Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce to you WfMC's tenth annual BPM and Workflow Handbook, rounding out a complete decade of this important reference work. Throughout the decade, led by Layna Fischer, the Handbooks have consistently focused on the leading trends and advancements in the process technology marketplace.

Year 2009 was a real turning point in the process technology space. It was a year where a number of key pure-play business process management suite (BPMS) vendors were acquired, and are now incorporated into the stacks of large technology vendors. Many analysts responded asking the question whether we were seeing the end of BPM, but such a shopping spree should be viewed instead of the ultimate complete legitimization of BPM. The consolidation of the industry indicates that it has become mainstream. A budget item for BPM technology is no longer exotic and hard to justify, but instead a normal and frequently required part of IT spending. It seems that BPM has come of age.

Looking over the decade, we have seen both the introduction and the maturation of an area of technology known as business process management (BPM). Back at the time of the first Handbook, in 2001, the acronym BPM would have been unfamiliar to all but a few people. This handbook in 2001 was called simply the "Workflow Handbook." It is interesting to see the introduction of the term *BPM* at about that time, later to rise and completely eclipse the use of the term *workflow*. BPM promised many different things to different people: in fact even today, there are two different personalities of BPM. BPM means two distinct things to two different sets of people.

To some in the information technology sector, BPM means essentially a way to develop solutions that integrate information from many separate applications across the enterprise. This kind of BPM is an extension of the Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) field. As applications gain the ability to deliver raw information to remote requesters, they have become services which play a part in a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA). To these people BPM has represented the ability to orchestrate web services (using BPEL), and to make composite applications by integrating the results from many separate application.

To others, BPM represented the idea that management would represent the work of the organization as business processes, and they then manage these processes over the long term. This approach is completely separate from the technology (we are talking about processes, which, in many cases involve humans) but still technology was developed to help in the describing of processes, and the facilitation of the work to manage and maintain the processes. The end goal is the same; better support for the business. Proponents in this group will sometimes vigorously protest that BPEL and the integration technology are not central to the management aspect of BPM.

This bifurcation into two personalities of BPM still exists. What is interesting about the consolidation of 2009 was that companies in the integration space were acquiring companies in the management space. This allows the key vendors to offer the entire range from low level IT integration to higher level organizational management of processes.

While BPM crosses the gap into the mainstream, those who chase the cutting edge are asking "what is next?" The first half of 2010 was filled with soul search-

ing for a "new definition" of BPM. Is it going to be Social BPM? Dynamic BPM? Consider that BPM is built on the concepts of Scientific Management, and idea that perfecting a process to be repeatable and efficient is the best way to get work done. The main push behind BPM in recent years has been toward making more and more elaborate process definitions with increasing capabilities for handling information flow. Notation, such as BPMN, has been elaborated toward the precise definition of information flow, and it is now seen as primarily a programming tool for process specialists. The idea of mass production of processes, done thousands of times in exactly the same way, achieving the benefits of scalability, has clearly been shown not only possible, but readily available. What is next?

Many analysts noted the rising importance of "Case Management" in the latter half of 2009 and early 2010. Case Management represents the antithesis of scientific management. Case Management is founded on the idea that getting the work done is more important than perfecting the process. It goes further than this, in saying that the details of the case are so overwhelmingly responsible for the plan of attack, that it is not useful to isolate the plan from the case itself. A large investment in creating a plan is not justified when the plan is used only once. Each case must be handled by an intelligent human being who can take in the situation, bring to bear experience and knowledge gained from earlier cases, and synthesize for this particular case the process necessary. It is the opposite of BPM because instead of trying to find one single "best" process, Case Management is oriented toward finding a different and unique process for every different situation, and tools that support custom on-the-fly elaboration of processes.

The process community is having a hard time understanding the difference that case management brings, because after a decade of struggle to get people to view all work as a process, it is hard then to see another view. Because the case manager is not a programmer, it can't be exclusively a paradigm around programming the integration. Forrester has talked about Dynamic Case Management, IBM announces Advanced Case Management, and the WfMC has been active in trying to refine the concepts under the term Adaptive Case Management (ACM). It seems that while BPM is an approach that works well for predictable processes, Case Management is a separate approach that works for unpredictable, emergent processes. Interestingly, some of the same technology underlies both of these approaches.

The Workflow Management Coalition continues to push forward on standards to enable process model interchange, working directly with the BPMN finalization task force, as well as with other efforts to define conformance classes to allow for distinct levels of interoperability. WfMC remains the only standards organization focused exclusively on process technology.

Which brings us to the reason to focus this volume on Business Process Intelligence. Regardless of whether you design a fixed definition in advance for a predictable process, or whether a case manager extends the plan for an unpredictable process while working, the results can be analyzed with process intelligence technology. Retrospective analysis can tell us if the processes are going according to plan, and can tell us if the plan itself is a good idea. In cases where work was performed without the guidance of a process, process mining, also known as automatic process discovery, can tell us what the process has actually been without having to involve people in lengthy, and error prone, interviews. Process mining can tell us what is efficient and inefficient about an existing work pattern, and it can give us a jump-start on new BPM implementation efforts when no previous process definition exists. Business (Process) Intelligence is a field that is just be-

ginning to show very promising results. Eleven independent authors bring us views of this topic. After all, in the end, it is process analytics that keeps us all honest. Because it can measure performance, Business Process Intelligence is a critical part of delivering on the promise of improving performance of the business.

While the next decade remains unpredictable, it is only through the careful consideration of current trends, and maintaining an ability to respond with agility, that one can hope to navigate successfully. Representing the membership of the Workflow Management Coalition, I hope you find these articles helpful in your efforts to keep up to date on the current trends in the process technology community.

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