

OPINION

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ASPECTS

Secrets Revealed

The EC Co. Chief Executive Andy Duncan wants to shine some light on the dirty little secret at e-commerce firms. "Chemdex, Amazon, they all have a hell of a big problem right now, because they're passing orders along to their suppliers by paper fax," he says. "They have secret back rooms with all these people running around. We provide the application services to connect large companies and marketplaces electronically to the balance of their supply chains." About 155 members of the Fortune 1,000 use the EC network, Duncan says. "We're really a data exchange, the pipe between buyer and seller. Our goal is to be like Visa, the ultimate ASP. We move business documents instead of payment transactions." EC, which has \$45 million in cash, charges \$45 per month for basic service, more for higher transaction volumes, plus network hookup fees. "We have lots of value-added services to come," Duncan says. "When we move advance planning and forecasting online, it will set this market on fire."

Data Goldmine?

Launching today: DigiMine, a data warehousing and mining company founded by Microsoft alumni. Chief Executive Usama Fayyad is a big brain in the field who edits an industry journal and a newsletter. Data services are seen as complex and should join Enterprise Resource Planning software as natural candidates for outsourcing, Fayyad says. "IT [Information technology] will always pay attention to ERP, because it's mission-critical," he says. "The CEO says data warehousing and data mining are a top priority, but IT never quite gets around to it. Now, for the price of a single IT employee, they can."

On Behalf Of Donors

Also today: CoreMatter, an ASP that manages charitable programs for companies, will announce that it has secured four new customers - Applied Materials, E*Trade, NEC USA and The Clorox Co. CoreMatter is the new name for AllCharities.