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Middleware

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In computing, **middleware** consists of software agents acting as an intermediary between different application components. It is used most often to support complex, distributed applications. The software agents involved may be one or many.

The ObjectWeb consortium gives the following definition

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://middleware.objectweb.org/>) of middleware: "In a distributed computing system, middleware is defined as the software layer that lies between the operating system and the applications on each site of the system."

The classic example is the **transaction manager**, a component that is interposed between client users and the application or "back end" database in OLTP or client/server computing. In these situations, middleware accelerates client requests by reducing the number of resource-expensive connections that must be made, and by making each connection as efficient as possible. Examples of such transaction-focused middleware include: CICS, IBM Websphere MQ, Tibco, ObjectWeb JOTM and Tuxedo.

Another reason for using middleware is to centrally provide high-level abstractions and services to applications, to ease application programming, application integration, and system management tasks. Over the years, middleware has evolved from its initial limited focus on the efficiency of transaction management to this bigger role.

Middleware is now used to describe database management systems, web servers, application servers, content management systems, and similar tools that support the application development and delivery process. Middleware is especially integral to modern information based on XML, SOAP, Web services, and service-oriented architecture.

Middleware is the enabling technology of Enterprise application integration.

In addition to the existing vendors updating their wares to address the newly expanded vision, vendors such as Mercator, Vitria, and webMethods were specifically founded to provide Web-oriented middleware tools. Groups such as the Apache Software Foundation and the ObjectWeb consortium encourage the development of open source middleware.

The term *middleware* is sometimes considered a buzzword.

See also

- Game engine middleware
- Data Distribution Service (DDS)

External links

- Digital Rights Management Middleware (https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://knowledgebase.aegisdrm.com/knowledgebase_middleware_drm.htm)
- Middleware Messaging Resource (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://www.middleware-jmsmessaging.org/>)
- Middleware Research Publications (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://www.maffeis.com/publications.html>)
- Internet2 Middleware Initiative (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://middleware.internet2.edu/>)
- ObjectWeb: Open Source Middleware (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050729234922/http://www.objectweb.org/>)

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Categories: System software | Information technology management | Buzzwords

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