

The e-Con Smart Client

a To-Increase White Paper

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Date June 2, 2006

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e-Con Getting Smarter

In the highly dynamic world of today people expect a lot from the applications that they use. A state-of-the-art application provides an excellent user experience. It is location-transparent, installation-transparent and integration-transparent. It is used in online and offline scenarios. It is installed and upgraded automatically. It integrates seamlessly with all kinds of other applications.

Enter the Smart Client.

The e-Con Smart Client is an application that redefines the rules of configuration processes like guided selling and product configuration. It has a slick user interface, which uses the advanced features of Windows, .Net and Windows Presentation Foundation. It has intelligent connection management, which automatically recognizes the availability of data sources and synchronizes with them. It is installed using Microsoft ClickOnce technology. It integrates with other applications using a variety of technologies, including Windows Communication Foundation, web services and message oriented middleware. e-Con^{SC} is advanced, adaptive, user-oriented, state-of-the-art.

Let's follow its journey.

The Challenges

There must be good reasons to embark on a journey to develop a fully new configurator client application. Those reasons come from experience with Windows applications and Web applications.

A well-written traditional Windows application has a decent user interface with advanced controls. It can easily connect with a local database. It offers superior performance and utilizes the hardware resources of the local machine very well. But its installation is often not so easy. Additional files must be installed, DLL's of the right version must be available and installation often requires sysadmin privileges. Another drawback is that it is not well-prepared to deal with the latest technology challenges, such as accessing information over the internet, working in online and offline scenarios or accessing multiple, heterogeneous backend applications.

A well-written traditional Web application is easily accessed over the Internet. It is easily deployed to a web server and it can well integrate with other web sites. However its user interface does provide limited user interaction due to the technology that is used (HTML, HTTP). Performance and scalability are factors that must be carefully addressed because all application load is pushed onto one web server. Support for online and offline scenarios is difficult.

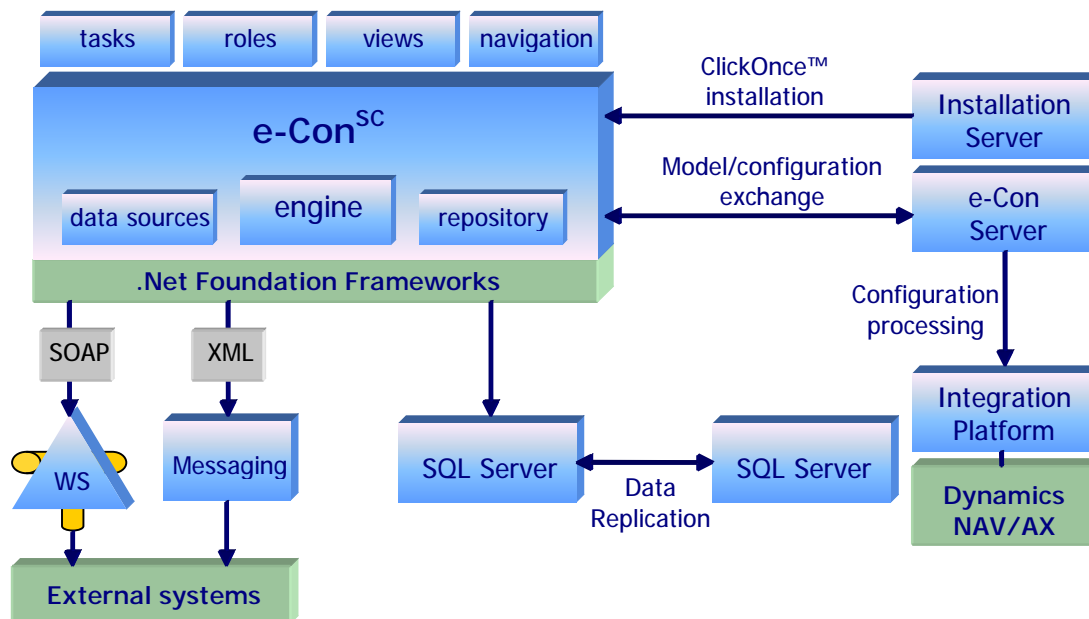
The new generation of applications must therefore be smarter and combine the best of both worlds.

- § The application must be smart in the user experience it offers. The application must take advantage of the power of the local machine and use advanced UI controls, advanced graphics and advanced personalization.
- § The application must be smart in the integrations that it provides. The application must integrate with all kinds of other applications, either locally or over the internet. It must use the latest communication technology for that purpose.
- § The application must be smart in the mobility that it gives. It must intelligently replicate information when being online and use the local data stores when being offline.
- § The application must be smart in the way it is accessed. It must be easily installed and updated on the local machine, but equally as easy run from a central server.

So, what does this smart-app look like?

The Solution

Overview



Key features

- § *Sophisticated user interface technology.* The e-Con Smart Client implements a role-oriented and task-oriented framework, in which advanced smart views are presented to the user and the appropriate actions are shown. e-Con^{SC} utilizes the Microsoft.Net Smart Client technology, combined with custom developed views, including tree views, grid views and diagram views. New technologies, such as Windows Presentation Foundation and the Vista Aero™ Windows user interface featuring advanced 2D and 3D graphics, will be supported.

- § *Model driven application.* The e-Con Smart Client uses a model-driven approach. The representation and behavior of the configurator is driven by e-Con models. The e-Con^{SC} integrations with external systems are also modeled.
- § *Advanced application integration.* The e-Con Smart Client seamlessly integrates with the Dynamics NAV and Dynamics AX enterprise applications. e-Con^{SC} uses the enterprise applications as repository and data source. It utilizes the To-Increase *Integration Platforms* for these integrations.
- § *Advanced interoperability.* The e-Con Smart Client uses the latest advances in integration technology to interact with external systems, including Windows Communication Foundation, web services and message oriented middleware. The integration is typically based on XML.

Benefits

- § e-Con^{SC} has a rich, adaptive and extensible user interface, which offers multiple views on the e-Con configuration. Custom configuration views and new interaction mechanisms are easily accommodated.
- § e-Con^{SC} is well prepared for mobile solutions. It can run completely on the local machine. Its intelligent connection management and data replication provide transfer of data to a central system when being online.
- § e-Con^{SC} is highly scalable, because the configuration engine is running on the local machine. Its performance is only limited by the power of the machine.

That's what we call SMART!

Learn More

More information about the e-Con Smart Client can be found at www.to-increase.com or contact us at e-con@to-increase.com or call (+31) 318 531900.