

# DATABASE BY DESIGN, INC.

## Leverage the Web Lightening Quick Data Gathering with Web Services

### There's Got to Be an Easier Way!

- ✓ Would you like to have information readily available for your customers instead of putting them on hold for things like "delivery status"?
- ✓ Have you ever wanted to get information from other web sites into your database program?
- ✓ If you could make information readily available to your staff members, would they be more cost effective and efficient?
- ✓ Would you like to electronically transfer data between your database and your customers and/or suppliers so that your communication costs are lowered?

If you wanted these capabilities before, you could have acquired them for a costly sum. Not any more.

### Web Services to the Rescue!

Now there is a solution (called "Web Services") that is less expensive and relatively easy to implement. It is designed to solve the communication problems that occur when trying to get different database systems to transfer information. Adding this technology to your database system can be cost effective and can pay off in big benefits, boosting the bottom line of your organization. Now you can have the data that you desire!



### Examples of the Power of Web Services

**Managing Your Customer Service:** If your organization ships several items using Federal Express shipping services, you may have found that they offer the ability for you to find transit and delivery information about your shipments on their web site. When you visit their site, you can simply enter the tracking code of the item shipped and the system will display a listing of each part of its journey, including the date and time of delivery and the recipient's name. When your customers call for the status of the shipment, you can relay the information found at the Federal Express site. This can be quite tedious and costly if you get constant requests for this information.



If you add Web Services to your database program, you could have your system contact Federal Express each night to gather the transit information for all shipped packages that are in your system. When a customer calls to find the status of the order, you can see all the transit and delivery information of the order right there in your system without having to visit the web site. Answers to your customer service shipping questions are immediate, which saves you time and money, and it helps ensure the loyalty of your customers.

Empower your customers by having this information available on your web site. If you allow customers to order and check the status of their orders through your web site, the shipping information can be displayed as well. With this system in place, it would free up valuable human resources from having to answer phone calls by providing this information to your customer at their convenience.

**Managing Your Sales Costs:** If you have a sales staff that travels a lot, you have probably found the benefits of using an on-line service to research flight times and costs of the different airline options. These services are very helpful, but it becomes difficult to associate the travel costs with specific sales efforts or even with specific clients. Tracking these travel costs can be very helpful in analyzing the cost of acquiring or maintaining a customer compared to the revenues generated from that customer.



If you use Yahoo Travel for researching your travel options, you could use their Web Services options to integrate with your database. Imagine that your database program could access their travel center and request various travel options for you. Instead of checking travel options one at a time on the web site, you could instruct your system to ask for possible flights among several date options. You could then have a listing of the results shown on your system where you could choose the one that you want to purchase. The system could then store this information for you and associate it with a sales promotion or a specific client so that you can review your costs for the year in a very detailed manner to assess your most effective efforts.

### Utilize the Benefits

Another area where Web Services can help you optimize your cost structure involves the transfer of information between your systems and your business partners' systems. Direct communication between a company and its suppliers and/or customers can provide benefits to everyone involved.

By having this information available on your web site... it would free up valuable human resources...

Use Web Services to get needed information in a more automated, convenient, and cost effective way. Look for more options to arise as this technology is expanded in the future. At Database by Design we know how to make Web Services work for you. We can add to your system or build a new one to help you leverage the information that is available on the web. Contact us so we can help you improve your data acquisition efforts.

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**Next Month's Topic:** Database Safety Issues - Lessons learned from recent Internet attacks