals might be able to access their medical records online without jeopardizing their privacy. And the sample “Loan Application” eform would allow users to apply for credit online. These are just a few examples of an endless range of business processes that can be implemented through Business Process Accelerator.

More on the Web

- [Lotus Forms Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Lotus Forms Demos](#)
- [Article: Integrating Lotus Forms with WebSphere Portal](#)
- [Lotus Forms Technical Content](#)
- [Lotus Forms developerWorks Forum](#)
- [WebSphere Process Server](#)
- [WebSphere Integration Developer](#)
- [WebSphere Business Modeler](#)
- [FileNet P8 Business Process Manager](#)

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IBM Collaboration Accelerator

Working with others from afar can be a challenge that may lead to delays, miscommunication, and duplication of efforts. Today's tools, including Collaboration Accelerator, all but eliminate the productivity barriers faced by geographically scattered teams. Collaboration Accelerator helps businesses overcome the challenges presented by teams that can be dispersed across several buildings, cities, states, and even countries.

Business Value

IBM Collaboration Accelerator bridges the geographical divide, allowing teams to work together more efficiently ([Figure 2.3](#)). As more employees telecommute from home or other sites, and as traditional teams are replaced by combinations of employees, partners, and consultants, businesses need to find ways to allow these teams to share their efforts securely and efficiently. IBM Collaboration Accelerator provides the tools needed to allow team members to easily connect with one another, to locate subject-matter experts, and to more effectively share information based on job roles and expertise.



Figure 2.3: Sample screen image from an IBM Collaboration Accelerator installation. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

By empowering people to team, connect, and communicate instantly, Collaboration Accelerator can help improve response times, increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer service. Smarter collaboration fuels both efficiency and innovation.

IBM Collaboration Accelerator helps with the following:

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- Enables employees to easily determine which of their colleagues are available to collaborate or share information
- Facilitates real-time text message conversations with individuals or groups, as well as audio and video support
- Facilitates the collective creation of content
- Provides secure access to content in a centralized team workspace repository
- Delivers Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, and bookmarks to promote efficient information sharing, research, and promotion of ideas
- Supports access to team workspaces from outside the firewall to facilitate greater collaboration with strategic partners
- Supports Web conferences where team members can share information on their desktops and use virtual whiteboards for brainstorm sessions.

More on the Web

- [Collaboration Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Collaboration Accelerator Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

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How It Works

IBM Collaboration Accelerator consists of three software components: IBM Lotus Sametime Standard, IBM Lotus Quickr, and IBM Lotus Connections. [Figure 2.4](#) shows the internal structure of Collaboration Accelerator as part of an IBM WebSphere Portal implementation. At the bottom is the “community and social services” layer. This layer includes a myriad of data

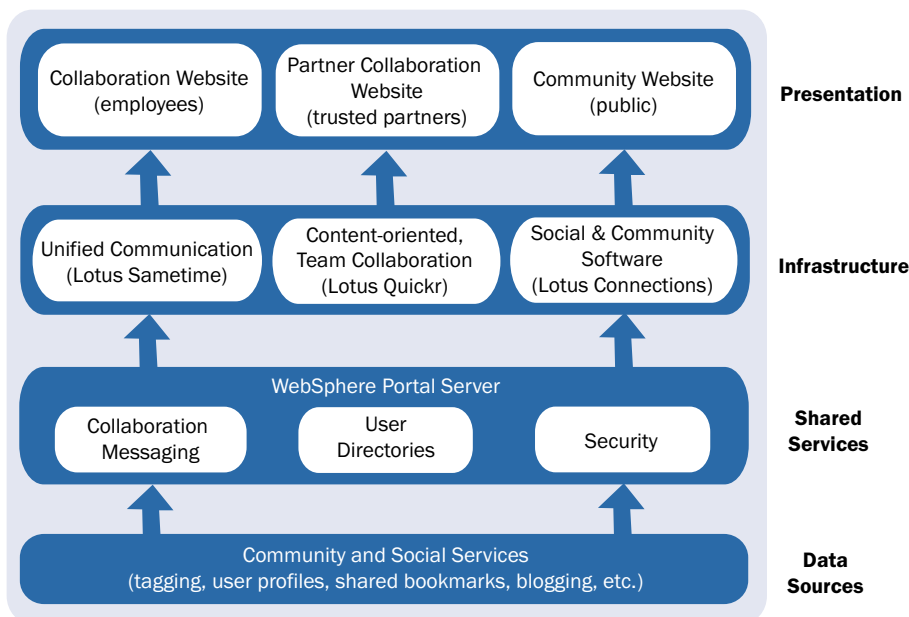


Figure 2.4: Internal structure of the IBM Collaboration Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

from social networking sources including tagging, user profiles, shared bookmarks, and more.

Next comes the WebSphere Portal layer, which is the foundation for this and all other IBM accelerators. On top of the WebSphere Portal layer is an infrastructure layer that provides three key functions. The “unified collaboration” function is implemented through Lotus Sametime. This software product provides instant, anytime access to people and information through three on-demand concepts: presence awareness, business instant messaging, and Web conferencing. Lotus Sametime provides communication that is more immediate (and takes fewer resources) than email but is less intrusive and often more convenient than a phone call.

The “content-oriented team collaboration” function is provided by Lotus Quickr. This software product is a Web 2.0-based offering that helps teams be more effective and deliver more results. It provides a repository enabling people to share information, documents, and even rich media—with colleagues, customers, and business partners—whether they are internal or external.

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IBM Lotus Connections implements the “social and community software” function of this layer. Lotus Connections software is a Web 2.0-based platform for business-grade social computing. It features Web 2.0-based components—activities, communities, dogear (social tagging), profiles, and blogs—that help people find expertise, share insights, and build new relationships based on their business needs.

The top layer of the model represents the way an organization presents information to users. This presentation may take the form of a “Collaboration Website” where employees would go to discover and participate in ongoing internal projects. Here is where employees would go to see an overview of the internal activity currently underway, discover items that have been routed to them for action through the company’s workflow system, find collaborative documents under development to which they can contribute, or monitor other items related to a collaborative effort.

Another way collaborative information may be presented by a business is through a “Partner Collaboration Website.” This is a site the business creates

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that can be accessed only by authorized business partners who have been entrusted to collaborate with company projects. It is a shared space where, for example, presentation materials related to a meeting might be posted. Or perhaps there is a wiki (i.e., a shared collection of information authored by a group) provided so all can share thoughts and ideas that can be gathered to be used—for example, in an upcoming meeting. And then after the meeting, action lists can be created and tracked in this shared space to ensure that actions assigned are completed in a timely manner.

Finally, through the “Community Website,” business personnel can collaborate with the general public or customers. Such collaboration often comes by forming a community of customers who have a strong and loyal interest in the products or services offered by the company. It is a place where like-minded customers can come together with business representatives and share product ideas, complaints, questions, adventures, suggestions, product or service reviews, tips, etc. Such community building can develop into a very rich and mutually beneficial environment fueling both customer passion and repeat sales.

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More on the Web

- [Lotus Sametime Technical Library](#)
- [Lotus Sametime Redbooks](#)
- [Lotus Sametime Wiki](#)
- [Lotus Quickr Features and Benefits on IBM.com](#)
- [Lotus Quickr System Requirements](#)
- [Lotus Connections Data Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Lotus Connections System Requirements](#)

IBM Content Accelerator

Business Websites began in the mid-1990s as little more than simple, static online brochures. Today, business Websites manipulate large bodies of dynamic content and provide customers, business partners, and employees with a rich set of applications that are central to business operations—and Website complexity is continuing to accelerate. During the same period, the tools used to construct, deploy, and manage Websites have gone through dramatic change from simple HTML editors to full-featured Web content management systems that allow for the creation and lifecycle management of Website content. Content Accelerator is today's state-of-the-art infrastructure

for developing and managing both internal and public Websites.

Business Value

The complete lifecycle management of Website content from development through approval, promotion, deployment, expiry, and removal can be a daunting task filled with misstarts, bottlenecks, and delays. Without an effective Web content management (WCM) system, Website content creation often becomes chaotic, and demands on IT staff spiral out of control. Visitors to a business's Website might have difficulty finding the information they need—or worse, might discover outdated content, view inaccurate pages, and never see the new promotion that might have turned that visitor into a customer. The challenge for a business is to keep its Website content easy to search, relevant, and secure without overtaxing the teams that create and maintain it. IBM Content Accelerator provides an infrastructure and a set of tools that help a business quickly create, manage, and promote critical information through internal and public Websites (Figure 2.5). Content Accelerator adds a full-featured WCM system and enterprise search capabilities on top of WebSphere Portal,

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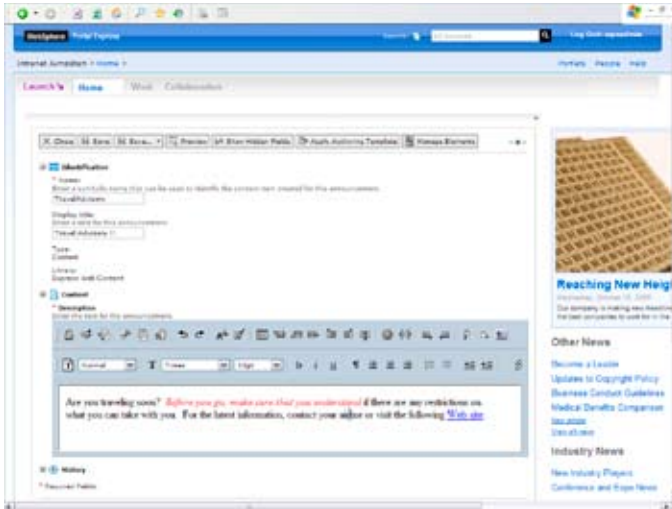


Figure 2.5: IBM Content Accelerator allows for in-line editing of Web content. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

which includes the lifecycle management of Website content development, approval, deployment, promotion, and removal.

IBM Content Accelerator and WebSphere Portal allow business users to create and maintain Websites and content without help from the IT department by providing features such as Site Wizard, Theme Customizer, improved rich text and in-line editing capabilities, custom workflow actions, etc. The new

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enhancements not only will ease the pains of a typical business user, but will empower them to create Websites, manage the look-and-feel of the Websites, create richer content, and adapt their content management process to their business workflow, thereby making the lives of the IT department much easier and virtually pain-free. “Out-of-the-box” portlets including Content Viewer portlets can easily be used to consistently display content and tools that enable reuse of content as appropriate and can help make content creators more productive. Additional “out-of-the-box” portlets can be used to consistently and contextually display content, which reduces development time. Still other tools guide users through the content-creation process, making content creators more productive.

Once created, the content is then automatically routed through an established approval process workflow, maintaining control and eliminating errors. Content can be tagged with publish dates and expiration dates so that Website visitors see only the most current information. Together, IBM Content Accelerator and WebSphere Portal provide secure, enhanced, and personalized Web experiences that improve

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visitation and increase conversion rates. They help organizations increase the value of their Websites by delivering real-time, personalized information while reducing the cost of deploying and managing Websites consumable through traditional browsers or mobile devices.

IBM Content Accelerator helps with the following:

- Provides tools that enable the control of authoring, workflow, management, and delivery processes
- Enables business experts to create Websites and content complete with site creation, in-line editing, and authoring capabilities
- Includes flexible Web content tools that support the dynamic delivery of personalized Web content, helping to extend the value of existing investments
- Facilitates rapid creation and easy management of robust Websites, intranets, extranets, and portals

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- Reduces the time it takes to get content from producers to consumers and speeds the Web content update and approval cycle
- Helps ensure consistency across the Website via templates and aligns content creation with existing business processes.

More on the Web

- [Content Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Content Accelerator Brochure \(PDF\)](#)
- [Audio Podcast covering Content Accelerator](#)

How It Works

IBM Content Accelerator consists of three software components that work together: IBM Lotus Web Content Management, Lotus Quickr, and IBM OmniFind Enterprise Edition. [Figure 2.6](#) shows an example of how The Content Accelerator components could be deployed to meet your business needs. In this example, content contributors cannot only create and manage content within IBM Lotus Web Content Management but also leverage simple yet powerful authoring tools that allow non-programmers to assemble information and rich media into what will eventually appear

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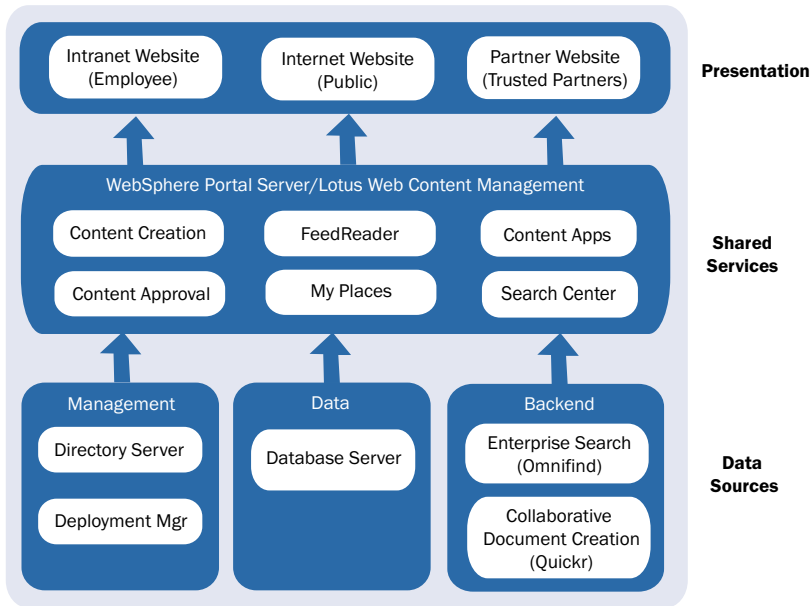


Figure 2.6: Internal structure of the IBM Content Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

on a Website. The content approval function provides a structured way to route content created by content editors through a well-defined approval process and manage the full lifecycle of Web content from creation to deployment to removal. Together, these functions help deliver faster time-to-value and lower project costs for deploying WebSphere Portal-based Websites.

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The “Enterprise Search” function is provided by OmniFind Enterprise Edition. This software product provides high-quality, scalable, security-rich enterprise searching that users can leverage to quickly find the information they need. By providing users with a way to sift through the sea of corporate information, the enterprise search function improves customer satisfaction and employee/business partner productivity, maximizing the value of the business’s portal and collaboration investments. OmniFind Enterprise Edition goes beyond just a simple search and is more of an information discovery technology.

The “Collaborative Document Creation” function is provided by the Lotus Quickr software. Lotus Quickr leverages Web 2.0 online collaboration concepts to help teams (be they local or geographically dispersed) work more efficiently and more effectively. Lotus Quickr provides a structured document repository enabling team members to share information, documents, and even rich media with colleagues, customers, and business partners whether they are inside or outside the corporate firewall. Once completed, the documents in the Lotus Quickr repository

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can be directly referenced (via a link) by Web pages published through WebSphere Portal.

The Presentation tier represents how the business makes this content available to those who need it. Content Accelerator is useful for deploying one or more Websites, whether they are available to the public over the Internet, available only to employees over an intranet, or available only to trusted business partners through a partner portal on the Internet that requires user ID/password to control access.

Although the underlying products that constitute Content Accelerator each offer powerful capabilities by themselves, it is the combination of these products working together that provides an enterprise with all the pieces of the puzzle it needs to deliver exceptional Web experiences that incorporate content and applications. For example, Lotus Web Content Management can publish content on the Web outside of WebSphere Portal. But by combining Lotus Web Content Management with WebSphere Portal and OmniFind Enterprise Edition, you can converge Web content, portals, and search. WebSphere Portal can be used to tailor the user Web experience within a

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portal page such that everyone logging into the same Web page sees a different version based on his or her role and has contextual access to appropriate tools and applications. Content Accelerator licensing allows you to deliver content generated in Lotus Web Content Management through the WebSphere Portal portlets rather than having to deliver that content through Lotus Web Content Management. And Lotus Web Content Management content can be created by users logging into their WebSphere Portal (via the Internet or an intranet). The content itself is also created and managed by users within the WebSphere Portal environment (via the Internet or an intranet). There are default portlets provided with WebSphere Portal that ease its integration with Omnifind Enterprise Edition and Lotus Web Content Management.

And beyond simplified software licensing and cost savings, there are functional advantages of purchasing Content Accelerator over purchasing all the underlying products separately. For example, when you buy Content Accelerator the role-based security functions of WebSphere Portal are already integrated with the other products. If you were to buy the underlying

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products separately, you would have to create a security system from scratch.

More on the Web

- [Lotus Web Content Management Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Lotus Web Content Management Information Center](#)
- [Lotus Web Content Management System Requirements](#)
- [Lotus Quickr Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Lotus Quickr System Requirements](#)
- [Lotus Quickr Features and Benefits](#)
- [Lotus Omnifind Enterprise Edition Info on IBM.com](#)



Lotus Web Content Management
(4:44)

IBM Dashboard Accelerator

Once the leadership of an organization has established a winning strategy, the difference between success and failure lies in its ability to execute that strategy. Yet monitoring and managing the effectiveness of the day-to-day operations in pursuing that strategy can be quite challenging. Ad hoc tools such as home-grown spreadsheets or periodic reports are often used in an attempt to monitor and report performance

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metrics, but such unstructured and static approaches often create their own set of problems over time, leaving both management and employees with ineffective feedback. To address this need, IBM has developed a solution called IBM Dashboard Accelerator that provides dynamic, real-time performance against key industry metrics.

Business Value

IBM Dashboard Accelerator is a software product that augments WebSphere Portal Server to provide management, employees, and trading partners with dynamic, real-time information integrated from disparate data sources, yielding a set of key performance indicators that gauge the effectiveness of strategy execution. It provides flexible tools for deploying dynamic dashboards and scorecards that help a business link strategic objectives to real-time performance information. IBM Dashboard Accelerator helps management make better real-time decisions, enables employees to act more effectively, and increases the organization's focus on the things that are most important to achieving business goals. Using the tools provided in IBM Dashboard Accelerator, executives and other members of the organization are able to monitor their

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own goals and objectives in real time, link their objectives to those of others in the organization, and gain an understanding of how their particular objectives relate to the overall strategy. These dashboards are delivered to users through portals customized for each user based on their specific needs and can be accessed from a corporate intranet, traditional browsers, mobile devices, Lotus Notes client, Lotus Sametime client, or in IBM Mashup Center. Alerts can automatically be sent via SMS (short message service) messaging or email to prompt action before issues become critical.

By pulling real-time performance data from multiple sources and presenting it in a visually intuitive way, IBM Dashboard Accelerator enables business leaders to provide an environment for employees, business units, and trading partners that is conducive to successful strategy execution. Dashboards use many types of graphics to present key information including charts, scorecards, maps, gauges, and animated flash, and users can decide which graphics to use on the fly. Users can drill up and down to the desired level of detail. To help jumpstart Dashboard Accelerator deployments, IBM has developed a catalog of


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prebuilt, ready-to-use dashboards available at no additional charge. [Figure 2.7](#) shows an example dashboard developed with Dashboard Accelerator for use by a county government.

IBM Dashboard Accelerator helps with the following:

- Drives alignment around a common, visible set of performance goals

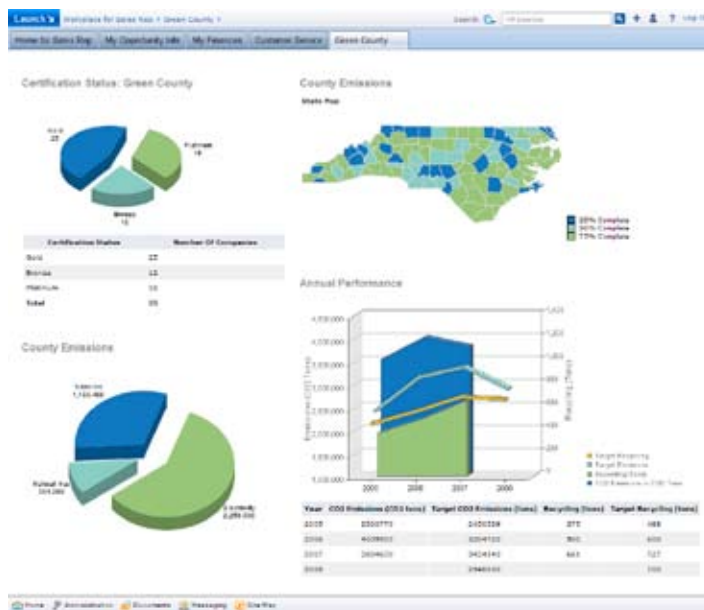
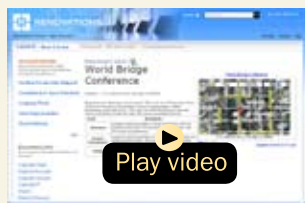


Figure 2.7: An example of a dashboard developed for a county government. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

- Allows you to build dashboards once and deploy them to the platforms that best suit your needs—without the need for programming
- Speeds time-to-value with builders that can enable you to quickly and easily surface business intelligence data
- Leverages intuitive developer tools to customize dashboards to meet your users' needs
- Provides deeper insight into the mission-critical information that affects your entire organization.

More on the Web

- [Dashboard Accelerator Overview on IBM.com](#)
- [Dashboard KPI Catalog](#)
- [Dashboard Accelerator \(2-page flyer\)](#)
- [Dashboard Accelerator Solution Sheet](#)
- [Dashboard Webcast and Podcast Library](#)



Content, Dashboard, & Collaboration Demo (4:59)

How It Works

IBM Dashboard Accelerator consists of WebSphere Portal and Lotus ActiveInsight software. [Figure 2.8](#) de-

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picts the underlying structure of a Dashboard Accelerator installation. At the bottom of the figure you find the data that will feed into the dashboard displays. As depicted, this data can be pulled from many different and incompatible sources (i.e., Lotus, JDBC Data Access API, Seibel, Oracle, PeopleSoft, Java, Oasis WSRP, Axis, etc.), helping to integrate what would

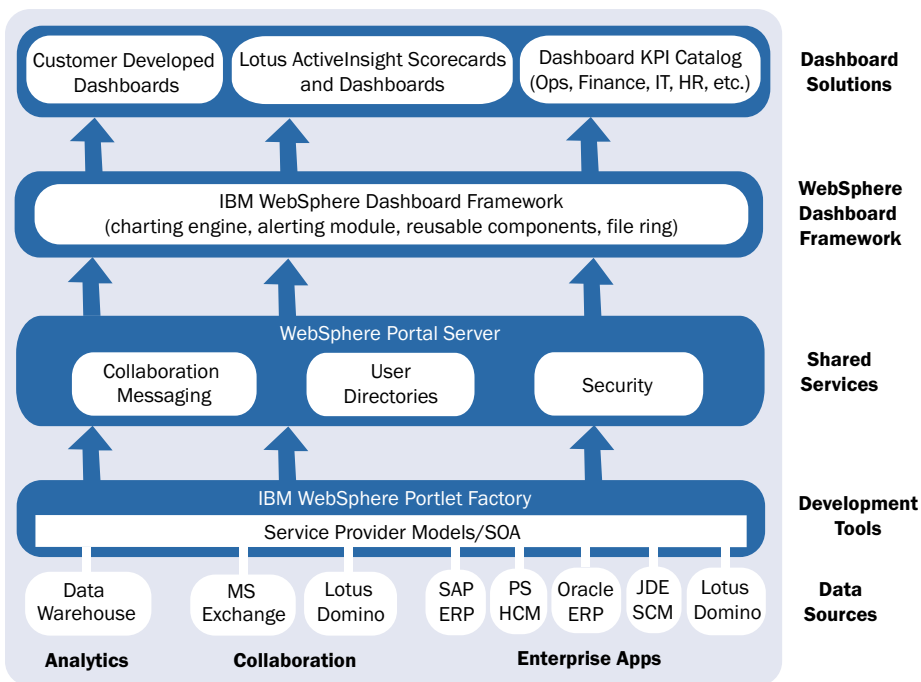


Figure 2.8: Internal structure of the IBM Dashboard Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

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otherwise be disparate views of the organization's performance.

Immediately above the data layer is the WebSphere Portlet Factory. WebSphere Portlet Factory is the component of WebSphere Portal Server that provides a Java-based, rapid application development environment used to build customized applications known as portlets. These portlets can be added to a user's portals to provide the specific functions and information each user needs. WebSphere Portlet Factory provides ease of use, prebuilt integration with applications such as Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino, SAP, PeopleSoft, etc., along with other advanced development features, all of which help speed up the deployment of a WebSphere Portal project.

The next layer is the WebSphere Portal Server itself. The Dashboard Accelerator sits on top of the WebSphere Portal Server, extending its function. The first component of the Dashboard Accelerator is the Dashboard Framework. This framework extends the capabilities of the WebSphere Portlet Factory by adding dashboard-specific functions such as high-fidelity

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charting, flexible filtering, alerting capabilities, and a set of dashboard-specific design components called “builders.” These tools allow for the creation of dashboard applications with very little programming effort, speeding up dashboard deployment and time-to-business value. For example, there is a “business intelligence builder” within the Dashboard Framework that simplifies the construction of more meaningful dashboards that combine information from Business Intelligence tools (such as Cognos, Business Objects, and Hyperion) together with other transactional, collaborative, or operational data to provide greater business insight. The builder also allows you to see a report that was generated from one of the BI tools and drill through multi-dimensional data that is in context to a business issue within the dashboard.

Above the framework layer is the “Lotus ActiveInsight Scorecards and Dashboards” component of Dashboard Accelerator. This component allows users to set up goals and objectives for each individual within the organization and tracks progress against these objectives. Business people can view their scorecards to quickly see how they are performing, and managers can assign goals and objectives to their

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employees and monitor their performance. This component also provides built-in collaborative services to help rapidly resolve actual or projected plan exceptions. Users can set up automatic alerts that are sent whenever important business conditions arise that need immediate attention. These alerts can be sent via email, over the Web, or to a user's mobile device via SMS (short message service).

At the top right is the Dashboard Accelerator KPI (key performance indicators) Catalog—a collection of reusable dashboards available at no charge to Dashboard Accelerator users. In it are prebuilt dashboards for many industries including automotive, banking, finance, insurance, healthcare, governments, and others. There are also cross-industry dashboards for finance, human resources, sales, executives, information technology, and other types of users. The Dashboard KPI Catalog provides a set of prepackaged, role-based dashboards to help jump-start a deployment. These prepackaged dashboards are ready to deploy as provided, or they can be modified to suit the exact needs of the organization.

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At the top left is the Customer Developed Dashboards component, which represents any custom dashboard applications that the user's IT department may have developed to meet its own specific needs.

IBM Dashboard Accelerator can be deployed on a wide range of servers including Windows, AIX, Linux, i5/OS, Sun, zLinux, and zOS. Dashboards can be developed once and then deployed on multiple client platforms including WebSphere Portal, WebSphere Application Server, Lotus Notes, Lotus Sametime, Lotus Quickr teamroom (delivering to devices like BlackBerry), Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and others. The latest release supports widget events for creation of situational applications and extends widget customization capabilities to business users, while providing seamless deployment to IBM Mashup Center. By using one tool to create both dashboard portlets and widgets, Dashboard Accelerator helps companies reduce development efforts and speed time-to-value.

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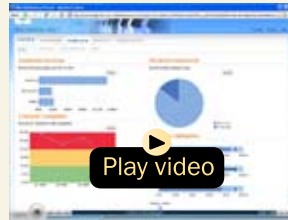
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More on the Web

- [Dashboard Accelerator Wiki](#)
- [Dashboard Accelerator and Business Intelligence](#)
- [Dashboard Framework Overview on IBM.com](#)
- [Dashboard Accelerator Solution Sheet](#)
- [ActiveInsight \(Info Center\)](#)
- [Lotus ActiveInsight and Dashboard Framework Developers Forum](#)
- [WebSphere Portlet Factory](#)



ActiveInsight Demo
(7:29)

IBM Learning Accelerator

The effective delivery of education to employees, partners, and customers is critical to business success. Ensuring that they have the skills they need to be effective and efficient can produce a competitive advantage. IBM Learning Accelerator is a tool to help more effectively deliver and manage education.

Business Value

IBM Learning Accelerator provides organizations with delivery of online training (e-learning) as well as classroom training. It starts with an easy-to-browse catalog that helps users find the education they

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need. Then there are tools to help streamline student enrollment and manage course rosters, test results, certifications, etc., saving administrative headaches and costs. The Learning Accelerator is designed to work with collaboration tools such as Lotus Quickr, Lotus Sametime, and others, which allows a business to further enhance the learning environment with real-time Web conferencing, document sharing, teamrooms, etc.

Learning Accelerator helps with the following:

- Helps administrators design curricula for specific job categories, regions, or departments
- Includes tools to help you analyze skills gaps so prescribed training can directly address development needs
- Streamlines management of courses, curricula, and enrollment
- Delivers a personalized, online learning environment for “just-in-time” learning
- Enables administrators to easily manage learning data such as test results and employee activity

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- Enables you to integrate powerful learning tools into your existing portal environment, hastening time to value.

More on the Web

- [Learning Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)
- [Learning Accelerator Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

How It Works

The Learning Accelerator consists of core LMS capabilities built on WebSphere Portal. [Figure 2.9](#) shows the internal structure of the Learning Accelerator. At the bottom of the figure we have the data sources for the Learning Accelerator. This data includes a “course catalog” that holds all of the details about each course made available through the Learning Accelerator, the “course schedule” showing when education is offered, and “course rosters” to keep track of who is enrolled in which classes. “Certifications” holds details about which certifications are held by each student.

Above the data sources layer is the “Learning Server” layer. This layer contains the infrastructure provided

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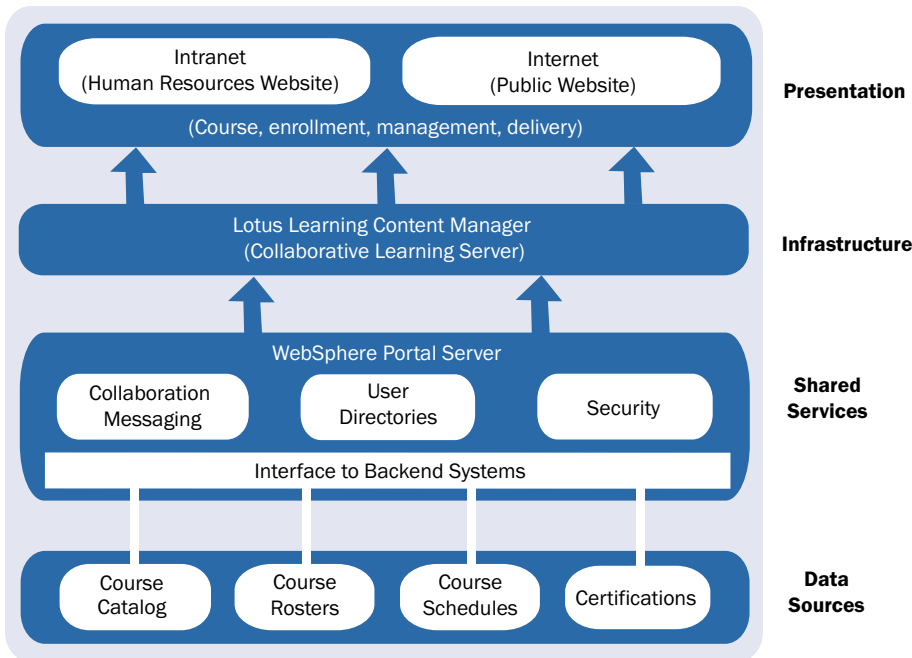


Figure 2.9: Internal structure of the IBM Learning Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

by the Learning Accelerator for course delivery, scheduling, and management. Above the Learning Accelerator lies the WebSphere Portal Server which is common to all accelerators.

The top layer is where users access the functions provided by the Learning Accelerator. If the education is

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for internal use, a “Human Resources” portal would typically leverage portlets developed for course enrollment, management, and delivery mechanisms for employees. If the education is offered to the public, an Internet Website can serve as the delivery vehicle.

More on the Web

- [Learning Accelerator for Portal on IBM.com](#)
- [Collaborative Learning Technical Documents](#)

IBM Mashup Accelerator

Today, software tools are reaching for the elusive goal of allowing less technically skilled business people to create their own situational applications—a capability that promises to fuel an explosion of innovation and significantly reduce IT costs. IBM Mashup Accelerator represents a new generation of easy-to-use tools that let people remix information from anywhere to gain business insight and do their jobs more intelligently and more effectively.

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Business Value

In the past, the level of customization required for the IT department to build applications for individuals made development of these highly customized applications far too expensive and labor intensive. This resulted in a large backlog of requests for small applications from business people. Now, less technically skilled users can quickly create mashups to solve a specific problem and change the application as their needs evolve over time. IBM Mashup Accelerator ([Figure 2.10](#)) builds on this by bringing the notion of user empowerment to a whole new level while also delivering cost savings and speed. A cycle that lowers costs begins with empowering a line-of-business user to assemble mashups that combine enterprise, personal, departmental, and Web information. Users can try out a mashup in a Mashup Center sandbox environment, then enable IT to “promote” proven mashup applications so that all users can benefit from them. This cycle also accelerates organizational capabilities to enable individual innovation, harness it, and share it back across the enterprise as best practices.

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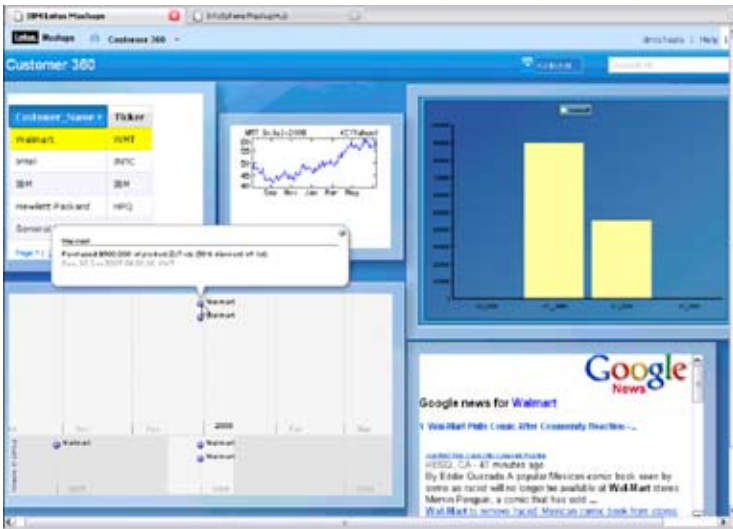


Figure 2.10: Example of IBM Mashup Center screen showing customer information of use to a sales person. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

IBM Mashup Accelerator provides:

- A rich set of out-of-the-box widgets that enables business users to assemble disparate information into applications that help deliver new insights
- A lightweight, easy-to-deploy environment where users and departments can incubate portal applications, promoting the best of them

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- A feed-generation engine for unlocking enterprise, Web, personal, and departmental information
- Unlimited access to a robust widget development environment for creating custom widgets
- A mashup catalog, with built-in community features for discovering and sharing mashups, widgets, and feeds
- A data mashup editor for transforming and remixing information into net-new feeds
- The ability to syndicate content by supporting seamless embedding of widgets and pages into any browser-based page
- A feed control module for providing rate-limiting policies on feeds, IP blocking, and masking of sensitive information.

More on the Web

- [Press Release Introducing IBM Mashup Accelerator](#)

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How It Works

IBM Mashup Accelerator helps speed the integration of WebSphere Portal and IBM Mashup Center. [Figure 2.11](#) shows the structure of the Mashup Accelerator. When users build mashup pages, they can pull from many data sources as depicted at the bottom of the figure. Data flows to the Mashup Center are estab-

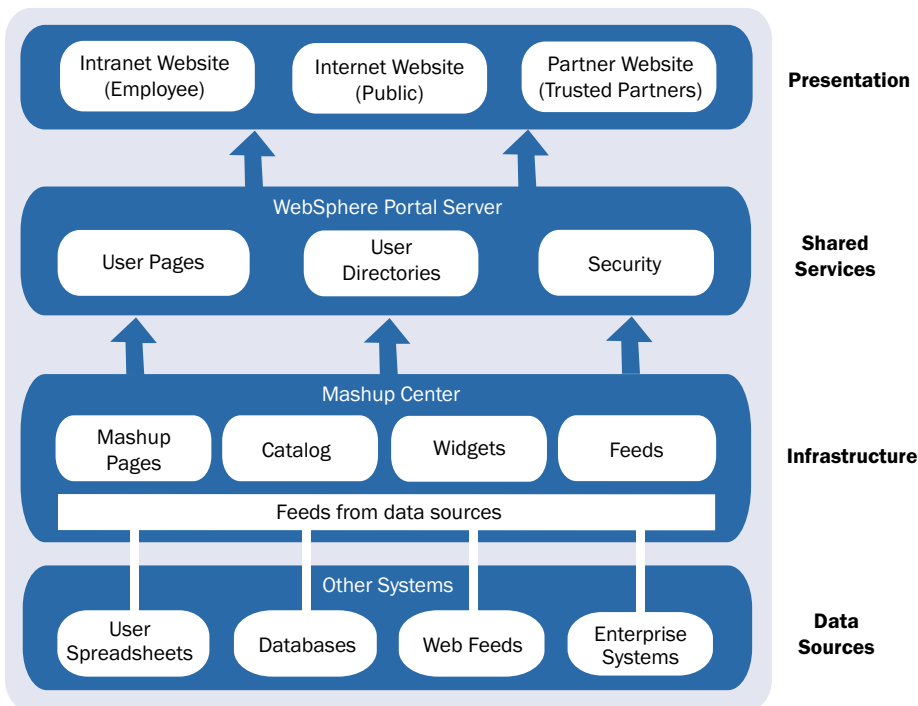


Figure 2.11: Internal architecture of the IBM Mashup Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

lished in the form of feeds (RSS, Atom, etc.). These feeds can pull data from many different sources ranging from enterprise applications (e.g., DB2, SAP, Information Server, etc.) to individual spreadsheets created by a single user. These feeds provide data to widgets (i.e., small snippets of customizable code) that can be included and interconnected on a mashup page. In fact, there is an entire catalog of widgets provided with Mashup Center. Mashup pages can then be deployed to WebSphere Portal. Pages can be shared to other portal users. With this capability, organizations can now promote a mashup page into a production portal environment for wider use.

More on the Web

- [IBM Mashup Center Info on IBM.com](#)

IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator

There are 2.7 billion mobile devices in use to which enterprises could make their portal content available. IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator software gives mobile users, on virtually every Web-enabled mobile device, access to these portals.

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Business Value

IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator gives mobile users access to portals via a highly navigable, rich Web experience (Figure 2.12). Business services, content, and commerce applications can be accessed from virtually anywhere using the same open, Web-based integrated business services traditionally used on laptop and desktop computers provided through IBM WebSphere Portal software. Enterprises therefore potentially can gain marketplace advantage, increase their



Figure 2.12: IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator enables smart phones like the iPhone, Blackberry, etc. access to needed information. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

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customers' loyalty, and increase revenue. And since the software enables developers to write once and render on multiple devices through device-independent authoring, enterprises can deliver Web content quickly—even on the newest devices—without touching business logic, which saves time and expense.

Here are some IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator highlights:

- Extends WebSphere Portal to a wide range of mobile devices
- Delivers the promise of “write once, render many” to a broad range of mobile devices with device-independent authoring
- Utilizes a continuously updated device repository and adapts to new devices without any changes to the existing content
- Accesses multi-channel applications to extend business-to-consumer (B2C) services to mobile users
- Represents a set of pages with menu links (text or icons) that open a sub-menu or content page for flexible navigation

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- Provides support for multiple platforms and multiple databases.

More on the Web

- [Mobile Portal Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)
- [WebSphere Everyplace Mobile Portal Enable Info on IBM.com](#)

How It Works

IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator consists of two components: a multi-channel server, and a device profile repository and subscription service—the IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator Device Update—which provides updates to that device repository. This offering provides an integrated, server-side, mobile front-end to WebSphere Portal software and enables organizations to extend the role-based personalized delivery services of the portal to mobile portal users across a broad range of mobile devices worldwide. This technology separates portlet development from page layout and branding and allows for the optimization of the content based on the device specific capabilities of over 5,600 different mobile device types without requiring device-dependent authoring. “Write once, render many” is enabled by leveraging sup-


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port for device-independent markup language called XML-based Device Independent Markup Extensions (XDIME). The Mobile Portal toolkit, provided with the IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator, enables developers to create standards-based XDIME portlets using a Portlet Create wizard. The multi-channel server engine interprets the standards-based XDIME portlet layout and policy definitions and optimizes and renders portlet information appropriate to the characteristics of the mobile devices. The offering also provides support for easy rendering of Lotus Web Content Management content to mobile devices, and includes business-ready XDIME portlets to accelerate mobile implementations. [Figure 2.13](#) shows the internal structure of IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator.

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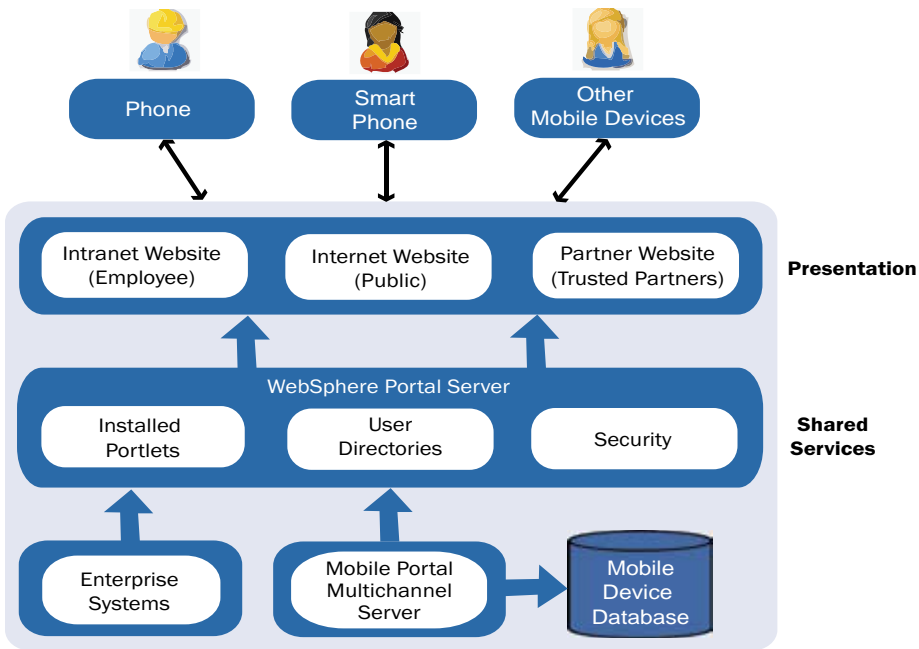


Figure 2.13: Internal structure of IBM Mobile Portal Accelerator. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

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IBM Accelerators and Your Business

This chapter highlights three hypothetical organizations as they leverage IBM accelerators to meet specific business needs.

Kinson and IBM Dashboard Accelerator

Here we will explore how a mid-sized manufacturing company gains real-time insight into its manufacturing operations with IBM Dashboard Accelerator.

The Situation

Kinson Manufacturing is a supplier to the auto industry worldwide. The company specializes in the development and manufacturing of intelligent control systems used in hybrid cars to seamlessly coordinate the use of gasoline and electric motors automatically

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in real time based on instantaneous driving demands and other variables such as battery charge level. The intelligent control system is an electronic circuit assembly and is central to achieving high levels of both efficiency and performance. Kinson is a privately held company with approximately 150 employees.

Kinson's newest product is called the Nova Intelligent Control System (or Nova for short). It represents the latest technology and has many benefits over earlier control systems. Soon after its introduction, Nova was selected by a major auto maker as the control system for a new flagship line of hybrids. For Kinson, this was a huge deal with a brand-new customer.

The auto maker had long been focused on optimizing its supply chain by leveraging the efficiencies offered by the "just-in-time inventory" model. With this model, suppliers are expected to deliver their specified quantity of components precisely when they are needed and not before. This lowers the average inventory levels at the auto maker, which in turn lowers manufacturing costs.

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Right after being selected to be a new supplier for the auto maker, Kinson was introduced to the auto maker's extranet supplier portal, which includes many useful functions. One of the applications available to suppliers through the portal is called "PlantView," which was implemented using IBM WebSphere Portal and IBM Dashboard Accelerator. PlantView provides a visual representation of the real-time information about the manufacturing work flow at the auto maker tailored to each supplier.

When a Kinson employee signs into the auto maker's portal, the PlantView dashboard application provides a graphical, real-time look at the number of Nova Intelligent Control System assemblies currently on hand at the auto manufacturer. PlantView also allows Kinson to see the auto maker's daily short- and mid-term projected need for Nova inventory in graphical form. So Kinson can see—in real time—exactly what the auto maker's situation is and, more importantly, can plan ahead to make sure the precise number of Nova control systems are delivered to the auto maker on the exact day they are needed.

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As Kinson begins to use the PlantView Dashboard, the Kinson management team quickly sees how helpful it is in monitoring inventory levels at the auto maker and in planning its own production of Nova assemblies. In fact, the Kinson production team realizes that having its own internal dashboard would help it gain tighter control and reduce costs on its own manufacturing floor, so Kinson puts together a project team to investigate the possibility.

The Solution

Right now, Kinson uses Linux servers to run its business, and it has manufacturing resource planning application (MRP) installed. Although the MRP system helps Kinson plan the future production of Nova assemblies, it lacks real-time information about what is happening on the manufacturing floor at any given instant in time. Herein lies the opportunity for an internal Kinson dashboard. So Kinson decides to implement WebSphere Portal and Dashboard Accelerator in its own business on the Linux platform, since it is already familiar.

First, Kinson decides to leverage several of the pre-built dashboards provided by the KPI Catalog for its executives to facilitate business decision making

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right away. Kinson also decides to develop an additional custom dashboard application for the production team, which they will call the “RightNow” dashboard. It will provide users with a real-time view of what is happening on the manufacturing floor, providing valuable insight to the entire company day-by-day. To be consistent with the auto maker’s portal, Kinson’s “RightNow” dashboard will use the same style of graphics to represent the on-hand component inventory from suppliers and Kinson’s projected manufacturing schedule.

Figure 3.1 depicts the Dashboard Accelerator solution put in place at Kinson. At the bottom left of the figure we see the Directory Server, which will validate the identity of all portal users and will provide the necessary security functions. At the bottom right we see the Linux server that is running Kinson’s MRP system, which will be a key source of information for the RightNow dashboard (for example, inventory levels for all parts of an assembly).

Using customized portlets developed with the tools provided with Dashboard Accelerator, information from the MRP system and other sources is fed to

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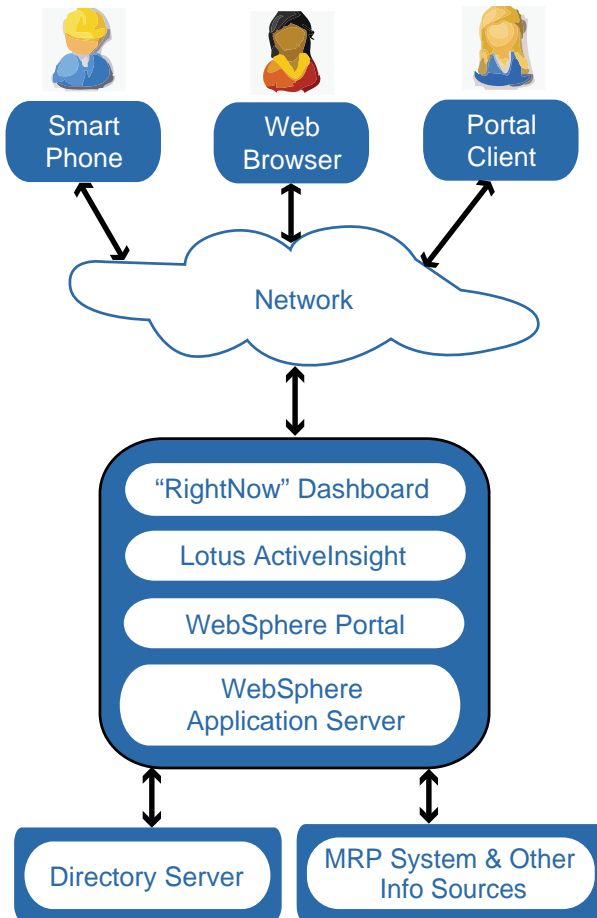


Figure 3.1: IBM Dashboard Accelerator at Kinson deployed on a Linux Cluster. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

WebSphere Application Server. Custom dashboard elements created using Lotus ActiveInsight populate the RightNow portal, providing an intuitive real-time

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look at key manufacturing metrics. For example, production managers can see at a glance the current parts on hand for an assembly. If any of the parts used in that assembly fall below a predefined minimum inventory level, the dashboard indicator for that assembly will turn red and flash. The production manager could then drill down from within the Right-Now dashboard to see exactly which parts are running low and take appropriate action.

Aided by this new real-time view of key performance indicators related to the manufacturing flow, Kinson's management team is able to make more informed decisions, saving time and money and providing better customer service. Further, manufacturing managers can share this real-time view with Kinson's suppliers to achieve better communications, thus streamlining the supply chain.

Now the auto maker's PlantView portal provides Kinson with a solid understanding of its requirements, and the internal KinView portal helps manufacturing have a better real-time view of its own manufacturing flow. Together, these dashboards allow Kinson to closely monitor customer needs and ensure that

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its own manufacturing floor is efficiently building only what is needed, thus reducing inventory carrying costs. The real-time view these dashboards provide allows Kinson to react more quickly to changes and to work more closely with its suppliers.

More on the Web

- [IBM and Linux Servers](#)
- [IBM Dashboard Accelerator Info on IBM.com](#)

Tachyon and IBM Business Process Accelerator

In this section, we explore a hypothetical case study of Tachyon University based on actual Business Process Accelerator deployments.

The Situation

Tachyon University is a world-class educational and research institution founded in the late 19th century. Today, Tachyon serves over 35,000 students and has a worldwide reputation for excellence. Tachyon's faculty of over 6,500 delivers a wide range of both un-

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dergraduate and postgraduate programs to an international student body.

Tachyon's success has led to steady growth over time. However, there is room for improvement in the university's operations. Students, faculty, and staff often find that the methods for performing various tasks, from registration and paying fees to ordering equipment and onboarding new employees, are outdated and inefficient, creating frustrating bottlenecks. These outdated methods increase costs, impact the productivity of all involved, and are not in keeping with Tachyon's reputation as a leading university.

As such, Tachyon's administration formed a task force to review the school's methods and to come up with a recommendation. The task force included representatives from administration, faculty, student body, information technology (IT) department, and other areas of the university.

After some analysis of existing procedures, the task force began to see that the incompatible computer application programs in use throughout Tachyon, along with many paper-based systems, were causing inefficiencies and delays. Tachyon's dependence on

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incompatible computer applications resulted from an evolutionary effort over many years to address specific operational needs with the best application programs available at the time. This type of evolutionary proliferation of incompatible application programs is not uncommon in organizations with a long history. And although most of these legacy application programs remain vital to the operations of many university departments, they also create problems. For example, each application program requires a unique user ID and password from people who use multiple application programs every day to do their jobs. Further, each application program presents the user with its own unique user interface, so training employees is made more complicated. And information captured in one application program cannot easily be shared with other application programs, often resulting in duplicate data that easily can get out of sync and introduce errors.

The paper-based systems were also taking their toll at Tachyon. Paper forms often were used to gather information either at the start of a process or at various steps along the way. As we have all experienced, bits of paper can sometimes get lost, which would


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then interrupt a process. In addition, auditing often was difficult because although every paper form was filed, it was sometimes hard to find what was needed when someone needed it. New processes were difficult to implement because everything had to be built from scratch with a new form and new set of procedures; there was no opportunity for reuse. It was clear that these paper-based processes were causing problems while at the same time projecting an undesirable “old-fashioned” image of Tachyon.

Since Tachyon University had long been an IBM customer, IBM was asked to join the task force, help study the problem, and propose a solution. Together, the team crafted a vision for the future for Tachyon that would unify access to all legacy systems and provide flexibility. Tachyon would need to easily change its business processes to adapt to the changing needs of its students, faculty, and staff over time. The overarching concept was to provide a unifying “window” to make it easier for all types of users to get the information they needed, when and where they needed it.

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The Solution

The implementation of the team’s vision centered on developing a university-wide portal solution, which they named “OneView,” through which students, faculty, and staff could easily and securely access all of the university systems. The OneView portal would allow a user to “sign on” once with a single user ID and password and gain access to all university systems for which he or she was authorized without having to sign on to each individual university system (known as “single sign-on”). Once signed on to the OneView portal, users would be presented with a consistent “view” of the appropriate university systems based on their role at the university (e.g., student, administrator, faculty, etc.). The OneView portal would therefore be a “role-based” portal. Users would be able to further customize their portal view to achieve maximum productivity and improve user satisfaction. In addition, the OneView portal would be the place users go to check their email, send an instant message, work with their calendar, complete and submit electronic forms, collaborate on document creation, etc.

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Developing and deploying OneView would be no small task given that there were over 40,000 users and many different legacy application programs that would need to be accessed in a consistent way through the portal. So it was clear from the start that an enterprise-class foundation was needed, and IBM Business Process Accelerator fit the bill. Since Tachyon has long been an IBM mainframe customer, they chose to deploy OneView on the same IBM mainframe architecture platform on Linux on System z using virtualization to balance workloads and segregate function as appropriate. The necessary customization work would be provided by Tachyon's IT department and a local IBM Business Partner.

Figure 3.2 shows a basic block diagram of Tachyon's OneView portal solution. Business Process Accelerator includes the WebSphere Portal and Lotus Forms eforms capabilities. The Lotus Forms component of Business Process Accelerator is a key component in the OneView portal. Lotus Forms will enable the construction of online electronic forms (called eforms) that will replace the existing paper forms currently commonplace at Tachyon, thus automating manual processes. The Lotus Forms eforms provide

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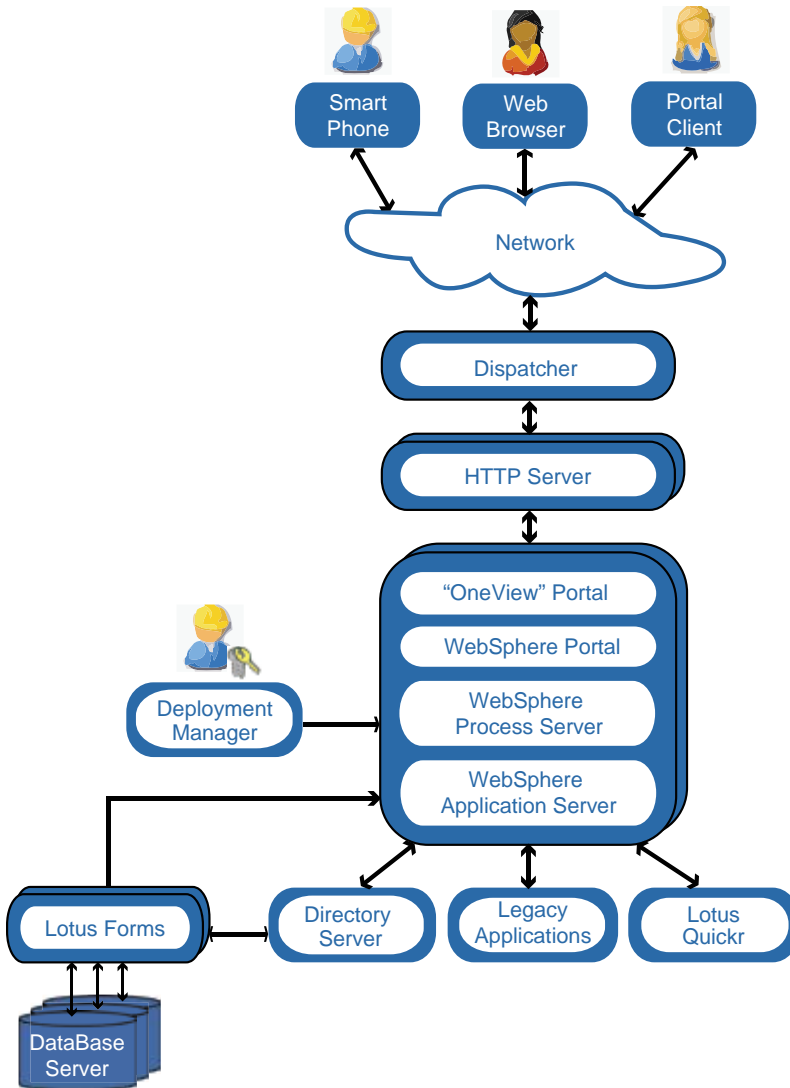


Figure 3.2: IBM Business Process Accelerator implemented on an IBM System z server at Tachyon. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

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an easy-to-use front end to the business process, enabling users to enter information that can be integrated with the back end to initiate the associated business process. The eforms themselves will be stored using Lotus Quickr as the repository, and the data within each eform will be extracted and passed to WebSphere Process Server so that the appropriate business process path decisions can be made in real time by the system. Once initiated, the status of a particular business process can be viewed to see how far from completion it is or who may need to take the next step required to complete the process. IBM Business Process Accelerator therefore provides many of the building blocks the team will need to construct the OneView portal solution.

The “Directory Server” function provides user ID and password authentication for each user of all university applications. Also shown near the bottom are the “Legacy Systems,” which represent the many application programs used by Tachyon before the new portal solution was implemented and which will continue to be vital systems for the foreseeable future. These legacy systems contain the data vital to day-to-day operations at Tachyon from registration and student


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records to accounting and human resources information. To allow OneView to interact with these legacy systems, the OneView project will leverage the service oriented architecture (SOA) capabilities inherent in WebSphere. Using the SOA model as the foundation for OneView will make it easier to exchange information with the many legacy systems without having to modify those systems. SOA will also afford Tachyon the ability to make changes to the OneView solution easily and more quickly as needs change.

WebSphere Application Server provides the SOA foundation of the OneView solution. WebSphere Process Server enables Tachyon administrators to define, deploy, and monitor the steps necessary to perform each specific business process being implemented. The business rules manager provided in WebSphere Process Server will oversee each business process and route the flow or indicate when to send an email to alert the appropriate person when action is needed based on the data in the eforms. WebSphere Process Server will also provide a window into an organization's business processes and a way to manage them. WebSphere Portal will pro-

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vide an enterprise-class foundation for OneView as it does for all IBM accelerator deployments.

Given that the OneView project is large in scope and affects all areas of a very busy university, the team came up with a plan to roll OneView out in small steps over time. Carefully selected business processes will be implemented and tested one or two at a time before moving on to the next business process. This approach will minimize the disruption of university operations as OneView steadily progresses, providing incremental benefit all along the way.

More on the Web

- [IBM Business Process Accelerator](#)
- [Lotus Quickr](#)
- [Linux on Z](#)

Graystone and IBM Content Accelerator

This section looks at a fictional company called Graystone Travel and how it leveraged IBM Content Accelerator and WebSphere Portal to expand a successful marketing program.

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The Situation

Graystone Travel is an online business that serves the travel needs of thousands worldwide. The firm has 400 employees and has been experiencing consistent growth over the last decade. It provides self-service functions so that customers can compare airfares from multiple airlines, reserve flights, compare hotel accommodations and make reservations, reserve rental cars, and more. Customers can post reviews on their sites, which provides the customer community with more information to help them make travel decisions.

More recently, Graystone has started negotiating special rates with selected airlines, hotels, rental car companies, and other specialty companies and then creating themed travel packages called “Escapes.” Each Escape has its own special themed section within the Graystone Website complete with engaging graphics, maps, music, interactive 360-degree images, videos, and more. All this makes for a compelling sales environment for visitors. Based on the excellent response so far, Graystone wants to grow the number of Escape packages and increase the cadence of their introduction.

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One inhibitor to that is the labor-intensive nature of both the creation and the management of the specialized Web content needed to support each Escape package. After the often-arduous process of negotiating special pricing and defining a new Escape package, the Graystone team is essentially having to build a “mini-Website” for each Escape package from scratch using very basic tools. It is clear that Graystone will need new Web content management tools to support the expansion of the promising Escape program.

The Solution

After evaluating various alternatives, Graystone chose to use IBM Content Accelerator as the foundation for its Web content management solution because it provides all of the pieces needed. [Figure 3.3](#) depicts the Graystone solution. Since Graystone currently uses IBM Power Systems and the AIX operating system, IBM Content Accelerator will also be deployed on AIX.

Starting at the bottom is the directory server, which will validate the identity of all of the Graystone Website users (both internal employees and travel club

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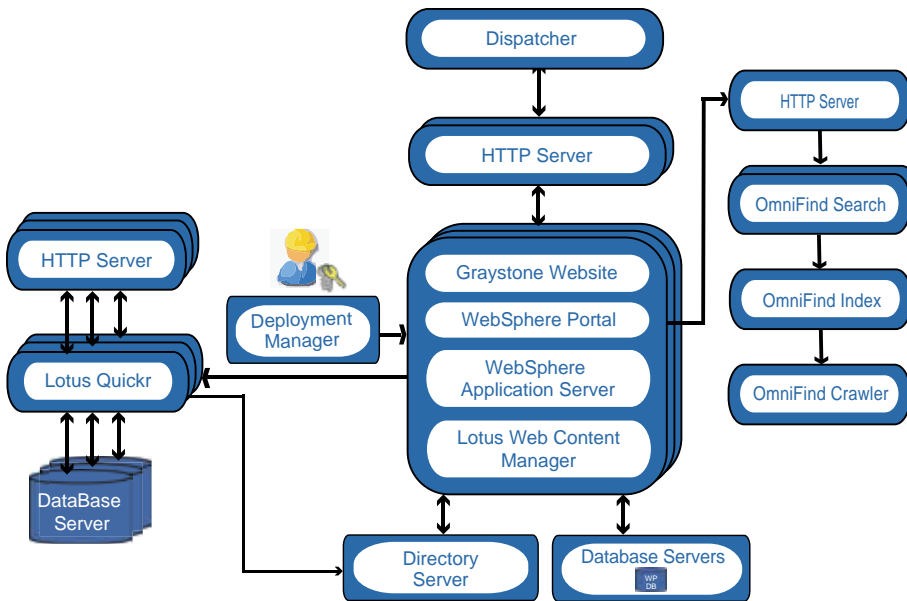


Figure 3.3: IBM Content Accelerator implemented on an IBM Power server for Graystone. (Click [here](#) to enlarge.)

members), providing the necessary security information to dynamically grant role-based and individual-access control functions. The database servers will provide the storage repository for all Web content and related information. Just above the directory and database servers layer is the primary server cluster that houses the Lotus Web Content Management component of IBM Content Accelerator and the

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WebSphere infrastructure used to deliver the Graystone Website.

When authorized employees sign in to the Graystone Website, their customized portal screen will provide them access to Lotus Web Content Management. This is the application that allows nontechnical Graystone marketing staff to build and manage all content needed in the special Website sections for each Escape package. The content repository allows for reuse of content as well as the ability to create new sections of the site based on templates, speeding deployment of new Escape pages and increasing productivity. For example, Graystone will build a Caribbean Escape package that will feature island-style graphics, underwater videos, Caribbean music, and more. Later, when Graystone decides to roll out another Escape package to the Greek islands, for example, employees will be able to use the Site Wizard function provided in WebSphere Portal to copy, modify, and reuse many of the Caribbean Escape elements (site structure, page templates, terms & conditions text, logos, generic travel photos, an audio message from the CEO pitching the Escape Travel membership, etc.). This reuse will help Graystone

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meet its goal of rolling out a series of Escape packages more quickly, more efficiently, and with greater quality. Nontechnical users can use the Theme Manager function in WebSphere Portal to further customize the look and feel (e.g., change color schemes) of the Greek Islands Escape content pages without involving the IT department. The ability provided by Lotus Web Content Management to define and enforce a structured review process for all Escape content will help ensure that all information presented to the customers is well-produced, consistent, and error-free, which will improve customer satisfaction and revenue.

Below Lotus Web Content Management are the WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Portal, which provide the foundation for all IBM accelerators. WebSphere Portal will not only provide a customizable and secure delivery platform for all areas of the Graystone Website, but will also facilitate the development of portlets or mini-applications that provide visitors with additional travel-related tools. For example, in the Caribbean Escape package, there is a “ReefFinder” tool implemented using a WebSphere Portlet. ReefFinder first presents a customer with a series

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of 10 questions regarding diving experience, depth preferences, interests (e.g., underwater photography, wreck diving, spearfishing, fish feeding, shark encounters, etc.). Once the questions are answered, the customer is then presented with a list and several underwater videos of recommended dive sites that match his or her answers. Graystone wants to roll out many such portlets for its customers over time to add value to the Website and keep customers coming back. And when visitor cookies are present (implicit personalization) or registered users (explicit personalization via an Escape Travel club membership) sign in to the Graystone Website, WebSphere Portal will present them with content tailored to their expressed interests.

The Deployment Manager is a software function provided with WebSphere Application Server but is installed on its own server. Deployment Manager allows a system administrator to configure and control multiple computer systems (i.e., nodes) running together in a cluster configuration as depicted in the figure.

The Lotus Quickr component of IBM Content Accelerator will provide a content repository that will en-

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able Graystone employees as well as the employees of select Graystones travel partners to collaboratively develop and share documents and rich media elements for use in the various Escape packages. For example, John at Graystone might create a description of a hotel to be featured in an upcoming Hawaiian Escape package. John could then upload the document to Lotus Quickr and have Lisa (who works for the resort to be featured) download the document, make changes, and then upload the new version back to Lotus Quickr for John to access. Lotus Quickr's check-in/check-out function provides the version control to keep the collaboration orderly. Once the document is completed, it can be made directly available through a link in the Hawaiian Escape section of the Graystone Website due to a Lotus Quickr and WebSphere Portal integration portlet (i.e., content viewer portlet) provided with IBM Content Accelerator.

Search represents a real opportunity for Graystone as it directly affects the user experience. With proper configuration, the IBM OmniFind Enterprise Edition component of IBM Content Accelerator (shown on the right of the figure) will allow visitors to search the


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Graystone Website and ensure that relevant Escape package offerings are presented in the search results. This will increase both customer satisfaction and revenue. Graystone employees will also use an internally configured OmniFind Enterprise Edition component when building new Escape packages to search for existing content, which they can reuse as well as other information they need to do their job.

More on the Web

- [IBM Power Systems](#)
- [IBM Content Accelerator](#)

Moving Forward from Here...

Since the advent of computers, businesses have been providing employees with application programs that improve productivity. As these systems proliferated, the resulting incompatible “silos” of data combined with inconsistent ways to access application programs work against the very productivity computer automation was intended to provide. It typically is not practical to solve these problems by ripping out critical application programs and starting over in the pursuit of consistency. A more attractive solution is

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to insulate the users from the complexities and disparities in underlying application programs and data through a portal. It is clear that providing users with a single, consistent “on the glass” workspace maximizes their productivity and enhances agility. IBM accelerators provide a head start in deploying just such solutions.

At the same time, businesses have increasingly been leveraging project teams that include people who are geographically dispersed. And many project team members are mobile, doing much of their work on the road outside of a traditional office setting. Assembling such loosely coupled teams enables a project to benefit from highly specialized expertise that may not necessarily be “warehoused” within a single business or location. On the other hand, such dispersed teams can run into productivity problems that are inherent in their decentralized nature. This is why collaboration tools that bridge the geographical divide have become so important today. They enable teams to include distant colleagues and far-flung specialists without encountering the productivity problems typically associated with dispersion. IBM accelerators help busi-

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nesses deploy just such tools and play a key role in smarter collaboration.

Whether you are empowering users, integrating disparate systems, streamlining business processes, or enabling smarter collaboration, in the end it's all about gaining and keeping a competitive business advantage. With the rapid pace of globalization, businesses are under increasing pressure to differentiate themselves from their competitors worldwide in order to maintain that advantage... and innovation is the key. Providing employees, teams, business partners, and customers with the tools needed to enable and amplify innovation will lead to that competitive advantage businesses need to excel. IBM accelerators are designed to jump-start initiatives that provide users with an exceptional Web experience, improved productivity, and tools that foster the type of innovation that is central to business success—or, as IBM puts it—innovation that matters.

Yet proceeding with potentially game-changing projects that employ technology to improve business results has always involved risk. Not every project undertaken in good faith turns out to actually deliver

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the intended benefits. But the great promise of fueling innovation and improving productivity through portal-based projects means that some will proceed... perhaps your competitors. So, interestingly, the biggest risk of all may be faced by those who choose to do nothing.


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