

**EMAIL INTERVIEW John Greenwell & Ken Sinclair****John Greenwell, President****[CEPORT, LLC](#)****jgreenwell@ceportbsp.com****Convergence Needs to Make Sense**

We take a holistic view of the building, this means understanding the purpose of the building, how people utilize the building, what business processes are in use and how the mechanical systems were designed.

Articles**Interviews****Releases****New Products****Reviews****Blogs****Sponsors****Archives****Past Issues****Home**

Sinclair: When you look at the marketplace for converged building solutions today, what do you see as the major gaps?

Greenwell: As our tag line indicates, CePORT is focused on the convergence of people, space, time and energy. When the idea of convergence started to gain traction in the marketplace, most companies focused on a bottom-up approach. We looked at a top-down model instead, where the focus is on business processes and how they affect the building. Many solutions in the marketplace today emphasize wire-level protocol and device integration to the physical assets managed by a BAS. We found a significant gap in the marketplace and chose to deploy a solution above this. By offering loosely coupled data services to lower-level systems, we can allow building automation systems to do what they're good at – maintaining tight control over a closed loop. These loops do little for integration, so we built a layer above them that feeds qualified data to these loops and then pulls data from individual points as needed. This system then accumulates this data into information that people can use – directly in the interface and in reports that are customized to meet building owner and occupant needs.

Sinclair: What do you mean by the bottom up approach?

Greenwell: Currently, we see a major focus on the convergence of systems that are typically hardware-focused at the lower level, via protocol exchanges and protocol standards; while this kind of convergence is essential, we think that the convergence of enterprise IT with these “basement” systems would be even more valuable. We take a holistic view of the building; this means understanding the purpose of the building, how people utilize the building, what business processes are in use, and how the mechanical systems were designed. Convergence needs to make sense to building users. It needs to serve the businesses in these buildings and the people who work for these businesses.

Sinclair: Tell me more about this convergence with enterprise IT. Can you give me some examples of the kinds of IT counterparts that you envision converging with building systems?

Greenwell: Almost anything: human resources systems, business process management systems, enterprise resource planning systems, corporate intranets, corporate email and calendaring software, and IPTV signage. These are all enterprise IT assets that could be entry points for integration functionality or sources of data for integrated capabilities

Sinclair: Who are the customers of the solution that you're describing?

Greenwell: Initially, I would say large enterprises. They typically have complex business operations and would benefit from streamlining the way their facilities work. Again, our focus is on making facilities responsive to business processes and the people affected by them. By improving the processes involved in working in a building or even visiting a building, we can not only improve productivity but also reduce energy usage as a result. These integrations can facilitate LEED certification, which is on many corporate agendas. Better integrated

reporting gives C-level executives' actionable information to allow them to make better decisions and ultimately improve their bottom line.

Sinclair: How are you implementing the kind of integrated services portal you describe?

Greenwell: Our core product, the Building Services Portal, provides an enterprise-class reporting engine, a time- and event-based scripting environment, a database, a web server and an application server built into a 2U appliance. We have also built a secure, headless single sign-on (or "SSO") module that can be used by other web applications. This on its own allows enterprises to collect, compile, and distribute data across a wide variety of presentation targets. We provide loosely coupled data services to both enterprise IT systems and building-level systems.

Sinclair: What are some of the initial integrated applications that you see in this space?

Greenwell: There is a lot of low-hanging fruit right now. Enterprise IT systems and even building software have evolved in terms of their interoperability to a great extent in the last ten years. Some obvious applications include integrating HR data, security data, and energy information. By integrating people, space, and energy you can show departmental energy utilization, or you can bring occupancy information to signage and other intranet solutions, like creating a smart portal for company carpooling. Alternative workspace management can be facilitated by the integration of occupancy data with rich space management and scheduling of shared resources.

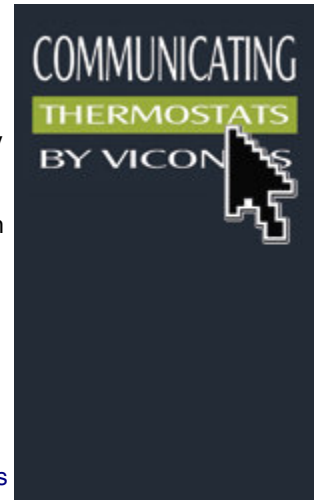
Ultimately, the icing on the cake is delivering the information that C-level executive's care about, in a format they understand, in time for them to make better building and employee management decisions. This is where integrated report delivery, custom reports, and searchable reporting data become so important.

Sinclair: What differentiates your vision from the solutions currently available on the market for this space?

Greenwell: We think that many of the building systems integrators have a mindset that is similar to enterprise software vendors in the '80s. Many of them can't deliver integration unless they own the whole stack. This allows them to tightly couple solutions that they own or manufacture and build high-functioning integration solutions on top of them. The problem comes when you want to alter that stack. Many of these vendors today rely on that closed architecture to protect their market and create an impressive barrier to entry. Now, fast-forward in the enterprise software space to 2002, and what do we see? Evolving standards make interoperable systems a reality. Software now trades data in XML packets, not binary proprietary data sets. Enterprise software vendors can swap databases or application servers and not be chained to a single vendor or the software stack their vendor certifies. We foresee the same paradigm shift in integrated building systems.

Sinclair: What do you see the timeframe for when we can begin to see truly converged buildings?

Greenwell: We're ready right now, and so is the market. We've built the platform that allows that to happen today. All the requirements are in place: systems with accessible APIs, open data standards, security protocols, APIs to everything from signage to security systems, and database-driven card access systems. The only remaining obstacles are political. So what we need to do is break down people's assumptions about what is possible.



FREE Downloads of all software
Data Acquisition Software

[Click Banner To Learn More]

[\[Home Page\]](#) [\[The Automator\]](#) [\[About\]](#) [\[Subscribe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

[Events](#)

[Our Sponsors](#)

[Want Ads](#)

[Resources](#)

[RF Transmitter-Receiver](#)

RF for OEMs - RS232/485 FHSS high rates, long range, certified.

www.aerocomm.com