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## The myth and reality of Web 2.0 to host

*The modernisation of old applications into new-generation interfaces is not a new phenomenon. However, publishers specialised in overhauling old systems are now also surfing the wave of Web 2.0.*

**17/10/2006** With the appearance of application servers based on Web standards, Information System Departments have started to examine how they can upgrade their old-generation programmes to this new environment. For many, the option of migration is not always a possibility. This is because it is difficult to abandon a solution which has proved its worth in terms of security and performance and around which the company has built up its own expertise, and to replace it with an emerging technological environment.

Offering an alternative to complete migration, publishers are now producing integration solutions that allow access to these central software packages via Web interfaces instead of proprietary monitors. This method is known as Web-to-Host. With the arrival of Web 2.0, which is essentially characterised by the creation of Web functions similar to rich interface environments, the companies in this segment have recently expanded the range of products offered.

Syspertec is a notable player in this field. In 2002, this French publisher offered an initial tool for translating 32/70 programmes into conventional HTML screens. "The first applications in AJAX started to appear in early 2005. We immediately understood how these JavaScript requests could help us enhance the Web interfaces of our clients and thus improve their interactivity", explains Jean-Michel Saby, Development Manager at Syspertec.

### A first step at Seagull: the deployment of Web Services

He adds: "In particular, AJAX introduced the notion of asynchronous requests and allowed updating to be concentrated on a specific point of the screen". The publisher therefore decided to implement a product policy based on this idea.

After developing an initial asynchronous request management application from its Web server, over the coming months Syspertec decided to take advantage of the many programming interfaces and JavaScript libraries appearing in Open Source. "These codes allowed more effective adaptation of our solution to the specific issues of each project", explains Jean-Michel Saby. The libraries exploited by Syspertec include YUI (by Yahoo) and the Dojo tool kit that is used in particular for the creation of sortable tables.

At Seagull, one of the world's major Web-to-Host players, AJAX is not yet a reality. "Our products can however dialogue with system applications in real-time via Web Services. This allows us to construct Web interfaces with composite functions that are similar to Web 2.0", says Yves Guéry, Services Manager and Technical Director of Seagull Software in France.

Seagull is working on the possibility of integrating a development mechanism based on AJAX codes into its solution. For the time being, the group has signed an agreement with Ecensity which

offers a solution for rewriting interfaces in Web mode including the AJAX specification.

Syspertec is currently launching initial projects for the deployment of Web 2.0. interfaces. "A bank has chosen our Virtel solution to transform the screens of its mainframe applications into HTML. We have installed a JavaScript library that manages a navigation menu which will be present in each application without having to be loaded every time a page is opened", says Jean-Michel Saby. " It's a good example of how Web 2.0 can contribute to the development of interactivity."

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