

INTERVIEW WITH BILL WIMSATT

Lindsey Green: Hello and welcome to the Biztech Report's Internet Radio. Hi, I'm Lindsey Green and today we present the next installment in our IT Solutions Series, Doing More With Less, sponsored by IBM. In today's report, we once again discuss the challenges IT managers are facing and explore the latest trends and approaches being used by leading edge organizations around the world to accomplish organizational objectives. Here to bring us another discussion on how organizations in today's economy are doing more with less is Biztech Report's editorial director, Lane Cooper.

Lane Cooper: Thank you, Lindsey. The relationship between systems architecture and enterprise architecture is growing in importance as organizations seek to streamline and leverage every last bit of functionality from existing investments and new investments in technology that are coming down the pike. Here to help us understand that relationship and the role of enterprise architecture in general, is Bill Wimsatt, principal of McLean, Virginia based Wells Tivar, an IBM partner and a consulting firm that helps organizations implement integrated enterprise solutions cost effectively. Bill, thank you for joining us today.

Bill Wimsatt: Thank you very much, Lane.

Lane Cooper: Bill, let me start by perhaps getting you to give us a little bit of a sense between the relationship between enterprise architecture on one side and the systems architecture activities on the other.

Bill Wimsatt: Sure. Systems architecture is typically about conceptual design and behavior of a system. That could be anything from embedded systems or to a – even aircraft systems quite honestly, and it even bleeds into the area of systems engineering. Typically, most of the system architects are more technical in nature, more concerned about how the different systems communicate with each other, the different technologies, specific technologies that are used within the systems.

Versus the enterprise architecture side of the house in which they have a more broad role. They do need to know about the technology and how those different systems and applications fit together, but their role bleeds much more into the business side of the house and understanding the different business processes, the different business organizations that are using the systems, really projects and the portfolio side of the house. So an enterprise architect really has a broader view than the system architect.

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Lane Cooper: Interesting. Now I could imagine that this sort of represents a next level of opportunity for folks in the IT career that have sort of cut their teeth on the technical side. Does this sort of serve as a bridge to get more into different elements of the organization as you see it?

Bill Wimsatt: Absolutely. Those that are coming up from the system architecture side of the house, understanding, kind of having a more broad view of how that system fits in within the organization or even outside the organization. You know, more and more, our companies are teaming together to form much larger organizations or just because of acquisitions. Understanding how the different parts of the business fit together and not just how that one system plays, how it plays in the general theme of the business is actually a very important stepping stone to get into the enterprise architecture side of the house.

Lane Cooper: Well what about sort of the leaner stuff? I know that there's a lot of new technologies that are being introduced and that has introduced quite a bit of complexity. And of course we hear a lot about things like services oriented architectures. What does an enterprise architect need to do to sort of ensure, provide confidence to business decision makers, that they are optimizing their resources and doing more with less?

Bill Wimsatt: That's a really good point on the enterprise architecture side of the house, because it is a much broader view and you need to have a knowledge of how finance – to some degree, of how that company actually makes money. Understanding what are the different services, really at the business level, so that when we're implementing services oriented architectures, the investment that's being made towards that, which business processes and which business organizations are going to be most impacted by that is a critical part of their thinking. So when they're – as I said before, the system architect is kind of taking the systems view. The enterprise architect has to take in the business side of the house, understand how all that fits together in order to make the business itself function, not just technically, but how it functions in the market, or in the public sector, how it's providing those services to the citizens.

Lane Cooper: Mm hm. Well you mentioned mergers and acquisitions, and I know that you're quite active, I think, in the public sector. What can enterprise architects do there to ensure that disparate

investments, investments that have been made over time or investments that need to be put together as a result of either an integration of agencies or the coming together of two companies? What can the enterprise architect do to make sure that every last dollar of IT spend is being effectively utilized?

Bill Wimsatt: I think that's where you're really drawing on the deep parts of their particular skillsets. Typically, enterprise architects are extremely good at understanding collaboration – collaboration at the team level, and collaboration at the software level. We've been working with one, a financial organization that has had large acquisitions that we've seen over the past year, and they truly had a side of their house which is completely virtualized was one of their acquisitions. And there, where this enterprise architecture group came from, was not.

They needed to understand how that particular – what virtualization meant and how that's going to mean to the larger organization, but they also needed to work with, quite honestly, the finance, accounting side of the house to understand what were they going to do with those investments? Did they need to divest? Did they need to reinvest and make those work together? So from an enterprise architect standpoint, they needed to clearly understand what A – what virtualization is and how it's going to impact across the systems, and then B – what does it take to pull that off, both operationally as well as skill-wise and being to pull that collaboration and facilitation across those different skillsets in the organization is absolutely paramount to be able to help the whole merger acquisition process happen effectively.

Lane Cooper: That's interesting. You must run into some sort of culture wars if you have two different, you know, especially in the scenario that you just described. You have one that's made a commitment to virtualization and the other that's still doing business in the same old-fashioned way. And I don't say that with any pejorative terms. But how do you reconcile the cultural differences and is that something that the enterprise architect plays a role in?

Bill Wimsatt: They play a role in it, but unfortunately, we're not trained in cognitive psychology and those skills. I think it really is just having that broad base, being able to take on those different hats. Understanding when somebody from the marketing organization, understanding what their initiatives that they want to be for the next year, also taking someone's hat who's on the organization side of the business, how they're going to be impacted. Being able

to wear those different hats and understand how they're going to be impacted in order to come up with the best solution and to work with those different stakeholders, whether they are technical developing teams, whether they are program management offices or whether those are business stakeholders, being able to help pull that team together and be able to offer that advice. So I think what they are is hopefully a great sounding board of reason and that's really what they provide as a part of that – as you just said, the turmoil that often comes with that change.

Lane Cooper: Interesting. Now what about – I know that enterprise architecture is really – it's a relatively new term, you know, certainly no more than a decade old. I think I first heard it maybe seven or eight years ago being used in earnest but still in the grand scheme of things a young discipline. Are there any tools or technologies or methodologies that are emerging to support that new function?

Bill Wimsatt: There are. Actually, there are several different methodologies out there. Actually, the U.S. federal government has several methodologies that they've been putting forward both on the civilian side, which is federal enterprise architecture framework, and that's managed out of the Office of Management and Budget. And then the Department of Defense has what they call the DoD architecture framework.

But on the commercial side, there are several other frameworks out there as well. There's one from the Open Group, which is called Togaf, the Open Group architecture framework. There's also another interesting one that we've been working with called the enterprise architecture methodology out of the University of Munich. And as you said, it's somewhat nascent, in a lot of ways. Togaf has actually been around for a number of years. They actually just released version 9 here in 2009. And the other methodologies that I mentioned before have actually been around for quite a while. But they're really proliferating and having a much deeper, richer set of capabilities than they've had in the past.

Lane Cooper: Interesting. And what about specific tools and technologies that can actually help create the enterprise architecture? Is that all done from the application development side up, or are there tools that can be purchased to help people manage the design and implementation of an enterprise architecture?

Bill Wimsatt: The architecture itself tends to be fairly organic these days. The best thing when you're looking into kind of getting your

organization in the next level of capabilities, you want to look for platforms that have rich collaboration, platforms in which there's multiple users and multiple types of stakeholders. So enterprise architecture tools that can look at organizational models as well as networking models as well as database models. So tools like Rational System Architect is one that we have used for a number of years with extreme success because it can handle a broad range of tools. You know, you will always have those organizations that will use what I could call the more traditional paper and pencil and Visio, just in which they are diagrammatic. But being to pull that together into a platform in which the business process modelers as well the data modelers can all be working from a single environment is really important.

The other piece that as I said before is that business side of the house because it's not just those models. An enterprise architect also needs to take into account the portfolio side of the house. So understanding how the business makes decisions on which investments to continue with and which investments to not continue with is also another set of tools. Rational Focal Point is one that we've used over just recently. Wells Landers has been using with quite a bit of success. Also being able to understand how the business makes decisions and how they can pull that together is really important.

The final piece that we actually look at – we look at designing, which it would be like system architect type tools, deciding which type of investments to manage, that would be like Focal Point and kind of portfolio management tools. The last piece is really informing, making sure that all the different collaborators as a part of that stakeholder group are informed. So having a business intelligence platform in which you can keep reports, kind of state of the state type of information together. So tools such as Cognos, or other platforms that you can use as a rich business intelligence environment across the enterprise that's pulling from PMO, from your systems architecture environment and from your portfolio decision environment. Really having all of that together is what's important for the enterprise architect.

Lane Cooper: Excellent, Bill. This has been great. I really appreciate your taking the time to chat with us today.

Bill Wimsatt: Thank you very much.

Lane Cooper: Stay tuned for more on this. Hopefully we'll get Bill back and I'd like to dive into something like project and portfolio management with you, bill, in one of our upcoming podcasts, because I think that's a very hot issue too related to this topic. But we will be continuing to explore this in future podcasts and other reports, the role of enterprise architecture in general and some of the other offshoot disciplines that are helping IT managers do more with less. For Biztech Reports Radio this is Lane Cooper. Please come back to www.ibm.com/itsolutions. Lindsey, back to you.

Lindsey Green: Thanks Lane. Today's Biztech Report podcast is sponsored by IBM, where the big blue team is working with clients to develop new business designs and technical architectures that enable the flexibility required to compete in today's economy and global landscape. For Biztech Reports, this is Lindsey Green.