

YBN in brief [www.ybnd.eu]

YBN [Your Business Networked] is a spreadsheet-like language which enables to specify company and/or value chain processes with a set of simple matrices, of which the main one describes the main process flow and the others describe process data, or specify execution in greater detail (*YBN is a workflow, which however does not stick to the way workflows are commonly used*).

The purpose of the language is to enable the final users of different departments and/or companies to cooperate in:

- Defining how to work together;
- Changing / improving their choices over time.

This is achieved in six ways:

1. By how the language is used: everything is done by considering *information contributions along the process*, which is both an organization and an ICT concept; the users involved in the process design define what data the process should gather, in which order, and by whom (person, department, or company);
2. By how the language is represented: input / presentation is *simple and transparent, easy to use as a spreadsheet*;
3. By how the language is executed: one doesn't go through the long exercise of providing specs to programmers (...and then sit down and wait for an implementation most probably different, more expensive and rigid than specified), or the shorter (but just technical) exercise of using a program generator; more simply, *the YBN language is native on – i.e. it is directly executed by – a distributed SW-HW platform, named **NBI** [New Breed of ICT], which sits on the company servers and/or a common platform provided by a Telco as a shared ICT resource. It's like using a word processor: when something is changed, then the new version, just prepared, can be immediately printed, too. The main, key difference vs. today is that the users will be in direct control of the language and the language will be in direct control of a distributed environment, possibly as large as an entire value chain (provided all companies and/or organizations in the chain use YBN, of course; for the other organizations, SOA / XML / web services will be needed, ...or any other interoperating standard adopted in the future)*;
4. By what the language (YBN) and platform (NBI) provide for free: *access security, end-to-end process integrity, activity tracking / certification, storage duplication / service continuity and partial off-loading of customers IT systems. All of them as built-in features. The users will have to take care of the organizational issues linked to security (e.g., providing smart cards to employees, maintaining a repository of public keys, etc.), but all the features will be embedded in the SW-HW platform (YBN-NBI is aimed at PA's and the SME segment first; targeting the corporate segment will follow when/if targeting the PA's and the SME segment has proven to be a success; this because corporates have a much larger sunk investment in IT than SME's or PA's)*;
5. By what the overall YBN-NBI approach enable to change within the present IT systems (i.e., simplify and/or discard): today, workflows typically interface downwards, e.g. via SOA, with existing applications, which need to be properly adapted in order to make their business functionalities externally available; *the YBN-NBI purpose is to progressively "substitute" – as opposed to "use" – the existing applications, since the YBN workflow is "complete" in both embedding an "operating" database (where it gathers all the process information contributions) and accessing the company "official" database directly (e.g. for accounting entries). According to a progressive migration program, the existing applications will be divided among those to be kept in the long term, those to be fully discarded when progressively substituted by new YBN-based applications, and the *minority* – in case of YBN – to be used / interfaced in a similar way the existing applications are used / interfaced today*;
6. Last but not least, by how the workflow is used: all the information contributed by the preceding steps of a process instance is made available to the next process step to be performed, in order to provide everything is needed to properly act or decide, and a list of the process steps to be performed is provided to each user, like a list of incoming mails, to ease the choice about how to perform his/her job.

To make a long story short, the YBN project envisions a Telco which builds a server platform and offers a novel SW-HW business support to its PA / SME clientele: spreadsheet-like matrices prepared together by the users involved, directly executed as soon as they are specified, immediately modifiable when needs / opportunities arise ...*just like an organizational word processor*.

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