

CIPScene

Canadian Information Processing Society, Calgary Section

OCTOBER 2003

Speaker

John Schuett, AESO

Topic

J2EE and .NET

Date

Thursday, October 23, 2003

Time

7:30 am

Registration and
continental breakfast

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Presentation

9:00 am – 9:15 am

Question and answer period;
wrap-up

Location

Calgary Petroleum Club,
Devonian Room
319 - 5 Avenue SW

Register online at

<https://securegs.com/cips/>

CIPS OCTOBER SEMINAR

"Knowledge Sharing and Networking"

J2EE and .NET

In response to our membership survey it was requested that an objective comparison of J2EE and .NET, independently of the "owners" of the environment, be presented. John Schuett, of Alberta Electric System Operator, will define the two environments, along with the pros and cons of each, from both a business and technical perspective. Some firsthand recommendations from his practical implementations in both environments will be provided as well.

John Schuett is a Calgary-based senior software developer who has worked locally and internationally in enterprise technologies like J2EE and .NET. Currently a Development Team Lead at AESO, John coordinates development of several mission-critical web-based applications. This coordination covers writing software, managing tools and methodologies, change management, version control, and application architecture. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Calgary.



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If payment is to be made by cheque, please forward it to the office *before* the event. All reservations not paid for by the day of the event may be resold.

Payments will not be processed at the event.

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CIPScene

CIPScene is a publication of the
CANADIAN INFORMATION
PROCESSING SOCIETY,
CALGARY SECTION

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Published by

At Associations
Plus Inc.

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It has been an extraordinary summer in Calgary and hopefully, you got a chance to get out to the mountains or to enjoy the sights and sounds of the back deck with your family. As for me, I had a very busy summer but thoroughly enjoyed a couple of weeks away to Vancouver and many evenings on the back deck with family and friends.

As the fall routine settles in with the kids' return to school and likely over-commitment to extracurricular programs and activities, we at CIPS are also gearing up for the season. Our annual planning session will be held on September 19; each portfolio will finalize its plans and budgets per its mandates. Plans being what they are, the board will allow flexibility in the spirit of continuous improvement throughout the year. I encourage you to discuss your ideas and needs with any board member as the season progresses.

After a tough spring and summer employment season it is good to hear that there is some higher level of activity in the job market. Let us hope it is more than

just the normal end-of-summer spike. As we all look forward to a sustained recovery within our sector, it is (as always but particularly now) a time to focus on high payoff activities at work and areas of personal development. Employers are looking for a proven ability to deliver value to customers and it will be those that can deliver results within a challenging, under-resourced environment who will always be in demand. In an environment where the supply of talent is greater than the demand, it is more than the hard skills that win out. With all the pressures on our time within our professions and personal lives, Stephen Covey's lessons should ring loud and clear – don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Broadening our perspectives through pursuing professional designations, continuously developing our skills, and broadening our networks seem to be more important than ever in our pursuit of excellence. Of course, (need I say?) one sure way to stay informed, connected, and continuously improving is through participation at CIPS events and pursuing the I.S.P. See you at the next CIPS event. ☺

Speaker
TBA

OCTOBER LUNCH MEETING
"Knowledge Sharing and Networking"

Date
Wednesday,
October 1, 2003

At publication time, the lunch meeting information was unavailable. Check the website at <http://local.cips.ca/calgary> for additional information.

Time
11:30 am
Registration

12:00 noon
Presentation

Location
Calgary Chamber
of Commerce

4th Floor, 517
Centre Street South

Please register by noon on Friday, September 26, 2003 as seating is limited.

Register online at <https://securegs.com/cips/> or phone CIPS at (403) 244-4487. You may send a replacement if you cannot attend. Prepaid seats will be guaranteed until 12:00 noon, at which time they may be released for general admission.

PRICES - Pre-registered
(Prices include GST)

Members - **\$32.50**
Non-members - **\$40.00**
Student Members - **\$21.50**

A two-dollar surcharge will apply for all walk-ins.

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Show Leadership - Be Involved...



I have been serving the CIPS Alberta Board since 1989 as Secretary, Director of Discipline and Professional Practice, Vice President, and now, President. I have led the formulation of the discipline procedures, the introduction of the ISP Professional of the Year Award in 2002, and the recent refurbishment of the CIPS Alberta website. This could not have been done without the active commitment and participation of the Board members.

CIPS Alberta has had a long history of attracting top professionals and leaders who care about the IT profession. This can make being a Board member an increasingly hard act to follow. Yet, we have to be mindful of asking ourselves at the beginning of each new term: why do we exist, what is our mandate, who are the stakeholders, and what are their expectations? We must understand these expectations and what we

can do to evolve and prosper within the constraints of our resources. This is necessary to keep our focus while we pursue our dreams and aspirations.

Our primary obligation is to administer the Information Systems Professional regulation, under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act (POARA). In this capacity, we are accountable to the Alberta Government for implementing and enforcing this regulation.

The I.S.P. membership is the second group of stakeholders we must care about when we make each decision. The value of an I.S.P. is what you make of it. By becoming an I.S.P., you have placed importance in being recognized as a professional. As such, each member should be concerned about what the Board does, respond to the Board's solicitation for input and advice through surveys, submit any questions or concerns to the Board and, most importantly, participate in the Annual General Meeting. Naturally, contributing to CIPS Alberta's evolution through participation on the Board or on committees is also important. The success of the Board depends on the membership's involvement, pure and simple.

Protecting the public interest is central to our responsibility as professionals. This is easier said than done. As individuals, we need to put the interests of our employers, our clients, and the public at large ahead of our own interests. While one of the Board's goals is to promote the awareness and value of the I.S.P. designation, your individual contributions as professionals will determine the real value of an I.S.P.

We also need to work together with CIPS National and the local chapters to foster the development of professional standards at the national level. This is, in my opinion, the next frontier. In September, the Board decides upon the program for the next year, which can also affect the agenda for years to come. I look forward to reporting to you next month on our work plan and projects for the coming year.

I also look forward to your continued input and critiques. You can contact me directly via either telephone: 403-862-7901 or email: edgardo@cips.ca.

Show leadership - be involved...

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myopia

Introductory classes in strategic management almost invariably touch on one or more of the following cases: the "Big Three" automakers and their response to the oil crisis of 1972/3, and IBM with its response to the emerging market for personal computers.

In the case of the oil crisis of 1972/3, the "Big Three" automakers continued to design and produce "boats," even as consumer preferences were being inexorably forced towards smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, due to the dramatic increase in oil and gasoline prices. This left the door open for manufacturers such as Toyota, Nissan, Honda, and Hyundai to enter the market with cars like the Civic, Sentra, and Excel. Predictably, consumers responded well to these "econoboxes" that met their primary need—cheap, reliable transportation.

IBM, as has been well-documented, was equally non-cognizant of the emerging market for personal computers in the early 1980s, viewing personal computers as an adjunct to its well-established mainframe and minicomputer lines. We all know how the personal computer story ends.

In more recent times, Microsoft nearly missed the Internet boat, and would have, save for a "bet the company" move by Bill Gates in 1995. The crossover vehicle segment basically caught General Motors by surprise after Chrysler released its PT Cruiser, Mazda its Protégé5, and Suzuki, the Aerio Fastback. The demand seen in the "vanilla" cola segment outstripped any projections Coca-Cola could have made, causing Pepsi to rush out its "smooth" vanilla cola.

In each of these cases, companies were internally-focused, navel-gazing organizations. This is what classical management theory, right up until about the 1960s and even the early 1970s, held.

Organizations existed in a vacuum, independent of events in the milieu within which they operated. This assumption was not disproved for many years until the environment changed. Once this "bedrock" assumption shifted, it caused a ripple of effects throughout the business environment.

One of these effects was the trendy, indeed, popular (think Peter Senge's "Fifth Discipline") bromide asserting that companies should be perceived as open systems.

Systems, of course, are a collection of interrelated parts that function as a (usually) coherent whole. Open

systems react to and respond to feedback from their environments.

This means that, in order to be successful within the new business paradigm, companies need to concentrate on their environment. This allows them to spot trends, concepts, and emerging data that will impact their operations and systems.

But, just as organizations were paralyzed throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, organizations are being derailed in the 21st century. However, instead of being paralyzed by *internal* forces and matters, organizations are now sabotaging themselves by overfocussing on *external* forces and issues.

The amount of time and energy that is spent on externalities is preventing organizations from taking time to step back and refocus to ensure that they can be nimble enough to respond to these externalities.

When organizations (or people) operate in "crisis mode", there is a definable "enemy" or "goal." This temporarily unites and brings people together, papering over the real problems and issues at the heart of the matter.

Think here of the US and USSR alliance during World War II, which degenerated into the Cold War immediately afterwards. Think here of the extensive spindoctoring being done by US President Bush and UK Prime Minister Blair around the need to engage in Gulf War II.

This also hits closer to home. School funding is a constant touchstone in Alberta. There are many people who are crying that the healthcare system is in crisis. There is a litany of similar problems throughout the public and private sectors.

Maybe it's time to put on the blinders again for a moment and seek a balance between external and internal focus. To build a strong internal capacity to handle external shifts and changes, attention and energy must be directed in these two different directions simultaneously.

Within your organization, resist the temptation to focus on the crisis du jour. The human capacity for adaptability is amazing and staff can often handle the crisis intelligently on their own. Focus instead on building the capability (i.e., focusing internally) within your staff to handle the externalities.

To focus solely externally or solely internally is to invite myopia... and not the type that can be corrected by an ophthalmologist's prescription. If anything, the "prescription" will be for the type of funeral service your company prefers. ☹️



CIPS Calgary Section

Future Meeting Dates

Wednesdays – 11:30 am

October 1, 2003	March 3, 2004
November 5, 2003	April 7, 2004
December 3, 2003	May 5, 2004
January 7, 2004	June 2, 2004
February 4, 2004	

*All meetings are held at the
Calgary Chamber of Commerce
4th Floor, 517 Centre Street South*

CIPS Events

October 23, 2003	CIPS CALGARY SEMINAR SERIES <i>J2EE and .NET</i> 7:30 am – 9:15 am Calgary Petroleum Club Devonian Room 319 - 5 Avenue SW
November 20, 2003	PROJECT MANAGEMENT SIG <i>Managing Agile Projects</i> 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm Fifth Avenue Place Conference Centre 2nd Floor, West Tower 237 - 4 Avenue SW

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When you attend a business meeting, you probably don't use the wrong fork or slurp wine from fine glassware. Just as it is important to have good table manners at a luncheon, it is essential that you mind your email manners in the workplace.

Email etiquette in business isn't as old a tradition as table manners, but it is becoming equally as important. A poorly crafted letter zipping through cyberspace can cause you embarrassment or, worse yet, a lost opportunity.

The following are some key principles to help you communicate clearly via email:

Think before you write. The great thing about an electronic message is that it's quick. The bad thing? It's quick. If someone sends you an email that raises your ire, you can easily tap out a fiery retort before you have time to cool off — a mistake that can haunt you and hurt your reputation.

The best advice: **Steer clear of any flame wars** (exchanges of angry emails) **that your colleagues may engage in at your company.** Take the time to compose your thoughts in a professional manner.

Stick to business; be considerate; and always maintain your composure — just as you would using any other method of communication.

Make use of the subject line. It sounds like such a simple, unimportant matter, but it is not. Since many people receive dozens of emails each day, the subject line serves as a critical flag that can help recipients prioritize and track important messages. For example, if you send a fellow employee some key data for the report he or she has been working on, type "important data for 'xy' project" in the subject line. Doing so will improve chances that your email gets the attention it deserves.

Don't misuse the caps lock key. In today's book of email etiquette, a letter written in all caps suggests that you are shouting at the recipient. Even if you have an important message to convey, the use of ALL CAPS sends the same loud, irritating message.

Write your letter as if the whole world will read it. Don't put anything in your emails that you wouldn't

want anyone else to see. Your message may be forwarded to many people without your knowledge.

Give the recipient a heads-up. If you require a fast response to your email, call and inform the recipient that you have sent a message. It is not only courteous, but also effective, since not everyone checks email several times a day.

Respond quickly. If someone has sent you an email, you can assume the answer is eagerly anticipated. Try to respond to all messages as soon as possible, even if your reply does nothing more than acknowledge receipt and indicate when you'll be able to provide a more thorough response.

Avoid the urge to forward chain letters or jokes.

They are annoying and unprofessional — and take time away from work. If you don't enjoy receiving them, you can bet your co-workers don't either. And even if you do find a particular joke humorous, your colleagues may not. Click on "delete" instead of "forward."

Be literal and avoid sarcasm. Since email recipients can't see your face or hear your voice, they are unable to determine your mood or whether you are joking. As a result, cute, sarcastic remarks can be read much differently than you intended.

Despite these and many other advantages, email cannot completely replace phone calls or face-to-face meetings — nor should it. These methods of communication continue to be valuable in building relationships and understanding complex situations. When used appropriately and courteously, email will reflect the professionalism and tact that should characterize all of your business interactions. ☺

Stephen Mill is a regional manager for Robert Half Technology, a consulting services firm that provides companies with skilled IT professionals on a project and full-time basis.

Project Management SIG

By the time this is published, we will have had our opening session in September, delivered by Dr. Francis Hartman, who is well-known in the local and international project management community. Dr. Hartman spoke to us concerning the critical role trust plays in IT projects, the topic of a major, multi-million dollar study at the University of Calgary for the past four years. Knowing Dr. Hartman, it will have been an entertaining and insightful presentation!

Once again, we want to thank our sponsor for this event, Quality Enhanced Decisions, a management advisory firm that specializes in rapid value-building through projects and effective change and in strategic planning and its effective implementation.

Our next session will be held:

Date: Thursday, November 20, 2003
Topic: *Managing Agile Projects*
Time: 12:00 noon (sharp) to 1:00 pm
Location: Fifth Avenue Place Conference Center
 2nd Floor, West Tower
 237 - 4 Avenue SW

Agile development techniques and their benefits have been widely publicized in the software development world in the last eighteen months. Many organizations are now looking at agile approaches, drawn by the claims of improved productivity, higher quality, better ROI and greater customer satisfaction. However, many of the "emergent", "light-weight" techniques advocated in agile methods appear contrary to the traditional "plan-based" project management best practices.

Mike Griffiths will provide an overview of agile development techniques from a project management perspective and examine the project circumstances that favour an agile approach. Mike is a full-time project manager and trainer at Quadrus Development Inc., specializing in appropriate methods. Before joining Quadrus in 2001, Mike worked for IBM Global Services, England and in 1994 was involved in the development of the agile methodology called DSDM. Since then Mike has continued to be active in the agile development

community and co-authored the DSDM White Paper, "Combining Agile Techniques with Formal Project Management". He holds PRINCE2 and PMP project management certifications, along with DSDM and Scrum agile certifications.

The presentation will make the case that many types of software development projects are sufficiently different from physical engineering-based projects that construction-inspired project controls are not the most appropriate means for management. Mike will then compare and contrast elements of the PMBOK against the principles of Agile development and suggest alternatives to the traditional project planning, execution, and tracking techniques. The explanation of these approaches will be backed up by accounts of their practical use on software development projects and will form the basis for discussion items.

Our session sponsor will be Quadrus Development Inc. Established in 1993, Quadrus delivers results-driven IT professional services and solutions to firms of all types and sizes across industry sectors using proven development practices and a wide variety of technologies.

To register, visit the CIPS SIG website at:
<http://www.associationsplus.ca/cipsig/>

Although the PM SIG events are free, please take the time to register so we can plan sufficient seating for the session.

Please note: In addition to registering for the specific event you wish to attend, if you are not, but would like to be, on the PM SIG Membership list to receive emails about upcoming events, sign up by registering for the "SIG Membership" event listed first in the events.

Should you wish further information, please contact:

Karen Wright - Partner, Ethier Associates
 Phone: 403-234-8960
 Email: kwright@ethierassociates.ca

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Knowledge & Networking Survey Results

Jeff Wallace

Director, Knowledge and Networking

Summer is nearly gone and we have received the feedback on our membership survey regarding lunch and breakfast topics. Very interesting...

The following are the results of the survey with feedback grouped where required. We will now be working to find the speakers for the topics you have asked for... watch this space in future editions of CIPScene for further seminar information. As well, we will send out emails on speakers' programs for the rest of this year and include all this information in the November *CIPScene* and *eBytes*.

- Trends in email; legislation around email archiving
- Networking and infrastructure - Novell
- Networking and infrastructure - Microsoft
- Objective comparison of J2EE and .NET - technical and business issues
- Current development methodologies - What and why - XP, RUP, Agile, Test-First, and FDD
- Considering a "computer room" - pros, cons, and the whys
- GPS developments and applications
- Wireless security issues and opportunities
- Impact of PIEDA (Bill C-6) on the IT community
- Successful implementation of an Enterprise Project Office
- Relationship management
- Project management
- Business process design
- ERP solution from the business point of view
- Ensuring outsource success
- What is middleware, why, how, success story with vendor
- GUI design
- Patents and selling your software ideas
- CEO's expectations of a CIO
- Innovation in team productivity in software development
- Business Intelligence - Leverage off of internal information
- Portals - Centre point of access for information for all users
- Next generation of enterprise application integration. ☛

WHAT IS CIPS?

CIPS is a group of professionals from all areas of IT. We offer the only IT professional designation (the I.S.P.) in Canada. Our events, including regular seminars, luncheons, and conferences, are dedicated to promoting continuous learning and networking opportunities. Through learning from other like-minded professionals, we are able to stay ahead in this fast-paced industry.

University of Calgary Student Receives Scholarship

CIPS Calgary offers congratulations to **Beatrice Kwok** of Calgary, Alberta on being awarded a CIPS scholarship and a student membership.

Beatrice writes: "...as a new member of the Canadian Information Processing Society, I will be able to learn more about the industry, meet new people, and join various industry related activities."

To find out more about CIPS Student Section membership, opportunities, and events, be sure to contact Ken Wrigley, Student Chair – phone: 233-7578 or e-mail: gum-man@telus.net. ☛