

Software Development Collaboration and Innovation
– Getting More for Less
Pod Cast



Hello and welcome to our Podcast. I'm Susan McNeice with Frost & Sullivan's Global Information and Communications Technology practice. Today we'll evaluate trends in software development and collaboration, with a focus on the ways firms are getting more for less.

The face of software development is changing rapidly. Today, software is often mission-critical to business success. And yet, recent studies show costs for software development are rising 10% annually, and unfortunately, about twice the rate of IT budget growth. To bring even more pressure to bear, recent worldwide economic changes, while not yet fully played out, are poised to impinge even further on constrained corporate investment plans. Finally, many software teams are moving to more agile development methods, with an emphasis on small, highly interactive and iterative cycles in a management structure of minimal oversight. Fast, yes, but if they're not implemented well, agile processes can also be quite chaotic and threaten product quality.

At the same time, as our business sectors have globalized, so, too, has our software development environment. Collaborative, multi-team development around the world is now commonplace. This provides many benefits, not the least of which is around the clock attention to development processes. For example, architects and engineers can produce their specifications in one time zone and then hand off to design, code and test teams in another part of the world, taking advantage of the time difference to deliver 24-hour productivity.

Likewise, mergers, acquisitions and multi-business unit projects require us to work across time zones and geography to build reusable software modules that fit the requirements of multiple organizations, preventing redundant solutions that address the same business need.

So, the challenge for software development executives is to get better business value in place for the same or even lower per-deliverable investment. A valued solution to that problem is a nimble, lightweight, collaboration environment for your software development and delivery teams. It will track progress, ensure adherence to standards and provide the most current work products, all of which help to reduce and even eliminate costly rework.

Consider the value that the newest generation of Web 2.0 collaboration products brings to the productivity challenge. In the business world, we have email, instant messaging, file sharing and 'click to call' features to help us work in parallel with colleagues around the world as though we were in the same office. Consider further that software can be designed and built in much the same way. Collaboration solutions provide instant communication to foster maximum productivity; process and content control solutions ensure quality deliverables are produced according to consistent methods and procedures, even in a fast-paced agile development shop. And supervisory capabilities ensure managers up-to-the-minute status.

Today, the market offers solutions to move your development to a more productive environment. As you globalize AND look for ways to improve your development team's productivity, consider today's innovative software development solutions. So, what are the characteristics and benefits of today's development solutions?

For one, they're collaborative: You can see what's new, what's hot, who's online, the latest project status, any change requests.

Two, they're current. You have instant/consistent access to the most current versions of all project artifacts, whether they're requirements, change requests, or software code. By ensuring everyone on the team is working on the same version of an artifact, you avoid mistakes and rework.

Three, they support out of the box, agile processes to get you up and running right away. Later, you can customize these processes to the needs of your project and team's working style.

Four, they're open. They allow you to integrate the development solutions you currently use so your prior investments are protected.

Five, they're automated. Workflows, project status tracking, approvals and reporting all follow the processes you specify, with little to no administrative overhead for your team's contributors.

Six, they keep you informed with timely dashboards and reporting. For management, this means you stay abreast of project progress, quickly identify and correct problems and reassign resources to critical path items that threaten timelines, project cost or overall quality.

Finally, seven, these solutions foster innovation. Because your team collaborates in real time, the stage is set for them to leverage the individual strengths of the team's members. They'll begin to think and work in unison. They are free from the coordination burdens associated with distributed work groups, and now they can perform as though they were all in the same room together.

IBM's Rational Team Concert product is a good example of one of these new collaborative solutions. Rational Team Concert embodies all of these characteristics I've described. Further, it is based on IBM's Rational Jazz Platform® for collaborative application lifecycle management (C/ALM). Through Jazz, IBM opens up its Rational Software Delivery Platform to be more extensible, making it easier for customers to consume and integrate it into their existing solutions. Jazz is developed in an Open Commercial Development model, and interoperates with industry standards, third-party products and even competitive solutions.

Rational Team Concert automatically creates and tracks work items, controls software versions, and schedules and executes builds. You can use one of the many included agile processes and tailor them to the level of rigor you require for your project. Then Team Concert takes this process, builds a project workflow, guides your team as needed and provides real-time progress with customizable reports and dashboards. This gives managers the insight they need immediately. Think of what that would take if you had five different teams in five different time zones around the world.

So in closing, a software development team's productivity is essential to the success of so many businesses today, and yet, so frequently, you're required to do more, with less. Many of you have globalized your teams; that's good news. But to get the most from this decision, you need to accelerate the rate at which you gain business value from these teams, you need to be able to coordinate their activities and allow them to be creative while they collaborate. With the right platform solutions you can have more for less: more innovation, more collaboration and better productivity because you team thinks together while they work together.

I trust you have enjoyed our podcast. For Frost & Sullivan, I'm Susan McNeice, wishing you a good day.

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