# Collaboration Environment
# for Economic Simulation models

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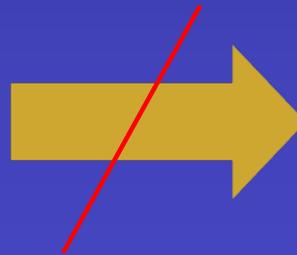
# What is iSimulate @ World Bank ?

- Initiative to create a **web-based global community** of individuals interested in economic modeling

- **In-house developed system [still in "beta"]** to share some of the World Bank's economic models and data

- Users can "**execute custom simulations**" [more than just retrieve data] using just a web-browser

- A real-time environment to form groups, share results and **collaborate** on economic simulations

# An identified business need .. but no quick answers

- **A "business – need" for collaboration**
  - We're in the business of monitoring and forecasting the global macroeconomy
  - Interaction with country office units
  - Need for a system with real-time access to data and if possible, to simulation models

**What we had**

LAN based system

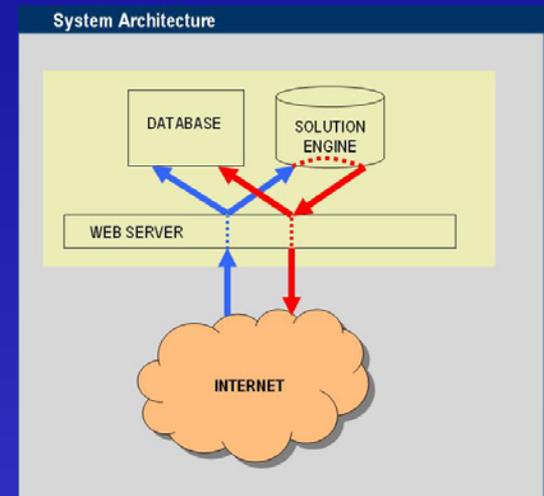Isolated economic models

Software-dependent processes

**What we needed**

Location-independent system

Integrated models

Preferably a software-independent solution

# A potential solution ....

- **Leverage the Internet for location-independence**



- **Centralize economic models with new system design**

- **Introduce Web 2.0 collaboration features to improve effeciency and productivity**

# Our initial challenges ....

- **"Why do we need this?"**
  - Resource constraints

- **"I don't want to change the way I work!"**
  - Adapting technology to users rather than forcing a solution

- **"Open Source v/s Closed source software"**
  - Integrating with the larger Bank infrastructure

- **"Generalization v/s Customization"**
  - For the "team" v/s For the "Bank" v/s For the "World"

- **"Delivering a working product within tight deadlines"**
  - Not just the "proof-of-concept" in less than a year

# Bringing the power of collaboration to economic forecasting

- **Shared space and private space → "User Groups"**
  - Collaborate in shared spaces, experiment in the private area
  - "Public" group → based on wikipedia concept
- **Real-time updates from users within same group**
  - Data updates
  - User activity feed
- **Activity log for all simulations**
  - Reverting to previous simulation is a button click away
- **Blogs to publish and share results**
  - Ability to keep blogs data private or make public
  - RSS feeds

# .. And what we have learnt ..

- Building an online Communities of Practice:
  - "**Keep is simple, keep it free**"
  - "**Provide an incentive**"
  - "**Release-early-release-often**"

- ... and where we are cautious:
  - It's a "**niche**" audience → Customize or Generalize ?
  - Challenges of **integrating** systems
  - External user created data on Bank systems
  - Limited resources