



DWL builds big e-businesses with WebSphere Application Server.

Application Transactional, audience-driven e-business solutions for major industry companies and their external users

Business Benefits 300% revenue growth in past year; 250% revenue increase anticipated next year; 75% savings in development time; new business opportunities in targeted tier-one sector

Software IBM WebSphere® Application Server, Advanced Edition
IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite, Start Edition
IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for AIX®

Servers IBM RS/6000®

If you want a big building, you start out with big pieces. The same goes for building an e-business. To put big businesses onto the Web, the technology is now available to do the job quickly and efficiently with applications and components developed with scalability and customization in mind.

Founded in 1996, Toronto-based DWL Incorporated is behind this very type of technology, using its solution to develop e-business applications for some of the largest insurance companies,

“Big companies want reliability, scalability and security when surfacing transactions to outside audiences. And there is no product like WebSphere Application Server for providing those benefits.”

– Simon Chong, Vice President of Strategic Alliances, DWL



DWL builds Web sites that can handle large transaction volumes using its DWL Unifi Engine™ and WebSphere Application Server.



Indigo books needed a scalable, robust and easy-to-enhance Web site, so it turned to DWL and the WebSphere software platform for e-business.

“EJB development with WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Commerce Suite shrinks the development cycle to about one quarter of what it would be otherwise.”

*—Gordon Birnie, Vice President,
Retail and Consumer, DWL*

financial services organizations and consumer goods retailers across North America. Every DWL solution contains the DWL Unifi Engine, a transactional, audience-driven layer that surfaces transactions from multiple legacy systems and then presents them through personalized interfaces for the Web and wireless devices.

When creating Version 3 of its DWL Unifi Engine, DWL recognized that the best development route would be to use Enterprise JavaBeans™ (EJB™)-based technology. So DWL began shopping for an application server that supports EJB-based development and high volume, Web-to-host, personalized transactions. An IBM Business Partner, DWL conducted a thorough evaluation of the products on the market, including BEA WebLogic, and found IBM WebSphere Application Server to be the best-of-breed EJB component engine, offering scalability, speed-to-market, reliability and stability for the large distributed applications the company develops. “WebSphere Application Server is the easiest to work with, both for us and for our customers who use DWL Unifi™ components to create their transactional portals,” says Simon Chong, vice president of strategic alliances for DWL.

DWL used the IBM Application Framework for e-business as a roadmap for developing new solutions with WebSphere Application Server, and customers have been quick to express their approval by giving DWL their business. Since DWL began focusing its marketing and development efforts on a WebSphere Application Server-based version of Unifi, revenues have soared over 300 percent. “For any organization that needs a robust e-commerce site to handle huge transaction volumes and update information quickly and easily, we recommend WebSphere Application Server,” says Chong.

Easy-to-edit solution for virtual bookstore

One of DWL's newest customers for the WebSphere Application Server version of DWL Unifi is Indigo, a Canadian book and music store with 14 retail locations throughout Canada and a virtual store at www.indigo.ca. Indigo caters to customers who truly love books and literary culture. When it developed its first Web site, it was important for the company to provide a varied cultural community for its users and always have new and interesting places to browse. Indigo envisioned a constantly changing menu of author readings and other features. However, Indigo's C++-based site proved difficult to edit. In order to support its vision, Indigo needed a fully transactional, scalable e-business solution to enable the e-tailer to meet its changing click-and-mortar environment.

Having heard that DWL offered a scalable, robust and easy-to-enhance IBM e-business solution using components of the WebSphere software platform for e-business, Indigo asked DWL to build its new e-commerce site. The e-business project was the first to incorporate the DWL Unifi Engine, IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite and WebSphere Application Server into one e-tailing solution.

Besides functioning as an application server, WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition provides a runtime environment for EJB-based applications managed by the DWL Unifi Engine. DWL used IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite, Start Edition, Version 4.1, to develop the front-end interface that manages the user account information and logins. WebSphere Commerce Suite interacts with WebSphere Application Server and IBM DB2 Universal Database for AIX, which stores product, price and account information. The Unifi engine is in charge of the session and communicates with Indigo's back-end systems. The entire solution runs on an IBM RS/6000 server.

With the DWL Unifi features built into the solution, Indigo will have no problem refreshing its site daily. The DWL Unifi solution facilitates editing and updating by providing EJB-based publishing templates which non-technical personnel can use to fill out pages, keeping the overall appearance of the site consistent. The publishing application is one of six that reside on the DWL Unifi Engine framework and that run with WebSphere Application Server.

By the time the holidays roll around, Indigo.ca is expecting 50,000 to 100,000 hits per day to its site. "A site of the Indigo magnitude that can handle hundreds of thousands of simultaneous hits would take at least a year to develop using any other solution," says Gordon Birnie, vice president, retail and consumer, for DWL. "We took only three months. EJB development with WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Commerce Suite shrinks the development cycle to about one quarter of what it would be otherwise." Leveraging these components of the WebSphere software platform for e-business together with the DWL Unifi Engine has worked out so well that DWL believes that it will be able to redeploy and even license the Indigo solution as a standard e-commerce software package.

"IBM provides us with entrepreneurial opportunities as well as product leadership and support. It's a very valuable partnership."

– Simon Chong



Indigo.ca expects 50,000 to 100,000 hits per day and knows WebSphere Application Server can handle the traffic.

DWL Unifi's growth soars on IBM solution

DWL offers versions of DWL Unifi using different application server platforms. As DWL began gearing up for DWL Unifi's latest release, however, the company realized it had to make a strategic decision between developing with EJBs and Microsoft COM/DCOM. Both are object-oriented technologies that could be used for fast development of large distributed applications, but DWL couldn't continue to invest in both. "After studying the market of both Fortune 100 and Global 2000 companies, we decided that the future of our target market of tier-one companies lay with EJB architecture. That's where the big organizations are going," says Chong.

Every dollar of DWL's investment in the WebSphere software platform for e-business has been returned with dividends in less than a year. Moreover, large companies like Canada's Dominion Insurance Company — which exactly fits DWL's targeted customer profile — have come on board specifically because of the solution developed with WebSphere Application Server. DWL projects 250 percent growth for next year, which it expects to come entirely from customers of its WebSphere Application Server-driven DWL Unifi Engine. "Big companies want reliability, scalability and security when surfacing transactions to outside audiences," notes Chong. "And there is no product like WebSphere Application Server for providing those benefits."

Building e-businesses with IBM

DWL has incorporated WebSphere Application Server in its other e-business solutions and has made extensive use of the IBM Application Framework for e-business. Recently, the company forged an even closer relationship with IBM, agreeing to deliver comprehensive e-business solutions through vertical market Web sites (vortals) with help from IBM Global Services. DWL will use several of its own products, including DWL Unifi e-business Platform, DWL Unifi Transactive CRM, DWL Unifi Insurance Vortal, DWL Unifi Consumer Products Vortal and DWL Unifi Retail Vortal.

"DWL's relationship with IBM has a great future," comments Chong. "IBM provides us with entrepreneurial opportunities as well as product leadership and support. It's a very valuable relationship."

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