

company news ECOSPACE

Business Collaborator Ltd Contributes to €12 Million European Collaborative Working Initiative

Business Collaborator Ltd (BCL) is working with major European organisations, including Atkins, HP, and SAP, in a €12 Million research project, partially funded from the European Commission, and set to bring significant change to future collaborative working environments.

The main objectives of this three-year initiative, known as ECOSPACE, are to research innovative work prototypes; design and develop open standards that will enable seamless, instant collaboration amongst knowledge workers; and encourage the creation and introduction of new collaboration tools. Ultimately, it will create the opportunity for companies to use one set of tools for online collaboration, enabling greater cost savings, whilst reducing the overall cultural and operational impact, minimizing training requirements and facilitating faster launch times for new collaborative projects.

BCL Managing Director Sanjeev Shah said, "It is great to be working alongside other leading IT companies and collaboration solution providers on this initiative. The initiative will help us to better understand what collaboration barriers users are facing and what enablers will facilitate the adoption of more collaborative work and environments. As we publish the first draft of the 'standard reference architecture' shortly, we hope that this will encourage many other companies both large and small to get involved in this universal collaboration project."

Currently, at the start of any major collaboration project, companies spend a lot of time and effort deciding on which combination of collaboration tools will provide the optimum collaboration environment for all organisations involved. Once agreed further investment is then required for user adoption, training, and support with no guarantee that the same tool might be used on the next major project.

Ultimately, the ECOSPACE initiative will help to reduce the impact of future collaboration projects as companies will be able to use tools familiar to their company, keep existing working practices, and therefore maximise their existing collaboration assets.



Real time collaboration is the next step in collaborative working environments and the development of a single repository of online collaboration tools that can be easily integrated will deliver enormous benefits. The initiative will also drive better methods of collaboration on 3D models, voice and data models, email integration into the collaborative framework and improve accessibility.

Steve Crompton, Technical Director at BCL says, "The initiative will help us to further understand and harness behaviour in an online collaborative working environment and translate this into better processes and procedures."

“A single repository of online collaboration tools could facilitate the introduction of a “call and use facility”, as in ‘Mash Up’ technology, where technological layers are introduced to create an overall solution, much the same as introducing RSS feeds and Google search functionality into your website today. This will enable the introduction of many more new collaboration solutions that will enrich the collaborative landscape.”

“Our involvement in the ECOSPACE initiative, underlines our commitment to ongoing research and development to further enhance and expand functionality in Business Collaborator, and at the same time provide our customers with a future proofed solution,” concludes Crompton.

The main goal of the initiative is to create a standard for collaboration across all companies involved in the provision of collaborative solutions that will extend traditional benefits to customers that will reduce training requirements and introduce significant savings in time particularly at the launch of new major projects.

“Business Collaborator is regularly adopted as the online collaboration tool of choice for many multi-million pound collaboration projects, and if companies didn’t need to change the tools that they are using then it is just one less impact for any company. Making collaboration work does not only provide a good financial return for individual companies, but also a greater ‘return on interoperability’ (ROI) for all those involved” concludes Shah.

About ECOSPACE

ECOSPACE pursues the vision that by 2012 every Professional in Europe is empowered for seamless, dynamic and creative collaboration across teams, organisations and communities through a personalised collaborative working environment.

Designed as a three-year programme, ECOSPACE deploys a systemic approach built on matrix-based organisation with horizontal technology push activities and vertical application pull activities. Vertical validating applications apply a Living Lab approach within 3 application areas. They act as breeding grounds for innovation; they prepare the broad acceptance of the results, and create open business opportunities for new generic or sector-specific products and services.

ECOSPACE objectives are supported by a multidisciplinary and sound consortium which includes, large market players, SMEs, users and professional communities with a strong track record in collaborative work and infrastructure, community building, mobile working, visualisation, semantic web and social network analysis. ECOSPACE contributes to ERA activities, linking with national and EU initiatives for reference architecture and collaboration middleware activities.

<http://www.ecospace-ip.org>