

## Profound Logic Aims to Simplify Menu Navigation with Atrium

by Alex Woodie

One of the drawbacks of 5250 applications is the menu layout that users must learn to navigate. To accomplish certain tasks, such as checking on the status of a customer order, a user may have to drill through a dozen screens. System i application modernization vendor Profound Logic is hoping to simplify this maze of menus with Atrium, a new Web portal unveiled at last week's COMMON conference that gives users one-click access to specific screens. The vendor also introduced a new video blog.

Currently in beta, Atrium will provide a central repository for all of the applications that a customer has Web-enabled with RPG Smart Pages (RPGsp), Profound Logic's flagship modernization product for helping RPG programmers into the HTML age, and Genie, which provides on-the-fly modernization of DDS code, with customization handled through a variety of "skins."

Instead of forcing users to navigate through various menus and subfiles to get to the screen they need to use, Profound is allowing System i shops to take advantage of some of the intuitive Web 2.0-style interface components--such as drop down trees, "accordion" panels, pull-down menus, and toolbars--that people have grown accustomed to using to navigate Web applications.

The Atrium portal will provide users with an accordion-style navigation pane that's banked on the left side of the Web browser window. A user (or more likely with the first release, a user's administrator) will decide which screens are accessed most often and whether a user will benefit by having one-click access to them through the navigation panel. Other options, such as the user's favorites list, system messages, print functionality, and help topics, will similarly be accessible with hyperlinks along a top navigation pane.

Atrium also introduces the concept of tabbed computing to the i OS application navigation equation. Tabbed computing, if you are unaware, allows a user to have several Web browser screens open at the same time within a single instance of the Web browser. It was first introduced several years ago by Mozilla with its Firefox browser, and it proved so popular that Microsoft decided to copy it (imagine that!) by bringing tabbed browsing to IE.

Tabbed browsing could make a great addition to any System i application modernization project. Because users typically navigate System i applications in a linear fashion (that is, one screen leads to the next, which leads to the next, and so forth), having various tabs open to different points on that line of navigation could enable a customer service representative, for example, to get his work done faster and eliminate the need to back out of an application or close a session before jumping back to a previous screen.

The one caveat to Atrium is that a System i shop must have previously Web-enabled its 5250 applications using one of Profound Logic's screen modernization tools, RPGsp or Genie It also works with iData, a new Web-based database editor for DB2/400 that Profound shipped a year ago.

Profound says the idea behind Atrium is to give customers a strong framework that improves both accessibility and usability of their systems, while insuring security at the same time.

"Atrium was based on the business needs and requests of our clients," says Profound's David Russo, who leads the programming team that developed Atrium. "We worked with several customers, who demonstrated a need to redesign the way their end-users navigate between application screens. It was also important to our clients that they had more control over user access to the individual applications once they were running on the Web."

Atrium is currently in beta. Profound is seeking interested parties who would like to try Atrium, in exchange for receiving a free license once it's released. General availability is expected late in the third quarter. Pricing has not been set. More information is available at [www.profoundlogic.com/atriumovw.rpgsp](http://www.profoundlogic.com/atriumovw.rpgsp).

Profound also unveiled a new educational video blog (vlog) where System i professionals can get helpful tips on some of the industry's latest technology trends. The blog, which was launched before COMMON, currently has three videos on various AJAX topics.

Profound's vlog is ideal for System i professionals who don't have a lot of time to hunt for System i insights, says Philip Roestamadji, Profound's marketing director. "People want to know about various technologies and what they can do for their business, but with tight deadlines and busy schedules it is difficult to find the time to look into every new trend that hits the market," he says in a press release.

The Profound vlog AJAX-System i integration videos were created by Profound president Alex Roytman. The vlog can be accessed at [www.profoundlogic.tv](http://www.profoundlogic.tv).