

What the analysts are saying...

In a March 2006 Patricia Seybold Report on IBM's Portlet Factory, Mitchell Kramer, Sr. VP and Sr. Consultant wrote that...

“Portal Technology Platforms Make It Faster and Easier to Design and Deploy Customer Portals... ...But Portlet Development Slows Deployment.”

In this report on the capabilities of the product, Kramer writes that “portal technology platforms make it easier to design, develop, deploy, and maintain customer portals. These platforms package facilities and tools that give you a big boost in building portals. ... One of the most important yet complex tasks in building customer portals is developing the portlets that implement and deliver application services to your customers.”

A major premise of this report is that portlets represent a significant technical effort in most organizations. He writes that “building portlets takes a combination of development, to create a UI and process customer requests and responses, and integration, to access applications and/or data. Most times, your staff is going to be doing that work.”

Commenting on the pre-constructed portlets that accompany most portals, he states: “But, like most application software, you’ll need to customize these pre-built portlets to fit your application services requirements. Customization means programming (and it often takes longer to figure out the portlet’s code and modify it than it does to start building the portlet from scratch).”

On portal vendors, he said, “Portal platform suppliers know that you’ll have to do some programming to deploy your portals. Their platforms also package development tools for building and customizing portlets. ... They let your developers build portlets with the same tools that your developers use for building other applications. But, you typically need skilled Java developers to build portlets.”

Before reviewing the capabilities of this specific product, he concludes his overview by saying “Portal platforms are missing tools that let lesser technically-skilled folks, like business analysts, build portlets. Portal platforms are also missing mechanisms that improve the productivity of the portlet development process. ***So, portlet development is almost always both the critical path element and the highest cost element in the projects that implement your customer portals.***”¹ [Bold and Italics added]

¹ **IBM WebSphere Portlet Factory 5.11.3**, Portlet Development through Component Assembly and Mass Customization, Patricia Seybold Group/Product Review, Mitchell I. Kramer, March 7, 2006