Enterprise 2.0: Work-Meets-Play or the Future of Business?

Business adoption of Enterprise 2.0 has doubled since 2008 - and other surprising findings from AIIM's latest study.

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from AIIM's latest "industry Watch" research study. We urge you to visit the AIIM website (see more in sidebar) and download - at no cost - the entire, 30-page report, containing 23 graphs and charts.

When AIIM first reported on Enterprise 2.0 at the start of 2008, we found that early adopters were achieving real business value, transforming the way their organizations share information, encourage contribution, and work together as productive project teams. As "Web 2.0 for business," Enterprise 2.0 seemed to offer new ways for a diverse and distributed workforce to utilize social networking for knowledge sharing and rapid deployment of expertise.

Since that first report, use of social media outside of work has continued to grow rapidly, fueled by new arrivals such as Twitter. This has spilled over into demands for similar tools in the workplace, particularly from the younger generation, where the understanding and adoption of Enterprise 2.0 by business has more than doubled. Viral marketing and customer engagement through social media is high on the corporate agenda, and this is feeding back into the business as the need for alternative communications channels and more vibrant knowledge-sharing communities grows.

Definition Still in Flux

The definition and understanding of Enterprise 2.0 is still in some flux. For some it is seen as a step forward in business communications, based on the revolution of social media on the Web. For others it is much more: the bringing together of collaboration tools, forums, portals and messaging into a cohesive business platform. For the purposes of this survey, "Enterprise 2.0" means the business use of technologies such as blogs, wikis, forums, messaging, tagging, RSS feeds and rich media, popularized by social sites such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, TypePad and Twitter. By "Collaboration" we mean document sharing teamsites and portal applications like SharePoint, eRoom and WebCenter.

By their nature, Enterprise 2.0 technologies encourage openness and sharing, with their focus on user-generated content. This creates an exposure of businesses to possible brand damage, and indeed, potential legal and compliance issues. As we shall see, many are not even taking the basic steps towards protective policies, whereas others are struggling to embrace and encourage their use without imposing overly restrictive governance and usage policies.

Seen as the enablers of document-centric collaboration and the custodians of unstructured content, enterprise content management (ECM) vendors have responded very quickly to provide businesses with the tools for this revolution, working to replace the pure-play technology pioneers. The study looks at user intentions regarding integration with existing content management systems, and whether ECM vendors can supply the gov-
ernance that makes Enterprise 2.0 a safe place to play, so that it might truly become the future of business.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Corporate understanding of what Enterprise 2.0 is and how it could help business has doubled in the last year, with only 17 percent still having no idea what it is.
- Over half of organizations responding consider Enterprise 2.0 to be "important" or "very important" to their business goals and success. Yet only 25 percent are actually doing anything about it, although this is up from only 13 percent in 2008.
- Knowledge sharing, collaboration and responsiveness are considered the biggest drivers.
- Lack of understanding, corporate culture and cost are the biggest impediments.
- IT departments are by far the strongest users, with 68 percent using Enterprise 2.0. In contrast, only 6 percent of organizations are using it throughout the business.
- 21 percent of organizations use Enterprise 2.0 for viral marketing.
- 27 percent of people aged 18-30 believe that Twitter is an important rapid-feedback tool for business. Only 7 percent of those over 45 agree.
- 35 percent are using or accessing Twitter for their personal life, with 19 percent using it for business. Users 18 to 30 are twice as likely to use it as are those over 45. Twenty-one percent of the younger group use it during work hours.
- 68 percent think that professional networking on the Web is vital to career progression. LinkedIn is twice as popular as Facebook for this purpose, with over 50 percent having an account.
- 71 percent agree that it’s easier to locate “knowledge” on the Web than it is to find it on internal systems.
- 47 percent of those 18 to 30 and 31 percent of those over 45 expect to use the same type of networking tools with business colleagues as with friends and family.
- 40 percent feel it is important to have Enterprise 2.0 facilities within their ECM suite, with SharePoint Team Sites as the most likely collaboration platform.
- Only 29 percent of organizations are extending their collaboration tools and project sites beyond the firewall.
- As regards governance of usage and content, only 30 percent of companies have policies on blogs, forums and social networks, compared to 88 percent who have policies for email.
- Whereas almost all companies would not dream of sending out unapproved press releases or Web pages, less than 1 in 5 have any signoff procedures for blogs, forums and even the company’s Wikipedia entry.
- Despite one-in-10 organizations having had legal, staff or customer issues with blogs and social networks, only 1 in 3 have a blanket regulation absolving themselves from personal posts by staff.
- Planned spending on Enterprise 2.0 projects in the next 12 months is up in all product areas.

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You can download the full study at no cost from the AIIM website. You'll find it under the “Research” menu at www.aiim.org. Or, just go directly to http://www.aiim.org/Research/Collaboration/Enterprise20-Research.aspx.