



Podcast

When Document 2.0 meets Office 2.0

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Umang: Hi, this is Umang Shah and I'm from Xerox Global Services. This podcast is part of an ongoing series. Be sure to visit Xerox.com/ThoughtLeadership to download future Podcasts.

Today, I'm proud to present a conversation between Francois Ragnet and Ismael Ghalimi on the role of documents in Office 2.0. Francois is a managing principal for technology innovation within Xerox Global Services. He leads a team charged with transferring novel technologies into mainstream Xerox solution offerings. His team also focuses on enhancing current offerings within the Office environment to improve the efficiency of current products and streamlined support processes. Francois is based out of Grenoble, France.

Ismael Ghalimi is a passionate entrepreneur and fervent industry observer, founder and CEO of Intalio, creator of BPMI.org, initiator of the BPM 2.0 movement, producer of the Office 2.0 Conference, organizer of the Extreme Productivity series, and the founder of Monolab/Workspace. Ismael is an advisor to several high-tech companies including 3Tera, BuzzGain, Diigo, EchoSign, EveryTrail, Move & Play, and ThinkFree. Ismael is based out of Palo Alto. Now I'd like to turn it over to Francois and Ismael.

Francois: So Ismael, Xerox attended this year's Office 2.0 Conference, which is really this visionary cloud computing, collaborative experiment. That's not necessarily an association that comes to mind. What was your initial reaction when you saw Xerox proposing to attend or to present at this conference?

Ismael: Well, we were very happy to have you guys participate, Francois. Our view is that Xerox is all about managing documents and managing the processes that documents can help fulfill or execute, and the Office 2.0 Conference is all about understanding how business processes can be conducted in the cloud, how we can provide productivity to knowledge workers using online applications instead of applications that are running on your desktop or laptop computer, and a lot of these business processes require documents, either traditional paper-based documents or online documents that you develop with a word processor or exchange over e-mail as PDF files. The nature of the document doesn't really matter; what matters is the workflows and the processes that will manage them toward a goal that is set by the business, and we always viewed that Xerox had a unique understanding of the issues at hand, and so having your participation to that event was actually just for us a validation that you understand the role that online tools are going to play for managing these processes and you have a desire for Xerox to play a very significant role in that venture.

Francois: Well, maybe I can tell you a bit about my own experience because you know, at first I didn't know what to expect, and Office 2.0 being that great collaborative experiment, I started blogging to sort of frame the topic of Document 2.0. But until I came here, I really didn't know what to expect. You then asked me to run that panel around the role of documents in Office 2.0, and it ended up being a tremendous experience for me. I was joined by people—Mitch Grasso from SlideRocket, Jason from Plutext, Greg Johnson from Salesforce.com, Louisa Alfresco and David Terra from WordFrame, as well as Ed Shee from [3:25]. Until then, I didn't know them, but then it really turned out to be an excellent discussion, and what I kept from that discussion was that documents still have a very strong role to play in Office and Enterprise 2.0. And even more interesting was the reaction from some of the attendees that they were still reluctant or they still wanted to see how the cloud could bring them the long-term preservation, the non-repudiation, the security aspect that a local solution could bring them. So to me, it was really a great and enlightening experience. Have you heard anything else about that panel?

Ismael: Absolutely. We got very positive feedback on many panels, but this one in particular. And I think what got people interested about this discussion is that this panel was covering the area of 'How do we bridge the online world with the offline world?' And that is as much as we want to do everything online, as much as we want to have all our data in the cloud and strive for the vision of the paperless office, there's always an offline component. And really the challenge is not so much to put everything online, but much more to bridge the gap between online and offline better; make sure that the ends of whenever you go from a paper document to an online version of that document, whenever you go from atomic to electronic, it is handled appropriately so that all this quality of service that you describe such as non-repudiation, such as the ability to archive that document on the very long term—what will happen to that document fifty years down the road? A hundred years down the road? Maybe a thousand years down the road? How do we deal with these issues? I think that panel was very good at bringing these issues to the table, starting the discussion, and then the discussion is continuing online now.

Francois: Yes, yes. That was definitely a great discussion, and actually it's still visible on the Office 2.0 site; it's been recorded on video and it still is available there, correct?

Ismael: That's correct—and it will remain there.

Francois: Excellent. From my standpoint, another excellent thing that I retained from Office 2.0 was really some of the advocacies, or prophecies I could say almost, on the future of documents were becoming true. The document is going toward this not atomic, but instead distributed aggregation of content from various places; it's becoming evergreen, it's becoming refreshed, always up to date, and that's really something that I've been advocating for and which—where I saw technology, which really belonged to my dreams almost, at Office 2.0—SlideRocket; Zoho Docs; Google Docs, of course; MyBoo—quite a few of those. So it was really an enlightenment for me to see some of—maybe some living dreams come true. Now maybe you want to say a few words about the direction for Office 2.0 next year?

Ismael: Sure. The Office 2.0 Conference is essentially a real-time experiment*online productivity, and so not only do we talk about it, but we try to use it as much as possible; it's a little bit like eating our own dog food. And so the whole conference is itself

managed as a business online, entirely in the cloud. We aren't using any single piece of software; everything is put online. We're using a lot of applications like Salesforce.com and Google Apps and Zoho to essentially automate all our processes and digitize all our processes and run them from the cloud, and during the event, we're trying to make it as paper-free as possible; in fact, the last three events—the first three, I should say—were completely paper-free. So we proved that we could run an entire business—and it's about a million dollar business altogether—we proved that we could run an entire business paper-free. Now we're progressing in our understanding of that experiment and the challenges that we're facing, and actually next year we're interested to introduce some paper because we believe that paper has a critical role to play in these processes and we're interested to really focus our attention, again, on the hand-off between the offline and the online, or the *atomic* and the electronic. And with the working scenarios, we're gonna automate throughout the organization of the conference—prior to the event and then during the conference and after—we're going to automate a lot of business processes, from user registration to interaction with attendees, with these online tools and using, whenever it makes sense, this fantastic material, this fantastic medium, that is paper. Hopefully, we're gonna use the great Xerox multifunction printers to do that, and what we're doing, discussing with you guys and also our partners in Japan, which is Xerox, which is our Palo Alto center, here in Palo Alto, we're trying to understand what kind of scenarios we can build that are really showing how you can automate these end-to-end processes, these long-running transactions, that at some point will require and will be best handled with some piece of paper, and then link that to the online world and make sure that all these value-added services that we mentioned, such as non-repudiation, can be carried over. So that's one of the elements of the Conference for next year. We're also very concerned, of course, by the environment and the impact of conferences such as ours on the environment. And here, we're trying to achieve two goals; one is to bring people together, get them to meet—as you said, that was a great experience for yourself personally to meet these new people and have that conversation together on that panel. So we'd like to very much foster that, have people meeting in the same place at the same time. By the same token, we'd like to invite more and more participants online and make that experience very unique not only on the location, but also from multiple locations around the world.

What we've done for the past two years is that we've broadcast the live video feed of all the sessions on the Internet for free, in real time, and we're gonna continue doing that, but what we're gonna try next year is to actually organize the conference from multiple locations at the same time, and so we're working with partners such as Polycom, that has provided us some very nice videoconferencing equipment we are playing with right now; we're discussing with companies like Cisco, and I can't tell you exactly what we're gonna do, but most likely you'll be able to join the Office 2.0 Conference 2009 from multiple locations like Paris and London and Singapore and Tokyo and San Francisco all at the same time. We'd have to deal with the time zone issues, so you might have to wake up early or go to bed very late, but really the goal is trying to understand how, again, cloud and cloud-based computing can provide not only this automation of processes, but these great user experiences that allow us to get things done and learn new things.

Francois: Did you mention that you were going to target more of the top 500 large enterprises kind of population?

Ismael: That's correct. In the first edition, 2006, it was all about 'Hey, look at these cool tools, or toys. Let's play with them.' The second one was 'Let's try to understand how these technologies can be used by either individuals or small businesses, or maybe students/teachers in schools.' The third year, the one you attended, was about the enterprise. We thought that the technology was maturing to the point where it could be used by larger SMBs and large corporations, and we received fantastic presentations from the likes of General Electric and Wachovia and Cisco and Sun Microsystems. And moving forward for next year, for 2009, we're interested by the very large enterprise—by the global enterprise. And what we want to show is that these technologies can really enable very interesting processes, very interesting collaboration at a global scale, at a large scale. And of course, if we can show that, since we've shown already that it works at a smaller scale, then we'll make the point that actually it's ready for pretty much anybody in the market. And so our target audience for Office 2.0 2009 are the Global 500 companies, and we're trying to get the Office 2.0 evangelists, or the Web 2.0 evangelists, of as many Global 500 corporations as possible for next year, as well as representatives from as many countries as possible—and we already have more than 50 Global 500 that are committed and more than two dozen countries that will be represented. So I don't know if we'll get all 500 and all 130-something countries, but we're trying to get as many as we can.

Francois: That sounds very promising; I'm looking forward to it. And maybe we'll see Xerox multifunction printers as a gateway to the cloud. So thank you, Ismael—it was great talking with you again, and looking forward to next year.

Ismael: Absolutely, very much so. And we should start working on the integration of those MFPs right away. We've got some very good scenarios in mind.

Umang: If you'd like to learn more about information overload or Office 2.0 and other important topics, join us at Xerox.com/ThoughtLeadership. I'm Umang Shah; on behalf of Xerox Global Services, thank you for listening.

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