

Buildings 2.0

A great deal is being said about the future of buildings. How information technology is shaping the way buildings are designed, built, operated, and how buildings are generally viewed in the Internet-centric world we live in today. Many words and descriptions have been used to describe this vision, but none have come closer than the outcome of the Cisco Connected Roundtable at BuilConn in Dubai on 28 February, 2007.

The concept is to frame the future of buildings under the term “Buildings 2.0”.

What is Buildings 2.0?

Buildings 2.0 is a vision that intricately intertwines buildings with Internet technologies. It is a vision that the future of buildings is one which is controlled, managed and connected to the Internet in a way that goes far beyond simply placing a web server to the control system or in the use of IP.

Buildings 2.0 is a vision of how technologies such as IP and Web Services will transform how building systems connect to each other and how the limitations of traditional integration will be blown away.

Buildings 2.0 is a desire to look at buildings in a new way, how the occupant’s experience through new-found services--in concert with the purpose of the building--and maximizing a building’s performance can work in harmony.

Buildings 2.0 is also sensitive to the immense investment owners have in their buildings, and must present a way for facility managers to leverage existing systems and assets to work in the context of the vision outlined by Buildings 2.0.

Buildings 2.0 must be an initiative that cares for the scarce resources we have on planet Earth. Enormous opportunities exist today to adopt technologies that will enable buildings to use less or even no fossil-based energy, and thus produce less harmful carbon emission.

An Industry Initiative

Buildings 2.0 must be a broad industry initiative. It cannot be owned by any one element, but driven for and by all who subscribe to the principles outlined in a continuous discussion on how buildings need to adapt to the enormous opportunities enabled by the Internet revolution.

Buildings 2.0 will present to building owners, developers and operators a new and alternative value proposition, an alternative view of the traditional ways we have looked at buildings in the past. The Buildings 2.0 proposition goes beyond looking at buildings simply as a box to house people or things, but an active component of real-time enterprises that makes the world what it is today.

Buildings 2.0 will define a new way to design buildings, from the strategic thought process of space allocation, to the architectural and mechanical/electrical designs that occur before buildings are constructed. Buildings 2.0 will recognize that the design only represents a small part of the life of a building, which if done right can make the building flexible and valuable for decades of productive use.

Buildings 2.0 will also define the manner in which we construct buildings, specifically how we include the myriad of disciplines that operate buildings into a well-woven integrated partnership ensuring an on-time, on-budget delivery of the vision of the owner or developer.

Technology Neutral

Buildings 2.0 must be fundamentally technology neutral. This vision must recognize that almost all of the technologies in use today have only existed for a fraction of the time that most buildings have remained standing.

Buildings 2.0 must recognize that flexible standards must be adopted to make technology work. Adopted technologies must be truly open, be uncontrolled by any single entity, and unnumbered by any unreasonable economic constraints for its use.

Buildings 2.0 must recognize that information is the true currency of technology.

Buildings 2.0 will need to focus on information models that cover the broadest perspective of buildings from design to operation; information models must easily enable interoperability between the seemingly disparate stakeholders who have interests in buildings.

Buildings 2.0 will outline a broad and all-encompassing reference design and architecture of how the complex components of design, construction and operation processes can work together in a manner that is flexible and valuable to all stakeholders involved.

Buildings 2.0 must recognize security and regulatory constraints as well as issues such as privacy and safety.

Making Buildings 2.0 a reality

In many ways, Buildings 2.0 is with us today in technology terms. Yet in many ways the ball-and-chain that has tethered the industry to traditional ways remains strong today, barriers that would inhibit the realization of Buildings 2.0's vision. It is only with a common vision that this ball-and-chain can be broken.

An invitation is hereby communicated to all involved with buildings to embrace the principles of Buildings 2.0, to help develop, adopt and implement it, and make it the only way we should be looking at buildings.

Buildings 2.0 must engender a continuous improvement and questioning as to whether we are doing enough to make our built environment the best that it can be for society at large.

The author recognizes this is only a start of what Buildings 2.0 is. It is a concept that needs further discussion, evolution and questioning. There is no ownership in this document, only a desire to further how we design, build and operate buildings.

Those who support Buildings 2.0 must define tangible tools for Buildings 2.0 to evolve. These tools must enable this vision to be understood by a broad spectrum of stakeholders including laymen, such as illustrating key differences in technologies and benefits between Buildings 2.0 and previous view of buildings.

The reality of Buildings 2.0 is that it must enable commerce to develop, for without commerce and without positive economic impact to all stakeholders, Buildings 2.0 will not become a reality. The Internet has shown us how the power of the network can bring about untold opportunities. It's time to discover them in the context of buildings.

After all, who wants to buy or use a version 1.0 of anything these days?

Anto Budiardjo
President Clasma Events Inc.
antob@clasma.com