Making a Technology Choice

Windows SharePoint Services 3.0 offers a general foundation for human workflow applications. Office SharePoint Server 2007 provides extra capabilities built on this foundation. When is the workflow support in Windows SharePoint Services sufficient, and when is Office SharePoint Server also required? Here’s a short summary of the major factors in making this decision.

Windows SharePoint Services alone is appropriate for:

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| • | Adding application logic to Windows SharePoint Services sites that works with documents and list items. |
| • | Building workflow applications where user interaction via ASPX forms in a Web browser is sufficient. |

Office SharePoint Server is required for:

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| • | Using most of the pre-defined workflows that Microsoft provides. (The exception is Issue Tracking, which ships with Windows SharePoint Services and uses only ASPX forms.) |
| • | Building workflow applications where user interaction via Office 2007 client applications is required. This option also allows using InfoPath workflow forms, which are simpler to create and provide more functionality than ASPX forms. |

It’s worth pointing out that either technology can provide a foundation for independent software vendors (ISVs). A tool-focused ISV might build specialized tools for creating workflows, targeting either developers or information workers. An application-oriented ISV might provide pre-defined workflows addressing specific problems, such as a help desk application or a process for digital asset management. Depending on the requirements, the ISV might choose to base its application solely on Windows SharePoint Services or to require Office SharePoint Server as well.