

2003 iSeries™ announcements makes the WebFacing Tool the e-business solution for small businesses

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The January 2003 iSeries™ server announcements have the potential to dramatically increase the number of affordable e-business solutions for small and mid-sized businesses. This is great news for the e-business application providers as well as their iSeries customers.

The key announcements that impact small business and their application providers are:

- Applications that have been Web-enabled with the IBM® WebFacing Tool no longer require 5250 capacity to run on the newly announced iSeries servers
- The introduction of WebSphere® Application Server Express for iSeries dramatically reduces the cost of an e-business application server for the SMB market
- The enhancements to the IBM WebFacing Tool make it easier, faster, and more cost effective to create a Web interface to existing 5250 applications
- There have been dramatic improvements in the price/performance of low-end iSeries servers capable of executing e-business applications

Background

Small businesses typically have a very small IT staff. In many cases, the owner is the IT staff. Small businesses chose the iSeries server for several key reasons:

- There is a wealth of solid business applications for the iSeries server - approximately six thousand solutions - to help them run their business.
- The reliability, scalability, security and ease of use of the iSeries server and the iSeries business solutions allows them to focus on running their business rather than managing their information technology.

However, most of the solutions available for small businesses had green-screen interfaces and small businesses didn't want green-screen solutions. They wanted the ease-of-learning and ease-of-use associated with a Web graphical user interface and they wanted the cost effective communication capabilities delivered by an e-business solution.

The IBM WebFacing Tool allowed solution providers to cost-effectively create a Web interface to their 5250 solutions but the cost of the iSeries hardware and software made the solutions unaffordable for small business.

IBM WebFacing Tool no longer requires 5250 capacity

Applications that are Web-enabled with the IBM WebFacing Tool no longer require 5250 capacity to run on the new iSeries servers. This substantially reduces e-business solution costs for applications that are Web-enabled with the WebFacing Tool and allows solution providers to provide cost effective solutions for small businesses in two ways.

Lower iSeries server costs make e-business solutions affordable

The WebFacing Tool allows solution providers to quickly, easily and cost-effectively Web-enable their business solutions. Because e-business solutions created with the WebFacing Tool no longer require 5250 capacity, this makes the iSeries server much less expensive and makes the e-business solution affordable for small business.

Application solution provider model enabled

Because the WebFacing Tool no longer requires 5250 capacity, solution providers with very sophisticated business applications can reach new markets. By converting their applications using the WebFacing Tool, they now have a browser interface. Small businesses can now purchase browser access or usage of these sophisticated e-business solutions instead of having to purchase the expensive e-business solution (hardware, software and applications). This is a much more affordable solution for small businesses.

Two iSeries solution providers - Inter American Data, and TSC Solutions - have Web-enabled their solutions with the IBM WebFacing Tool and are actively pursuing the ASP model for delivering their solutions to small businesses.

WebSphere Application Server Express for iSeries

An application server is required as an execution environment for e-business solutions. WebSphere Application Server is the application server of choice for IBM solutions. The cost and resource requirements for WebSphere Application Server V4 were substantial inhibitors to the proliferation of e-business applications for small businesses. The introduction of WebSphere Application Server Express for iSeries makes e-business much more affordable for small and midsized businesses. WebSphere Application Server Express is substantially less expensive than WebSphere Application Server V4; \$2.0 K US versus \$8.0 K US. WebSphere Application Server Express V5 also requires substantially less iSeries resources than WebSphere Application Server V4. Most e-business applications running WebSphere Application Server V4 required a minimum of 500 CPW to execute with 500 MB of RAM. On WebSphere Application Server Express V5, e-business applications can run on a 300 CPW iSeries server with 500 MB of RAM. In 2002, only 30% of the machines being shipped were able to support WebSphere Application Server. Few if any iSeries servers operating in small businesses were able to run WebSphere Application Server. With the introduction of WebSphere Application Server Express, all new iSeries servers shipped in 2003 are able to support e-business....and at an affordable price.

WebFacing Tool enhancements

The WebFacing Tool continues to mature at a record breaking pace. Although it is still wise to check your display file DDS keyword to insure the WebFacing Tool can convert all of your

critical display files, most applications will convert with no DDS changes. We recently converted three large ISV applications all having in excess of six thousand screens with no changes required to the DDS code.

IBM continues to expand the list of DDS keywords that the IBM WebFacing Tool supports and address customer driven enhancements. In the latest release, we added support for WRKSPLF because we had numerous customer requests to support this iSeries system screen. Also in the latest release, most of our efforts were dedicated to improving the execution performance and scalability of the Web interface. In customer performance testing, we were able to support twenty thousand concurrent users.

In the latest release of our tools, IBM introduced WebSphere Development Studio Advanced Edition for iSeries. This new sophisticated development tool set, based upon WebSphere Studio Application Developer, creates fully J2EE compliant e-business applications. In this advanced e-business tool set, a new wizard was introduced to our WebFacing Tool to create a Struts-compliant Web interface. The architecture of this Struts-compliant Web interface allows it to be easily enhanced with other Web applications that are also Struts-compliant. Now developers can create Web interfaces to 5250 applications that can be leveraged and extended with other Web applications in a Struts visual development environment. Although the advanced tooling is required to generate this Struts-compliant Web interface to the 5250 applications, the new Web interface doesn't require any special run-time support for execution. It will run in any version of WebSphere Application Server. New sophisticated and enhanced e-business applications can be created for SMB customers.

Server price/performance

On top of the dramatic improvements in the e-business value proposition for the mid and small sized businesses, the 800 and 810 servers deliver up to an 80% price performance improvement over the previous releases.

Summary

The latest iSeries announcements have fundamentally changed the e-business value proposition for the small business marketplace:

- The IBM WebFacing Tool is the fastest, easiest, and most cost-effective tool for creating Web interfaces to 5250 applications
 - No development tool or runtime usage charges.
 - Same application supports a Web and 5250 interface - no dual maintenance.
 - Applications converted with the WebFacing Tool don't require 5250 capacity to execute.
- Even the smallest iSeries server priced at under \$10,000 US is capable of running e-business applications.
- WAS Express for iSeries is affordable

- Price of a WebSphere Application server has dropped approximately 70%.
- WAS requires 40% less horsepower to run e-business applications.

The new iSeries announcements will cause a dramatic increase in the number of affordable e-business applications for the SMB marketplace.

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