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## **Gartner Predicts 2002: Internet Platforms and Web Services**

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This is a Letter From the Editor for the "Gartner Predicts 2002: Internet Platforms and Web Services" issue of the Internet Platforms and Web Services Spotlight.

## ANALYSIS

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Among the useful distinctions lost in the hype-induced Internet buying binge was an appropriate sense of urgency and perspective in making Internet technology investments. Today, the Internet is in the "Trough of Disillusionment" of the Gartner Hype Cycle, largely because it is taking far longer for the Internet to transform business than technologists had led us to believe it would.

Current economic conditions now increase the pressure on IT decision makers to demonstrate a near-term ROI on Internet technology investments. As one would expect, a confluence of economic, world and industry trends has further dampened enterprises' enthusiasm about pursuing the next big Internet "thing." Gartner views this situation as a unique opportunity for IT decision makers to catch their breath and plan their next phase of Internet evolution.

This Spotlight issue examines some fundamental forces that will drive the evolution of the Internet through 2006 (see "2002: Tomorrow Belongs to Network-Enabled Components," AV-14-9002). Central to this is the Internet's burgeoning ability to facilitate the interoperation of business processes made available through highly distributed, network-enabled component interfaces — that is, through Web services.

The Web services paradigm will cause every enterprise to revisit its assumptions about its IT architecture, from application development environments, to messaging systems, to content management systems, to e-commerce platforms and enterprise portals. Users of these technologies will experience the need to further adapt themselves to an even more-distributed and loosely connected world.

Ultimately, Web services will be a process of self-discovery. Enterprises will be confronted with the dual dilemmas of 1) describing their organization and 2) redefining their value propositions so that they can reveal their core competencies as interoperable software components. Of primary concern are the mechanisms and business rules that will determine which competencies will be shared publicly vs. which will remain private. How long will this take? At least as long as it took for enterprises to reach their current level of Internet sophistication: approximately five years.

Given the pace at which this next stage of the Internet's evolution will occur, it makes sense to take the long view. This positions 2002 as an appropriate time for enterprises to become introspective about their core competencies and the Internet strategies that leverage their fundamental strengths. Toward that end, this Spotlight issue provides advice and perspective to help every business make its Internet strategy a continuing success.

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