

Enterprise Computing

Enterprise computing is just one of the hundreds of buzzwords that have been spawned by the business computing market. Like many buzzwords, enterprise computing doesn't have a strict, technical meaning. It has a loose definition that has evolved through usage. The term refers to all the computing issues faced by large corporations and organizations. Here is a short list of those issues.

- Providing employee access to corporate data. The primary problem of enterprise computing is that most employees now use PCs, rather than a corporate mainframe. This switch is great for flexibility, but makes it difficult for everyone to have access to important corporate data.
- Ensuring security of password and corporate data. Just because employee access to data is important doesn't mean that everyone should be able to access any data she wants. Enterprise computing must face the issue of protecting some data while it makes other data available.
- Creating network connections among LANs, mainframes and standalone microcomputers. Many companies still have their "legacy" computer—usually an aging mainframe that still serves a valuable purpose. These companies also may have any number of LANs that connect groups of microcomputers. Employees who are trying to set up systems for enterprise computing are often concerned with connecting all the various systems so that information can move freely throughout the company.
- Handling multiple hardware and software configurations. Part of the problem with connecting different networks is that each one might be based on totally different hardware and software. The marketing department might have an AppleTalk network of Macs, whereas sales uses PCs connected through a Novel Netware LAN. True enterprise computing might try to establish a bridge that allows these two departments to share data.
- Establishing and maintaining electronic-mail systems. Electronic mail is one of the fundamental tools of modern business. But setting up a companywide electronic mail system can be difficult when different parts of the company are connected to different types of LANs.
- Keeping track of software licenses. The licensing arrangements for all the software that is used by a large organization can be incredibly complicated. Somebody with knowledge of all the computer systems needs to keep track of this information so that the organization doesn't violate any of the licenses.

- Providing training and support for employees. Traditionally the information systems department was in charge of training employees how to use new software for the central mainframe. Employees are now using more microcomputer software, but they still sometimes need help.