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Learn the knack of powering portals

Vishwak Solutions is a decade-old company offering successful desktop and mobile portal solutions. T N C Venkata Rangan, heading the company since its inception, is trying to carve a niche for himself as an end-to-end portal management player. Here, he shares his views on the market growth and career prospects in portal development with CareerDigest E-Apps.

After the .com burst, the very purpose of creating a website has been redefined. It is no more a mere communication tool. In the present scenario, organizations go in for Portal Content Management (PCM) for critical collaboration, bettering the workflow processes and knowledge management.

So what is the role of a portal? Designing, collaborating and managing information are the three primary roles a portal offers. The technology adopted in managing portal is varied and dynamic. A portal can be created using various technologies like Microsoft, Adobe or Open Source technologies, which includes PHP and Ajax etc.

At Vishwak, we specialize in Microsoft's .Net technology, which includes ASP and Sharepoint. However, we vary technologies according to the customer specifications.

Portal Development

The portal requirement for a media house and an enterprise is not the same. While an enterprise looks for workflow processing, collaboration, security and business intelligence solutions, a media house looks for a portal with a different set of requirements. A media portal would be mainly looking at aggregation of content, developing Indian language capability and multimedia features. Multimedia features are an important aspect of a media portal, as it has to deliver to a range of devices.

Apart from the packaged products, we at Vishwak have developed a desktop-based portal solution called Vishwak Portal Framework. This is a complete solution for portal and high traffic website creation and management. The framework helps in delivering content to numerous users and provides a design environment to manage medium and large sites.

Market potential

Over the past five years, the percentage of growth in India as well as abroad has been accelerated with more and more enterprises going in for portal solutions.

According to an estimate, Indian enterprises that are into developing portals will be reaching USD 100-200 million dollars in the next three-four years.

Career in PCM

The biggest challenge in the field of portal content management is that of trained/skilled manpower. Since the market is witnessing an accelerated growth, it is a challenge to find people with technological skills combined with the skills to uphold consumer experience in terms of usability.

Additionally, there will be increasing need to hire people for managing content for media organizations, enterprises and other corporate. This will be a challenge for all those who are in the PCM space, including the big software guys.

If we consider the entire lifecycle of a portal content management, there are varied job roles a software professional could focus upon. He could be a software developer, tech lead, project lead or a technical writer.

Skills Required

To design an effective portal, one should be well versed in core engineering and architectural skills. The skills required to develop a portal is technology and company specific. It depends on the individual's expertise on a particular technology and the company's requirements.

If one has to develop a portal using Microsoft technology, he has to be well versed in .Net 3.0, WPF and Silver Light. Likewise if it is on open source technology, the basic skill required is PHP, MySQL and Ajax. And if it is Adobe, it is Flex and Apolo.

At Vishwak, our prime focus is on BE graduates with excellent written and verbal communication skills. A good communication is the basic skill we look for. Also, one has to be abreast with the latest technology in this space. Professionals who are rigid, not accepting changes and learning new technologies are a big no-no.

These days, apart from the performance of a portal, much emphasis is laid on developing a portal, which is secure. Security problems and security threats are on rise. Hence while developing each line of code, a developer has to foresee the security threats. Apart from developing, he should learn the skills to protect a portal as well.

As told to Harshitha B Hegde

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