

Development of LCMS Public Private Partnership Approach

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Abstract

While the software industry is considered a highly successful economic growth engine in India, firms primarily providing manpower intensive customized software development and maintenance services to foreign clients have achieved its rapid growth in recent years. The software service model is manpower intensive and growth is achieved only by a proportionate increase in the number of software engineers employed. Relatively unknown is the business model centered on software products, few Indian firms have made serious attempts to create a portfolio of software products nor has there been a growth of independent software product companies. NASSCOM has listed lack of presence in global packaged software market and lack of original technology development orientation as the two major weaknesses of their industry. NASSCOM has also identified e-learning as one of the emerging growth segment that require relatively skilled professionals.

This paper gives an outline of packaged software, LCMS, developed in public private partnership mode by APTECH, IIIT (Allahabad), IIT (Kanpur) and steered by a government department, DSIR.

The product LCMS is in the fermentation stage of Technology Life Cycle, with dominant standard yet to emerge, customer wish list at best fuzzy and competitive boundaries ever shifting. The peculiarities of Indian situation made the task more daunting; there is an abundance of programming and software development skills, yet there is an acute shortage of conceptualization capabilities. In software service projects, the conceptualization is mostly done by client appointed IT

consultant leaving only coding and implementation of software in Indian hands. In contrast, software product development is viable only if the firm can internally conceptualize unique applications and capture value through proper positioning and rapid scale-up. This longing for Killer application needed to generate bulk revenues and also differentiates the commercial R&D project from that of institutions projects ending with technology demonstration.

The case of LCMS detailed in the paper covers aspects such as product definition, product architecture, customer interface, version management, and life cycle management.