

Integration in the eEconomy: Costs, Benefits and Risks

Panel Members:

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Overview and Objectives

The e-economy depends on many innovative technical and institutional arrangements. One of the more fundamental arrangements is “integration”—the interconnection of the data, documents, systems, and business processes of the different organizations participating in the e-economy. Integration is necessary for the e-economy, but it is difficult and expensive to achieve and it brings with it the risks of propagating errors, crashes, and disasters.

The objectives of this panel are:

- To engage in lively dialog around controversial issues, such as “when should integration *not* be pursued?”
- To stimulate interest in, and new research on, the topics of business and systems integration

Issues to Be Discussed

- What are the different technical and social approaches to integration? What are the differences between integration involving databases and structured processes and integration involving knowledge repositories and unstructured processes?
- What has been the experience with different ways of integrating data, documents, business processes, and systems? What are their costs, benefits, and unexpected outcomes? What problems have arisen during integration efforts? Which integration challenges are most difficult to overcome?
- How well informed are participants about the technologies of integration and their attendant costs, benefits, and risks? How can organizations make better decisions about participating in integration projects? How can the risks of integration be better managed?
- Why have organizations embraced or avoided participating in integration efforts? What can be done to better manage inter-organizational change?
- Looking forward, what important issues does integration raise for organizational decision-makers and national policy-makers? How can and should these issues best be studied?