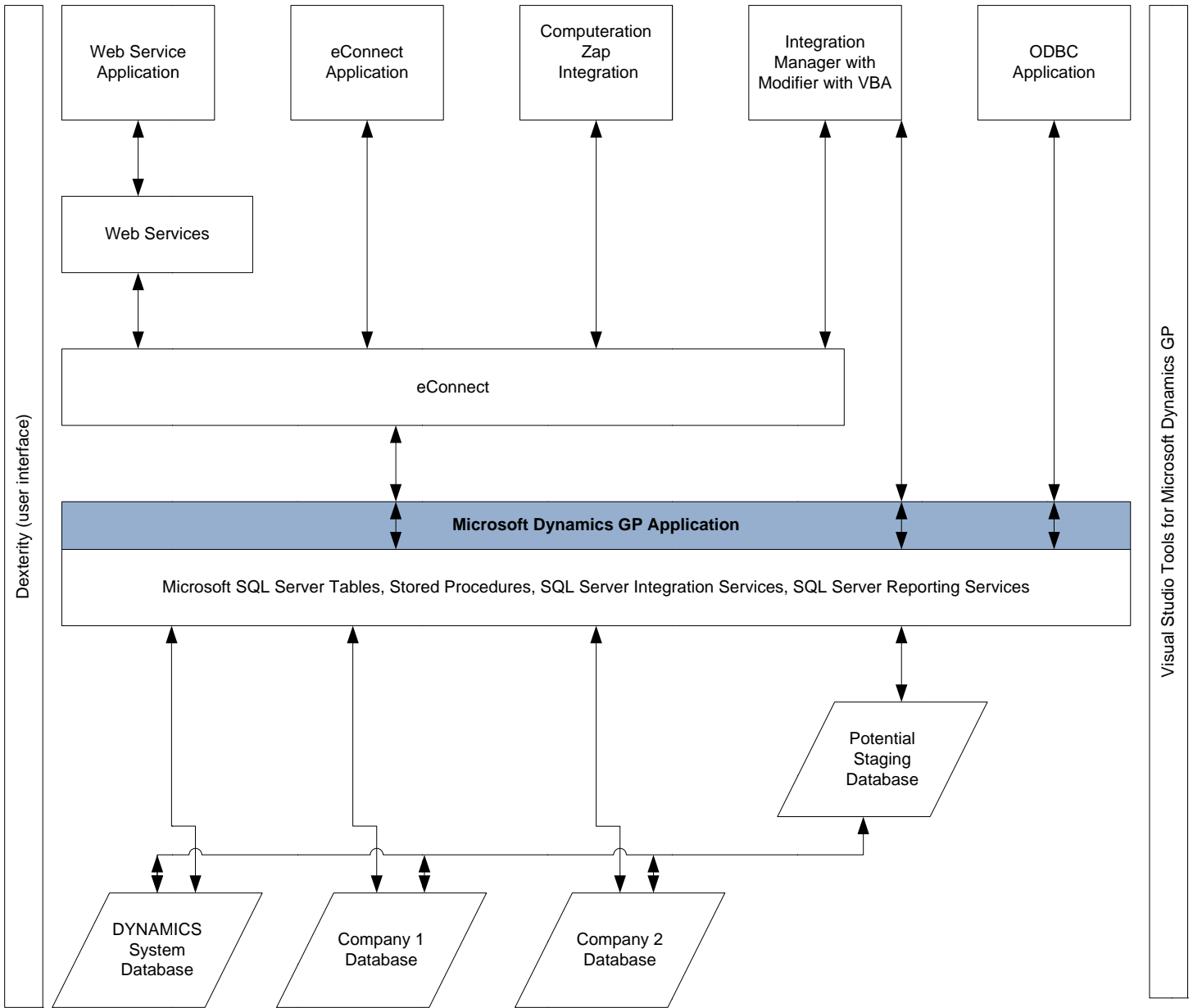


Microsoft Dynamics® GP Integration Tools



Available Tools

Multiple tools and options exist to create integrations with Microsoft Dynamics® GP (Dynamics) transactions and master records. Following is a summary of the current tools, with several downloadable documents providing more detailed information.

| Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Web Services | Web Services for Microsoft Dynamics GP provides a standard Web service interface to access data in the accounting system. Web services use standard Internet transport protocols such as Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and standard XML-based document formats such as Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) to exchange information. |
| eConnect | eConnect is a set of files, tools, and services that allow applications to integrate with Dynamics data. It is the primary platform for importing and exporting data. |
| Zap Integration | Zap allows you to use a familiar tool – Microsoft Excel – and facilitates low-cost, custom, easy integrations built with Computeration’s unique coding and eConnect. |
| Integration Manager | The Integration Manager is a separate application used to import transactions into work files and master records (without staging the record). End users with training can create and use integration routines. With Modifier with VBA, the power of the integration routines can be substantially increased. |
| Modifier with VBA | The Modifier with VBA is a customization tool that is available with every Microsoft Dynamics GP client installation. It is used to modify the appearance and functionality of Microsoft Dynamics GP windows, including those created by third-party applications. |
| ODBC | A more experienced developer may choose to use ODBC integration. The individual must have solid understanding of the tables, table groups, inter-relationships, and data structure of Microsoft Dynamics® GP. |
| Dexterity | Dexterity is the development tool used to create the Microsoft Dynamics GP application. It can be used by software developers to create both user interface and database integrations. |
| Visual Studio® Tools for Microsoft Dynamics GP | Visual Studio Tools for Microsoft Dynamics GP allows a developer to use Microsoft Visual Studio and the .NET Framework to create integrations for Microsoft Dynamics GP. These integrations are created entirely in managed code, and can use the extensive features provided by the .NET Framework. |
| Extender | Extender is a customization and integration tool that can be used to modify Microsoft Dynamics GP without requiring the developer to write code. It allows you to “extend” Microsoft Dynamics GP by adding additional data entry windows that work along with windows already in the system. |



Factors that Influence the Tool Choice

Four main factors will influence the tool choice:

1. The capabilities required of the integration
2. The degree of user interface
3. The developer's skills and experience
4. The underlying costs of the tool

Capabilities Required of the Integration

- An integration may insert data into Dynamics
- An integration may read and write data to and from Dynamics and another application
- An integration may export data from Dynamics

The Degree of User Interface

Users may manually execute integrations, selectively control the integration, or be relatively unaware of automatic read/write integrations.

The Developer's Skills and Experience

An important consideration in using an integration tool is the degree of the developer's skills and experience because both factors heavily influence the schedule and cost of development.

For example, Integration Manager is flexible for end-users. No programming skills are necessary to create and use its routines; however, powerful Integration Manager routines with Visual Basic scripting attached can be added onto a basic integration routine. If time is of the essence, a simple integration routine can be created to insert data into Dynamics. As the data is proofed and time allows, Visual Basic scripting can be added to enhance the integration with:

- Data preparation and cleaning
- Error checking
- Scheduling
- File cleanup post integration

For more complex integrations, many more tools and options are available to developers, including a combined use of several tools. The goal is always foremost to make these integrations easy-to-use in addition to creating the integrations two-way, live, and with error checking.



The Underlying Costs of the Tool

Several costs should be considered when choosing the tool:

- Licensing and annual software maintenance plan cost
- Training cost for the developer
- Hardware and software environment cost

In a perpetual licensing model, there may be a module cost for the tool plus its annual software maintenance plan. With Integration Manager, it is supplied at no additional charge for the first 120 days of use with the Microsoft Dynamics® Business Ready Licensing model. After 120 days, the Integration Suite can be purchased, containing both Integration Manager and eConnect. Other software tools will require the deployment of an IIS Server or the purchase of Visual Studio.

The training requirements for the tools such as Dexterity, Visual Studio, or Web Services can require training classes spanning days or weeks. Integration Manager and Extender, on the other hand, may require only several hours of training for the developer or end user.

In larger, complex environments, there may be hardware requirements to enable a Microsoft SQL Server instance with a staging database.

