



Ingleton-Beer Associates

Press Clipping:



Views of two suppliers on the NHS's National Programme for IT

Comment by Tim Holyoake, senior consultant, Software AG:

"The National Programme for IT [NPfIT] is yet another example of Government modernisation being criticised in the press, despite all attempts to bring better services to the public. In theory it's a good idea to upgrade the NHS and link all GPs to the main database for a more efficient and faster service, but ripping and replacing existing systems is not how it should be done.

"As seen with the **shelved Benefits Reprocessing Payments Programme**, at a cost of £141m to the taxpayer despite not being fully implemented, an upgrade is costly, and not immune to long delays or even being scrapped altogether. Ripping out existing infrastructures to replace them with costly new ones that don't necessarily interact with each other can also lead to lengthy staff downtime, and of course, project delays.

"Making the most of systems already present would be a smarter move to modernise the NHS and other Government departments. Technology exists to link up databases for easily information sharing, such as service-oriented architecture, which doesn't require huge infrastructure replacements.

"The Government needs to learn from mistakes already made, and adapt each process to find the solution that suits it best. Modernising existing systems will avoid long delays and additional costs, and can help provide faster information sharing for civil servants and, consequently, better services to the public."

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Comment by Stephen Tickhill, VP UK and Ireland, Seagull Software, which describes itself as a "leading provider of high-performance solutions that transform legacy business applications into service-oriented architecture (SOA) assets".

"Change should be driven by business needs - not by the IT department

"The NHS and its suppliers are guilty of 'narrowly focused IT-oriented behaviour' - and in my experience, it's not just public sector organisations that need to ensure that change is driven by business needs rather than the IT department.

"At the moment, most software initiatives start in the IT department using new technology with little regard to business requirement. They typically follow the 'classic' IT implementation model - define the business case; select a vendor and solution; scope out the project and allocate people; roll-out the software; then iron out any technical hurdles such as coding or integration.

"These attempts will invariably fail to deliver their full potential because they have to take on board a plethora of ideas, processes and aspirations, and any results are always at the end of the project, which may be years down the track (and by then, a company's goals have changed!).

"As Gartner points out, if you only deviate two per cent from your project goals each month, after a year you're already 24 per cent off target. And as projects drag on, as they invariably do, this figure increases.

Internet Site:

http://www.computerweekly.com/blogs/tony_collins/2007/02/views-of-two-suppliers-on-the-nhss-national-programme-for-it-.html

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"Companies are entering the next era of application optimisation thanks to the convergence of Service-Oriented Architectures (SOA), Web services and XML. SOA is not about building new systems, but giving end-users what they want from the systems already in place.

"To do this requires a fundamental shift in methodology and SOA means that you can turn the classic model on its head. It simplifies the IT reform model to a three-point plan: decide what services the end-user needs; service-enable the existing software; and only finally, think about more fundamental systems change - if it's needed. And as a result, businesses transformation is effected from the top down and bottom up and not by the IT department.