

Open Group forms industry vertical for exploration, mining, metals and minerals

The Open Group, the world's leading IT standards body, has convened a global collaborative drive to set enterprise architecture standards for the exploration, mining, metals and minerals industries.

The drive, conducted under the auspices of The Open Group, is the first of its kind worldwide. It will see the creation of enterprise architecture reference models specific to the industry.

Founding members of the Exploration, Mining, Metals and Minerals Vertical (EMMMV) are Real IRM, the representative of The Open Group in South Africa, Datamine, Debswana, Exxaro, Lonmin, Rio Tinto Mining and Exploration, SAP and The Open Group itself. In total, 40 organisations have expressed interest in joining the vertical, and over a period of time most companies which operate in these sectors worldwide are expected to become members.

"The activities of the EMMM Vertical span both business and technology, from the boardroom to the rock face," says Sarina Viljoen, the South African representative of The Open Group.

"The first deliverables of the EMMM Vertical will be reference models which can be applied to all companies in these sectors worldwide," says Viljoen. "These reference models will span the domains of business, information, data, applications and technology. As intellectual capital, garnered through work done by the founding members both in southern Africa and abroad, it will provide the industry with a foundation architecture from which participating organisations can jumpstart their operations and modify the models to suit their specific needs."

The reference models can cut by 60% and thousands of dollars, the time and expense required to design and deliver the enterprise architecture, adds Viljoen.

Member organisations will have a significant edge over their competitors, and be able to participate in the development and evolution of reference models for their industries.

Similar work in other industries

The EMMM Vertical will function across five continents. It follows on similar approaches in other industries, such as banking, where Microsoft and SAP led work to deliver reference models for that industry; the telecommunications market, which follows the eTOM reference model; and supply chain, which uses SCOR.

The formation of the EMMM Vertical follows on an agreement reached at the Gartner Mining and Resource Industry Technology 2007 Summit held in South Africa.

International research has shown that enterprise architecture confers long-term competitive advantage, and that companies which execute their strategy in line with enterprise architectural principles are more competitive and more profitable than their competitors. They are easily able to accommodate change, to enter new territories, to complete mergers and acquisitions, and to maximise return on IT spend.

"The objective of the EMMM Vertical is to realise sustainable business value through collaboration around a common operating model," says Viljoen. "In so doing, it will enable its members to differentiate their business-IT investment, and it will support vendors in their delivery of technical and business solutions."

Real IRM as a member of the vertical, will focus on applying enterprise architecture discipline based on The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF), the most

widely accepted industry framework. South Africa has played a lead role in defining and adopting TOGAF.

"Companies in the natural resources industry have reached the insight that they need to redefine their processes," says Viljoen. "Where typical drivers of 20th century mining practices were economies of scale, efficiency, vertical integration and domination, they have been replaced by new drivers in support of agility, such as flexibility, responsive, optimisation, value chains and collaboration. Enterprise architecture will help natural resources companies to achieve these goals."

Other areas enterprise architecture will help natural resource companies to address include:

- * The skills shortage, by encapsulating existing knowledge.
- * Business and solution complexity.
- * Regulatory and reporting requirements, which change frequently.
- * The critical need for an integrated approach to safety, health, environment and quality (SHE-Q).

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