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Document Engineering: Analyzing And Designing Documents For Business Informatics And Web Services (MIT Press)



Synopsis

Much of the business transacted on the Web today takes place through information exchanges made possible by using documents as interfaces. For example, what seems to be a simple purchase from an online bookstore actually involves at least three different business collaborations -- between the customer and the online catalog to select a book; between the bookstore and a credit card authorization service to verify and charge the customer's account; and between the bookstore and the delivery service with instructions for picking up and delivering the book to the customer. Document engineering is needed to analyze, design, and implement these Internet information exchanges. This book is an introduction to the emerging field of document engineering. The authors, both leaders in the development of document engineering and other e-commerce initiatives, analyze document exchanges from a variety of perspectives. Taking a qualitative view, they look at patterns of document exchanges as components of business models; looking at documents in more detail, they describe techniques for analyzing individual transaction patterns and the role they play in the overall business process. They describe techniques for analyzing, designing, and encoding document models, including XML, and discuss the techniques and architectures that make XML a unifying technology for the next generation of e-business applications. Finally, they go beyond document models to consider management and strategic issues -- the business model, or the vision, that the information exchanged in these documents serves.

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Customer Reviews

At the end of the day, business success comes down to three things: a product, the market, and the business processes. The business processes consist of people, tools and workflow. You can have a great product in a great market but if you have bad business processes...you can forget about it. Many organizations have tried to implement Six Sigma to ensure highly effective business processes. The key to six sigma is data. Data tells you how effective your processes are. For example, data will tell you things like: how many parts per million are defective, how many invoices per million were inaccurate, how many orders shipped late, how long it takes to execute an order once a contract is signed, how long a customer support rep spent on the phone, etc.....Once you have the data, evaluating the problem and recommending a solution is easy. The hard part however is getting the data. You can either collect the data manually over time or if you have the infrastructure you can collect it electronically through software. Unfortunately if you have to collect the data manually, it takes a long time, effort and money. If you collect data electronically it enables no additional time and provides real time visibility and the ability to implement positive changes on the fly. So how do you go from a manual data collection process to an automated data collection process? That's what this book, Document Engineering, will help you figure out. I have owned this book for about 2 months and it has been on my desk since. I continuously refer to it for insights on how to develop a clear plan on how to implement a data collection infrastructure that will help to more effectively manage business processes.

I really should like this book - it's highly related to what I do and I love my job. There were a number of good nuggets of information and references that I will find useful however I found I had a great deal of trouble reading the actual text - I found it boring. The large print, gaps between the lines and the stretched filled spacing of each line made it difficult to quickly scan paragraphs and grasp the gist of what was being said, even when rereading. The grid diagrams were also problematic - they all had the same look - there was little that was memorable about them. The authors also often used round about wording where more direct statements would have been clearer. As an experiment I typed a couple of random paragraphs from the text and found that they made a lot more sense. I also showed the text around to some of my co-workers and got the same reactions. Given the title of the book it is somewhat ironic that it should have this kind of a problem, but the book deals with

principles for the automated transformation of content, not effective presentation style. Better editing would have made a better book.

Document Engineering is a practical exploration of the role documents play in the nexus of contracts that drive modern businesses. The interdisciplinary approach put forward here, taking document engineering out of the realm of pure software engineering, is eye opening and provides some real insight into what it takes to make Service Oriented Architectures work in the real world. This is an absolute must read book for anyone seriously considering developing an XML based document integration strategy.

The book is a refreshingly understandable approach to explaining Service Oriented Architecture, Web Services and the Semantic Web. Other texts often drown the reader in hugely verbose XML examples. But here, the authors achieve clarity in discussing the essence of the above concepts. The XML snippets are clear, without being overly long. You can also see why interoperability issues might inevitably arise in a loosely coupled Web Services environment. Often due to differing semantic meanings attached to the same fields in a common document structure. The book touches upon hard problems of ontologies and how the different meanings might be accommodated in a realistic deployment of distributed Web Services.

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