



■ **The key to a successful EAI deployment is the prior definition of a consistent business logic, believes**

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Combined with a tight squeeze on spending, the drive towards automating the entire transaction lifecycle means that firms have to make the most of their existing systems, but alongside that there is a need to bring those systems together in a way that reflects the business organisation.

The key thing for EAI deployment is the definition of a consistent business logic and the formalisation of rules for how a particular firm goes about its business. From the definition of the trading structures will come the workflow rules and best practice defini-

tions that can be used to build an efficient overall system.

Ideally, what any trading firm should have is a common bus architecture integrating its front, middle and back office operations. And it should cut across the various asset classes in which the firm trades, which may, of course, have their own front and middle offices, if not all the way to the back.

To do this means the development of a common taxonomy across these operations, which is something that we are now seeing develop through the work of putative standards bodies such as XML.org and the work being done on the Market Data Definition Language.

While the leaders may be implementing systems based on Java or .NET, perhaps with some Linux and a few new database types thrown in, the vast majority of businesses are not.

Far more are using legacy systems in which a great deal of data that is vital to the STP process is stored, but which are structured in a way that no-one understands: the business logic has been lost, probably along with the IT staff who originally coded the system.

Middleware can solve this problem. In the initial buzz around the technology, much was made of it allowing data to be sucked out of ageing data silos for use on state of the art boxes.

It could, and can, do that, but the reality is that middleware has matured both in terms of the range of data and systems types that can be integrated and in the complexity of its deploy-

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ment at the core of an EAI project. Systems like IBM's WebSphere or BEA Systems' WebLogic have developed from internet novelties to mature technologies that are being marketed as Application Servers used for not only sucking data out of older systems, but also passing data to them for processing.

Where that is appropriate to the business logic, it is a perfectly valid application of the if-it-ain't-broke rule of engineering. Much more crucial is being able to work out if it is appropriate in the first place.

Once a definition of the business logic and workflow is in place, application integration can become a reality. Only once you've achieved integration of the systems can you monitor and manage them – and that's the benefit that middleware and EAI are at last starting to deliver.