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ERP: Rumors of my death are greatly exaggerated

These 4 trends are changing the face Enterprise Resource Planning



Daniel DeKemper

ERP systems have been around since the mid-1970s when they first ran on mainframe computers. Enterprises that invested huge sums in these big and complex systems now have elaborate legacy setups that they are absolutely dependent upon to run their companies. Because there's so much at stake, ERP providers and customers introduce changes to technology and deployments gradually to avoid costly mistakes.

Nonetheless, ERP systems **do change**--albeit slowly. For example, people started talking about adapting ERP software to client/server technology at the beginning of the 1980s, but it wasn't until the late 1990s that more client/server versions shipped than mainframe versions.

Today, ERP is still evolving--adapting to developments in technology and the demands of the market. Four important trends are shaping ERP's continuing evolution:

Trend 1: Improving integration, flexibility

The concept of integration lies at the very heart of ERP. To reduce the difficulty of connecting their systems with other vendors' applications, customers have pushed their primary ERP providers to adopt a more open and flexible architecture and to support standards-based computing. Most big ERP providers have responded by migrating their architectures to component frameworks. However, in the vast majority of cases, it's still quite difficult, expensive, and time-consuming to integrate enterprise software.

Still, when it comes to opening their architectures, vendors are of two minds. On the one hand, they need to respond to customer demands for easier integration. On the other hand, it's easier for vendors to provide efficient and reliable software when they control all the pieces. ERP vendors also make more money when they sell more modules to individual customers. While the trend is definitely toward increasing openness, it won't happen overnight.

Trend 2: Embracing e-business

In the late 1990s, demand for ERP applications began to flatten as the market became saturated and customers became disillusioned with the time and cost of ERP implementations. At the same time, a variety of new software vendors sprang up to offer e-business applications that automated concrete business

processes. Companies greeted these and other new e-business applications with enthusiasm, and as a result, many of the new e-business software vendors experienced exponential growth (IE. Siebel).

Several categories of e-business applications and modules that ERP vendors are adding to their traditional product suites have emerged:

Sales force automation (SFA) augments the performance of sales representatives by automating the process of collecting, qualifying, and organizing sales prospects. SFA software helps handle regular sales tasks such as contact management and appointment scheduling. SFA capabilities are available from most major ERP vendors and are sometimes bundled as part of the CRM application.

Customer relationship management (CRM) collects and organizes customer data gathered from a variety of sources, such as call centers, e-mail, point-of-sale operations, and direct contact with the sales force. CRM software provides a comprehensive view of customer data and behavior so companies can apply resources more effectively and derive more revenue from customer relationships. Most of the major ERP vendors, such as Baan, Oracle, PeopleSoft, and SAP, are on the second or third generation of their CRM applications. Most other ERP vendors have added or are adding CRM capabilities through development, acquisition, or partnership, thus making CRM a nearly ubiquitous application offering among ERP vendors.

E-procurement improves the efficiency of corporate purchasing operations by handling the specification, authorization, competitive bidding, and acquisition of products and services. It helps corporate purchasing agents manage and interact with suppliers by using features such as catalogs, auctions, request for proposals, and request for quotes.

Supply chain management automates the planning, coordination, and refinement of a company's supply chain from the gathering and tracking of unfinished materials and subcomponents, through manufacturing, inventory, shipment, and receipt of completed products at the customer's loading docks. Like CRM, all the major vendors, as well as many other vendors, offer supply chain management capabilities.

Business intelligence organizes ordinarily disparate data so that it can be analyzed in a way that provides new insights into existing operations and shines light on new business opportunities. The ultimate goal is to assist

managers in making more thoughtful, creative, and better-informed decisions.

Trend 3: Reaching out to new users

ERP is now opening to new classes of users which may significantly change company's business processes or dramatically increase licensing fees. Hence proceed with caution before licensing the following users:

Multi-enterprise users: Business processes now extend beyond the confines of a single company in modern supply chains. Companies now actively share information to improve supply chain efficiencies, product design and product lifecycle management. For example, a manufacturer can help suppliers improve the quality of subcomponents by regularly sharing warranty information.

Self-service users: Over time, more employees will begin to tap into their companies' ERP systems. With access to an ERP system, individual employees, for example, can look up the number of vacation or sick days they have or modify their benefits options rather than filling out paper forms and using HR staff time on these clerical tasks.

Mobile users: Wireless networks and handheld devices are making it possible to connect users such as field-sales reps, field-service agents, and traveling executives. Some of the big ERP vendors, including Oracle, PeopleSoft, and SAP, are starting to offer modules that let mobile users access corporate ERP systems.

Trend 4: Adapting to the Internet

The Internet is the single most important force reshaping ERP. ERP vendors are modifying their software to use application servers, Web servers, HTTP, Java, and XML-- adding browser-based interfaces in place of native clients so that users can access the system from any computer linked to the Internet. However, there are differences in how completely vendors have adopted the browser interface.

PeopleSoft was the first major ERP vendor to come out with no code on the client so all of [its] user interfaces are browser-based. The familiar nature of browser-based interfaces also makes it easier for new users to learn and use the system and reduces training costs. **Oracle, PeopleSoft, and SAP**, now offer portal modules to provide users with a browser-accessible view that can be customized to include data and processes that are specific to certain job functions.

Large enterprises are relying on information technology more than ever. By demonstrating once again their ability to adapt to new technologies and demands, ERP systems are playing a central role in that expansion.

HACKERS MAY HAVE YOUR CREDIT CARD NUMBERS

More than five million Visa and MasterCard accounts throughout the nation were accessed earlier this month after the computer system at a third-party processor was hacked, according to representatives for the credit-card companies.

Visa and MasterCard said they could not provide a timeline of when the breach took place or details on how it was accomplished because it involved a third-party processor used by merchants and not Visa or MasterCard systems. They would not disclose the name of that processor.

Both Visa and MasterCard said that no customer would be liable for any charges incurred as a result of fraud. They said the processor was working with law enforcement officials on the matter.

TRACK STOCKS ON YOUR PDA

Stock Manager will keep your portfolio up-to-date with the latest stock prices every time you synchronize your PDA with your desktop computer, by connecting your PDA to a modem, wireless modem, and mobile phone or by using the Palm VII's Palm.net service. It also retrieves the day's high, low, change, volume, bid, ask and 52-week high and low values. You can see all your favorite statistics in different currencies.

You can also set alerts on all your stocks based on current price, profit and profit % so that you never miss important market movements. Stocks can be categorized into different portfolios, each with its own totals. The program will display the total profit, profit %, current value and cost for each stock, portfolio or for all your stocks. Also with the portfolio charts you can get a graphical overview of your portfolio.

The Stock Manager conduit will also allow you to export your portfolio to a CSV file. Stock Manager is available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. It's free to try and \$24.95 to buy. **TECHWATCH ON LINE:** [Select General Information in your Profile](#)).

DOWNLOAD THESE TIPS FOR USING MS PROJECT

If you want to know more about MS Project and Project Server these tools, download this collection of 12 articles full of tips, tricks, and shortcuts. **TECHWATCH ON LINE:** [\(Select IT Management in your Profile\)](#).

DATA CONFIRMS CONSULTANT RATES DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY

Consultants rates have dropped significantly, according to RealRates.com. The Real Rate Survey, collected information from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2002. There were 691 rate reports submitted in that time, with 645 from contractors either working in the United States or reporting rates in U.S. dollars.

The Information Technology Services Marketing Association (ITSMA), a research and advisory firm that specializes in marketing technology services also concurs with Real Rates findings.

Reported rates, commissions, and raises (see graphic) shows the median hourly rates reported by consultants working under varying

Contractors' hourly median rates by tax status

TAX STATUS	2002	2001
All Brokered	\$61.50	\$68.00
Brokered contract extension	\$65.00	\$70.00
Brokered W2	\$55.00	\$60.00
Brokered1099	\$73.50	\$82.50
Brokered Corp	\$75.00	\$90.00
Source: Real Rate Survey from Realrates.com		
All Direct	\$76.00	\$80.00
Direct contract extension	\$82.00	\$80.00
Direct W2	\$66.00	\$65.00
Direct 1099	\$75.00	\$75.00
Direct Corp	\$90.00	\$95.00

tax arrangements. While the median rate for some specific types of brokered and direct consultants' rates have seen a slight increase, their cumulative median rates have decreased by \$6.50 and \$4, respectively.

ICI LOSSES MILLIONS OVER SAP FAILURE

ICI will write off a total of £23m as a result of a failed SAP supply chain software implementation last year in its Quest flavors and fragrances division.

The problems involved a project known as Q-Star - a SAP-based plan to optimise the supply chain. ICI had hoped that Q-Star would save Quest £20m a year by 2004. The company this week admitted it would not gain this saving.

At the end of May 2002, when the system went live across four locations in Holland, problems locating raw materials were encountered and a huge backlog in orders to be processed resulted.

Quarterly earnings at the Quest flavour and fragrance division fell for the three quarters following the installation.

SAP's share price dipped by 3.6% following the release of ICI's results.

ORACLE EXTENDS LIMITED SUPPORT FOR 10.7 SUITE

Oracle is to give users of version 10.7 of its applications suite limited support for another year after the 30 June cut-off date for general support.

The "Extended Support" offer is limited to known issues only, but will give users time to upgrade, Oracle said.

Customers will be able to download patches and get telephone support on existing issues only. There will be no new program updates, fixes, maintenance releases or functionality releases.

Extended Support is provided at no additional charge to customers who maintain support contracts for the relevant licenses.

SURPRISING WEB SITE STATISTICS

The more usable a website is, the better the user's experience. This translates into return visits, completed tasks, and site loyalty.

- ⇒ 28% of users report difficulty locating products and services on websites. Source: Zona Research
- ⇒ 40% of users do not return to sites at which they have had a negative experience. Source: Forrester
- ⇒ When IBM redesigned their website to make it more user focused, sales increased by 400%. Source: IBM
- ⇒ 75% of shopping carts are abandoned before checkout.
- ⇒ 27% abandoned their carts because they were confused by the checkout process. Source: Vividence
- ⇒ 40% of users give up trying to purchase a product they want because they can't locate it on a website. Source: A.T. Kearney
- ⇒ 68% of the time, users were unable to find specific information on 15 large commercial sites. Source: Jared Spool



SAS UNVEILS NEW SCM PRODUCT

A new SAS product, Supply Chain Intelligence, is made to work with manufacturing software from companies such as SAP. The SAS software slices and dices order and inventory information captured by those sort of programs.

Then the SAS product can create models showing how changes in pricing or promotions could impact production. Two components of the package, SAS Value Chain Analytics and SAS Supplier Relationship Management, are available now. SAS expects to release two others, SAS Demand Intelligence and SAS Process Intelligence, by the end of the year.

The package also includes data-mining and warehousing tools. Each component costs between \$200,000 and \$700,000 to license, an SAS representative said. SAS, a privately held company that makes data analysis systems.

FORD TURNS TO IBM FOR PLM

IBM, along with partner Dassault Systems, have been chosen by Ford to provide Product Life Cycle Management (PLM) capabilities. That means Ford, in some cases, will abandon its SDRS system (absorbed by EDS in 2001) in favor of Dassault's CATIA V5 software, which will be used primarily in body design. It doesn't mean the total demise of EDS within Ford, but it's not a deal that made EDS happy, or proud.

The 5500-seat, multi-year deal is estimated by analysts to be worth anywhere from \$200 to \$400 million, making it smaller than IBM and Dassault's deal with Toyota last year but still substantial.

PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS THE SAME?

The Bush administration is lending its support to an international proposal to map telephone numbers to Internet addresses.

In a recent internal letter, the Commerce Department recommended that the United States participate in an emerging electronic numbering system, known as ENUM, that will allow people to use one identifier for many different purposes, including mobile phones, e-mail, instant messaging and faxes.

ENUM is designed to accelerate the convergence of the telephone network and the

Internet and is expected to offer a huge boost to online telephony services.

The domain that will be used with ENUM addresses ends with e164.arpa. Assistant Secretary Nancy Victory said the United States should formally participate in the ENUM process and push for its implementation, consistent with a set of principles that include supporting competition, minimizing regulation, promoting interoperability and preserving privacy.

When ENUM domains become active, users will be identified by their telephone number including the country code. What that means is a phone number such as +46-8-9761234 would be mapped to the 4.3.2.1.6.7.9.8.6.4. e164.arpa Internet address in a process that is expected to become automated and transparent to the user.

ENUM grew out of the Internet Engineering Task Force's Telephone Number Mapping working group, which drafted the RFC 2916 proposed standard in September 2000. So far, 13 countries that are members of the International Telecommunication Union have signed on to the e164.arpa proposal and plan trials. The group is coordinating international efforts.

NETCAPTOR 7.1

Too many browser windows open at the same time? Download the NetCaptor 7.1 browser and remove your taskbar clutter! This application helps Web navigation by giving each Web site its own tab while blocking out unwanted pop-up ads!

TECHWATCH ON LINE: (Select Web Integration in your Profile and Visit the Download Center).

MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM DEVELOPER TO MANAGER

So, you made the jump from developer to a manager. Now what? Here are a few tips to help ease the move.

Get Some Help

Get some management and team leadership training: effective team leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, and helping others succeed. Also, if your Human Resources department has a class in employee evaluations, take it.

Improve your time management skills

As a manager, you'll be adding more directions in which you can be pulled. Develop your time management skills to balance the increased load.

Find a way to keep your technical skills sharp

A big complaint from new technology and development managers is that their technical skills suffer. Let's face it, as you become more involved in managing you will have less exposure to the things that keep your technical skills as sharp as when you were coding all day. Look for ways to stay involved technically. Perhaps you can assign yourself small programming projects aligned with your team's project—small because you need to balance your time and workload.

You should also try to keep up with technology shifts and new languages. If your team wants to use a particular technology or language, look into it yourself. If you're familiar with a new technology, it will be easier to sell it to the people you report to.

Represent your team well

As you go to meetings or deal with other managers, remember that you're representing the team. Don't over commit the team or, conversely, sell it short. Also, be careful not to say one thing to one group and something completely different to another.

Learn to let go

You may feel the urge to jump in and help your team with every issue. Don't. We all know the name for that type of person: "micromanager." This is one of the hardest things to learn. You need to oversee your team, but you need to give them room to grow.

FINANCIAL HELP FOR CIOs, IT MANAGERS

FORD will spend \$200-400 million on PLM.

This download is full of tips about portfolio management, leasing decisions, the acquisition process, IT investment and budgeting, and cost management. We've also included spreadsheets and checklists that will keep you on track.: (Select Management IT in your Profile and Visit the Download Center).

NORWAY REMINDS TO STUDENTS TO

REPORT TO SCHOOL

A prospective first grader in Norway received an email note reminding her that she'll be starting school this fall. The would-be grade schooler is 106! She should have gotten that note a century earlier. It seems the computer read the centenarian's year of birth as 1997 rather than 1897.



Pepsi, Fleet Financial win CRM Awards

CRM PUBLISHING DIRECT TO THE WEB

A new module from CRM solution vendor Clear Technologies allows dynamic updating of Web content through the company's proprietary CRM system and repository. This allows approved users to automate the traditional IT intervention required to update to the Web.

It's akin to portlet technology that employs users to crawl the Web for updated information; in this case, the module automatically pulls information out of Clear's C2 CRM system to update website content. Additionally, the module allows creation of custom, dynamic customer portals with real-time status on support issues, product orders, shipping, billing, etc.

"You're building all the content inside your normal CRM application, so you don't require a webmaster or anyone else to build a structure," says Van Symon, VP of sales at Clear Technologies. "I maintain my own partner website, enter the content it's dynamically put up on the fly so you eliminate all the human effort to update and maintain websites." Information latency aside, the solution is pitched to affect cost savings. "Many people today build their own site with WebSphere or some other product that is maintained by an IT person, whereas this is maintained through an application people are already familiar with," says Symons. "It's not the kind of thing usually done by your typical CRM people."

The new module is targeted at mid-market government agencies, healthcare institutions and other groups contending with frequent updates to websites and intranets.

BLUE CROSS JUSTIFIES CRM COST VIA PORTFOLIO

One of the biggest challenges facing CIOs today is the prospect of rationalizing IT spending to other senior level executives. For the CIO of health insurance provider Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts Inc., the problem was solved using an IT portfolio management service.

For Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the struggle was finding a method of proving business value for its different IT programs, including customer relationship management (CRM), data warehouse support and infrastructure maintenance.

"I found myself looking more and more for a way to rationalize investment in applications that weren't focused on administrative cost reduction," said Carl Ascenzo, CIO at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "Using IT portfolio management, we could put a quantitative value on what would otherwise be

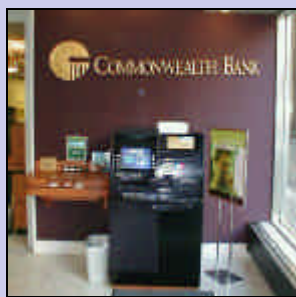
very soft, subjective expectations."

Ascenzo deployed ITCentrix's Value Accelerator Service in mid-2001. The service, which costs \$50,000 annually, allowed Ascenzo to organize all his IT operations in relation to how they drive value to the company's business. "It helps us assess where we're investing in technologies that have the biggest value to the company going forward," he said.

BAAN TOPS IN INDIA ACCORDING TO CIO'S

Baan has topped a customer satisfaction survey among CIOs. According to Dataquest-IDC's survey of CIOs of 307 large enterprises across India, Baan came out top in four of the five categories assessed - pre-sales and marketing, technical support, compatibility and overall product. Baan scored 79 on a scale of 100, as against the overall industry performance score of 75. Baan's

CRM LESSONS : COMMONWEALTH BANK & BRADY



Commonwealth Bank has seen its ability to pay wages impacted by PeopleSoft's inability to cope with local conditions after problems customizing the software to cope with Australian taxes and payment cycles. The payroll system - introduced last year - is now being examined by a team of experts, including bank staff and PeopleSoft developers shipped in from the US.

The PeopleSoft project, which was implemented with assistance from PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting (now IBM GSA), struck trouble in the middle of last year and

missed its go live date in June. After a three-month delay, the system went live, but without a back-up in the event of problems.

Meanwhile Milwaukee manufacturer Brady is has cited temporary disruptions to its direct marketing business associated with a new roll out of SAP software which led to it missing its earnings targets by 50 per cent. The problems with the software added to sluggishness in the U.S. economy and a shift in sales to lower-margin products are also at fault, the company said.

The trouble stemmed from the company's efforts to load large amounts of data from other business systems into the SAP applications. When the company switched on the SAP system last month, some of the data hadn't been loaded properly and was incorrect. Brady employees also had trouble using the software, slowing the normal pace of entering orders into the system.



David Vellante, CEO and founder of ITCentrix, likens IT portfolio management to the investment strategy from which the practice takes its name. "Managing a stock portfolio, you're not just paying attention to stocks you may be thinking of buying, you're keeping track of an existing portfolio as well," he said. "You have to be thinking of how adding stocks would fit into a larger scheme, and you constantly change and allocate strategy to fit the big picture. The same goes for IT spending."

GARTNER ANNOUNCES 2002 CRM EXCELLENCE AWARDS

In addition to solid metrics, Gartner's Customer Relationship Management Excellence Award winners shine on the "softer side" of CRM: executive advocacy, cultural change, employee involvement and process reliance. Winning in the Large Enterprise Category was Fleet Financial of Boston, PepsiAmericas and Grupo Financiero Bital of Mexico. **TechWatch On Line:** [Download the full award document on line.](#) (Select CRM)

products secured overall top ranking with high scores for user friendliness, price, technology, upgrades and documentation, and also topped the poll for compatibility, while its pre-sales and marketing team scored highly for its professionalism, friendliness and response times.

Dave Wangler, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Baan, said: "This survey confirms that Baan excels at meeting the criteria that CIOs consider most important in enterprise software - appropriateness to business requirements and provision of complete solutions for all relevant processes. The research also shows that customisation capabilities are key to which solutions CIOs choose and how satisfied they are with them.

A number of factors, including compatibility with the existing hardware platform, initiative of the company to constantly upgrade its product and its quality, availability of adequate documentation for usage and user-friendliness of the product helped Baan succeed.

Boeing serves up a portal with your 'peanuts'

CA UPGRADES CLEVERPATH PORTAL

Computer Associates announced changes to its corporate portal software that are designed to help businesses make better decisions. The Islandia, New York-based company is adding capabilities to its CleverPath product to make the portal software a better mechanism for studying historical data and displaying important business metrics.

For example, CA has developed a "dashboard" option for CleverPath that will give executives a consolidated view of operations, by providing up-to-date information on how well a sales team is meeting forecasts.

The company's development plans for better information delivery tools include CleverPath as well as security features and software for aggregating and analyzing corporate data.

Additions to the CleverPath portal include compliance with Web services protocols based on XML (Extensible Markup Language) for improved data exchange between applications. Base pricing for the upgraded portal software starts at \$20,000.

In addition, CA has migrated its Aion "business rules engine" to CleverPath. Aion is designed to streamline transactions and data processing using an "engine" that can reconfigure the application according to its varying inputs. The company has also boosted the collaboration capabilities in CleverPath with software for instant messaging, audio and video conferencing, and content sharing.

NEED TO LEARN .NET ARCHITECTURE?

This downloadable study guide will expose you to many of the topics covered by this .NET certification exam. In the study guide, you'll learn how to accomplish a variety of design tasks, including requirements gathering, technical architecture, conceptual and logical design, data modeling, user interface design and physical design, the Microsoft .NET way. **Download available at TechWatch OnLine: (Select Portals)**

AMR: SAP PORTAL "UNIQUE"

SAP Enterprise Portal helps produce a heterogeneous IT environment by integrating SAP and non-SAP applications, data warehouses, desktop documents, and Web content and services, says AMR.

SAP's unification technology is the enabler for its "Drag&Relate" capabilities, which enable users to "pull information from one portlet on top of another and get them to relate and for its composite applications, which mix and match

BOEING offers access to IN-FLIGHT Portal

Connexion by Boeing, the company's wireless technology subsidiary, is in the midst of introducing its in-flight Internet service, which could lead to billions of dollars in additional annual revenue for the Bethesda, Md.-based manufacturer. Lufthansa German Airlines began trials earlier this year on a Frankfurt-U.S. flight. British Airways will begin to offer the service starting Feb. 18 on a London-New York (JFK) flight. Japan Airlines and Scandinavian Airlines System will begin service in 2004.

Eventually, Boeing hopes to retrofit 4,000 airplanes with servers, access points and antennas for in-flight Internet access, said Scott Carson, president of Connexion. In the future, planes will emerge from the factory with the necessary Internet-access equipment installed. "We expect to sign one or more U.S. carriers by the end of the year," he said.

One hundred fifty planes will likely be retrofitted this year for Internet service, he added, while 800 more are expected to come online in 2004. Concurrently, Intel and others will begin to build and promote Wi-Fi connection areas in airports. Wi-Fi, also known as 802.11b, is a technology that allows the creation of wireless networks with a radius of around 300 feet.

But to make money, Boeing is betting on boredom. Each international-bound plane flies approximately 700 flights a year, Carson estimated. Early marketing tests show that roughly 20 percent of passengers on large planes, or 60 to 80 people, will sign up for the service, which will cost \$25 to \$35 per transcontinental flight. Approximately 100 people, or nearly 30 percent of total passengers, are trying out the service on Lufthansa in the early trials.

Multiplying these numbers, prospective revenue will come to \$5 billion to \$8 billion annually, depending on the variables plugged into the equation. Internet service for flights within the United States will cost less, said Carson, but planes on domestic routes can complete five or more flights a day. Connexion will share service with participating airlines.



Making a connection

Service is established through a combination of wired, wireless and satellite technologies. Depending on the plane, passengers can plug into a standard phone jack or connect via 802.11b. Either way, the connections feed directly to an in-plane bank of servers, which authenticate users and ensure payment has been made. Many planes also will come with electrical plugs so laptops won't have to run on batteries.

For now, connecting through a jack likely will be more common. National air traffic authorities have to approve specific Wi-Fi products for in-flight use. Wireless users on Lufthansa's flights, for instance, have to use loaners from the airlines. Regulatory approval, however, will likely accelerate, Weisheit said.

The in-flight servers then connect to satellites orbiting the equator. Connexion specially designed the antenna the airplanes use to connect, Weisheit said, and the company is working on a more high-powered version with Mitsubishi.

"It is mechanically like the same technology that links terrestrial ATM machines," he said. "The difference for us is that our ATM machines are moving at 600 miles an hour."

information from various sources. By providing a "Yahoo-like," transparent interface, the technology is adaptable for different types of users, AMR noted. SAP is in a strong position to sell to its own very large customer base, AMR said, adding that a key selling point for the company's enterprise portal technology is its integration with its CRM offerings.



How does your business reporting stack up?

Eighty-five percent of companies lack the IT infrastructure necessary to support the reporting requirements of business intelligence applications users, according to a survey conducted by Appluent Technology.

The survey was carried out in January 2003 via an online questionnaire completed by 189 U.S.-based companies across industry sectors. Three quarters of the respondents were from large or very large organizations. Participants held jobs in either business or IT management or were IT professionals.

The survey's key findings include:

- ⇒ Only 15 percent of respondents felt that their company's technology department supported the organization's reporting requirements "very well."
- ⇒ Twenty-eight percent of respondents felt their company was **only "average"** in this respect.
- ⇒ Thirty percent of respondents run reports at **off-peak times**; reports are run off data warehouse or data mart systems in 17 percent of companies.

The survey also questioned users about the frequency of data updates for key business management reports. They found:

- ⇒ One in five companies base their most crucial reports on **data that is a week or more old**, while the majority of companies,
- ⇒ 42 percent, base today's crucial reports on yesterday's data. Almost half of respondents indicated that they **need fresh data** several times a day.
- ⇒ Three out of four respondents list reports as being very important or extremely **important to their jobs**. Less than four percent said reports had no importance.
- ⇒ For business users (54 percent), reports are more often "extremely important" than those in IT management (40 percent).

85% lack infrastructure for reporting

MS MUSCLES INTO BUSINESS REPORTING WITH YUKON

Microsoft plans to embed a business-reporting feature into its SQL Server database software, a move that will likely cause jitters among specialized business-reporting software companies.

The software giant said that in the first half of this year it will begin a testing program for SQL Server Reporting Services, a planned add-on feature for a forthcoming SQL Server database code-named **Yukon**.

"This is the next step in extending SQL Server's business intelligence platform. We want to provide the infrastructure for partners to build these capabilities," said Sheryl Tullis, SQL Server product manager at Microsoft.

The company did not say when a final product would be generally available, although testing cycles for Microsoft products usually last several months or more than a year. But the announcement of the feature may make some potential customers postpone buying decisions in order to see what Microsoft has to offer.

With its new software, Microsoft is developing only the database server capabilities needed to generate the reports. Several companies, such as Cognos and Business Objects, also sell tools to write the actual reports. Cognos, for example, is expected to announce on Monday an upgrade to Cognos Series 7 that expands on the analysis capabilities of the reporting tool and introduces a reworked Web interface.

Still, Microsoft's entry into business intelligence software does portend price pressure. Analysts expect a repeat of the effect the Redmond, Wash.-based company produced when it incorporated data analysis and data transformation capabilities into SQL Server about five years ago.

Still, some ISVs--such as Crystal Decisions and Cognos--might deem Microsoft's move to include reporting with alarm. Current SQL Server implementations typically use a third-party reporting tool. Crystal Reports, for example, provides reporting capabilities for Great Plains and other Microsoft products.

Microsoft is saying the right things, but the market reacted violently when news of new analytics capability coming out of Redmond started hitting the streets. In February, shares of Cognos, MicroStrategy, and Business Objects were hammered, even though reports of Microsoft's plans were sketchy. At one point Ottawa-based Cognos shares fell nearly 8 percent. MicroStrategy and Hyperion were likewise off five percent, MicroStrategy falling to \$19.80 and Hyperion to \$26.05.

BUSINESS OBJECTS SPLITS DASHBOARD MANAGER

Business Objects SA is splitting off its Dashboard Manager software from its Application Foundation analytic application system in an effort to encourage wider deployment of business-intelligence dashboards throughout large companies.

The move will make it easier for companies to take the first step of building management dashboards, according to an announcement the vendor made in February.

Dashboards, (defined as at-a-glance view of key business-performance metrics), are becoming an increasingly popular means of delivering information and analytical results to users who lack technical or data-analysis expertise.

Until now, Dashboard Manager has been a module of Application Foundation, Business Objects' platform for building and running analytical applications. But the vendor now offers the software as a separate product comprised of the user interface and a processing engine to provide the dashboard with metrics such as time-series analysis. Additional analytical capabilities, including segmentation, predictive analysis, and statistical process control, can be added later.

By creating a separate dashboard product, Business Objects is stepping up its competition with Cognos Metric Manager, says Wayne Eckerson, an analyst with the Data Warehousing Institute. But he adds that the move is largely a repackaging of existing technology. All this is part of the vendor's efforts to offer the broadest product line for business- or corporate-performance management. The Dashboard Manager software is available, priced at **\$1,000 per named user or \$100,000 per 500 users for server-based licensing**.

ORACLE UPGRADES WAREHOUSE BUILDER ETL

Oracle9i Warehouse Builder (OWB) improves on metadata management functionality and delivers tighter integration with the Oracle applications. The next release of OWB, code-named Calais, will be available with iDS (Oracle's developer suite of products) v.9.04, expected in April 2003.

Improvements to OWB in this release are:

- ⇒ Simplified developer user interface for greater productivity
- ⇒ Improved debugging capabilities
- ⇒ Enhanced performance and scalability
- ⇒ Increased integration with the rest of the Oracle business intelligence (BI) "stack" (for example, ability to share metadata with Discoverer)
- ⇒ Enhanced metadata management capabilities

Guadagnici un certo peso con a Roma

You'll depart Rome 'a little heavier' if you visit Associates' favorite spots

There's so much to see and do in Rome, Italy that we can't possibly do the renowned city justice in one-page. So we've culled only the associates' favorites and newest attractions for this month's expose.

The city's new cultural attraction, **Music Park**, (Cha) is a cluster of three domed performance halls, a six-acre hanging garden and various support services. Locals have taken to calling it the Auditorium and the remains of an ancient Roman villa, unearthed during excavation work, are visible in the complex's foyer. Unfortunately, to reach the entrance hall you must either climb a monumental and daunting stairway or locate a difficult-to-find elevator.

Svarovski, the Tyrol-based manufacturer of synthetic-crystalware, has opened a shop in Rome, and prices are a good deal lower than they are for comparable items in the U.S. or Canada. Via Fontanella Borghese 39/40 (Historical Center). Tel: 39-06-6819-2600.



Trevi Fountain

The Coliseum



Scoglio di Frisio (Cha-Cha) is probably the oldest Neapolitan restaurant in Rome, having served its first meal shortly after the end of

World War 1. The place is loud with the music and singing of a band that untiringly plays Neapolitan golden oldies (think O Solo Mio). Dinner for two, with house wine, about \$80; pizza for two, about \$25.6. Via Merulana 256 (Esquilino). Tel: 39-06-487-2765.



Piazza de Spagna "Spanish Steps"

II Presidente (Cha-Cha-Cha) is one of the best old trattorias in the neighborhood of the Trevi Fountain. The wine list is ample, and there are a number of grappas and other strong drinks. Dinner for two, without wine, about \$100. Via Arsione 35 (Historical

No society wedding or prestige party in Rome would be judged totally well-done if the invitations don't carry the tiny **Pineider** logo, (Cha-Cha-Cha) from the renowned 18th century stationery company. A simple greeting card costs about \$2.60, though. Via Due Macelli (Historical Center). Tel: 39-06-679-5884.

Center). Tel: 39-06-679- 7342.

Few of the many eating places in the former Jewish ghetto are rigorously kosher today. **La Taverna del Ghetto (Cha)** is one of the few eating

Best Italian Meal Experience: *Il Presidente*

places left in the former Jewish ghetto which remains vigorously kosher. Try the "starter" of choice: Artichokes alla giudia-Jewish style-which means deep fried in olive oil. Dinner for two, without wine, about \$80. Closed for dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday. Via del Portico d'Ottavia 8 (Forum). Tel: 39-06-6880-9771.



Arch of Septimius Severus Roman Forum

Malecon, (Cha-Cha-Cha), a Cuban restaurant has become Rome's first cigar club. Dinner for two, with drinks from the bar, about \$80. Via del Teatro Valle 4 (Historical Center). Tel: 39-06-6813-4744.

Rome's **Target** (Cha-Cha) is not a branch of the discount retailer, but rather a restaurant near the Opera House that serves full dinners until 1:30 A.M. Dinner for two, with wine, about \$90. Via Torino 33 (Stazione Termini). Tel: 39-06-474-0066.



You'll definitely need a place to rest your head during the daily siesta after all of that fine dining. For a luxurious "pillow" try the **St. Regis Grand**, (Cha-Cha-Cha) Via Vittorio Emanuele Orlando 3 (tel. 06-47-091; www.stregis.com/grandrome). It was the first hotel in town to offer "a private bathroom and two electric lights in every room." Its roster of guests has included some of the greatest names in European history, including royalty, naturally.



St. Peter's Basilica

Business Travelers prefer to slumber on the west side of the Tiber River, about 6 short blocks northeast of the Vatican, at the **Hotel Atlante Star**, (Cha-Cha) Via Vitelleschi 34 (tel. 06-687-3233; www.atlantehotels.com) due to their helpful staff composed of multilingual European interns.

Best Family Hotel: *Hotel Venezia*

For the family traveler, try the **Hotel Venezia**, (Cha) Via Varese 18, near Via Marghera (tel. 06-445-7101; www.hotelvenezia.com), with rooms large enough to accommodate you and the kids: They'll even bring in extra beds if necessary. Some have balconies for checking out the action on the street below. **GODA!**



Understanding the CHA-CHA System

Cha-Cha-Cha: Or 3 cha's are given to establishments who represent the ultimate in tragically 'hip' travel. It's where the 'in' local crowd hangs out dressed to BE SEEN and SEE... also most expensive!

Cha-Cha: Rated best for the business traveler, luncheon, meeting or dinner.

Cha: Best places for the kids and for those who want to stretch their travel dollar, pound, euro or yen.

Hoboken's own 'BIG DIG'

Mayor promises the blizzard of '03 won't bankrupt The Mile Square City

When it comes to the cost of cleaning up the remnants of the recent blizzard, it's been a case of **"snow news is good news"** for Hoboken city officials. While many state municipalities have been digging deep into their pockets to clean up the mess, Hoboken has been able to keep the cleanup costs to a minimum.

"We've been able to do most of the work in-house," said City Business Administrator Robert Drasheff. "We haven't brought in contractors from outside the city, so we've been able to save a lot of money."

"The only cost that the city had to assume was **overtime and about \$7,000 of rock salt**," Drasheff said. He added that, although the final numbers are not in, he expects the overtime number to be around \$30,000 for the storm. This puts the total cost for the blizzard at only around \$40,000, much less than other New Jersey towns. **In Newark, that city budgeted \$1.5 million for snow removal** for the winter but is already over \$400,000 over budget.

He said that between February 19-21, **"a couple cars,"** which he defined as being three or four per block, were moved across the street on Washington Street so that the city's main thoroughfare could be cleaned. The cars were then towed back without cost to the residents. Drasheff added that **there are no further plans to move any cars** on any of the other city streets.

Hoboken has always been aggressive regarding snow cleanup. In the January blizzard of 1996, a comparatively sized storm, Hoboken made

national headlines when Mayor Anthony Russo **closed Hoboken's borders to non-residents and non-employees for four days**, saying the streets were too crowded and the additional cars could block emergency vehicles.



Hoboken shovels away 22 inches of snow dropped in 24 hours during the blizzard of '03 which hit on February 17th.

The former mayor was even featured on **World News Tonight with Peter Jennings**, whose camera crews followed him around for an hour and a half.

But this time around, the administration's mood toward snow removal was more mellow. "We've taken a more conservative approach," said Drasheff. "We could have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, but all that money would have bought is quicker removal.

"So instead of Saturday, **we let the snow sit until Tuesday**," said Drasheff. "We felt the savings warranted taking the conservative approach."

Drasheff added that this efficient policy has saved the city thousands of dollars. In 1996, according to published reports, the city spent \$190,000 on the snow removal effort for just the one storm.

Current Mayor David Roberts said that saving money never put residents' safety at risk. **"I'm proud of the city's efforts,"** said Roberts. He added that the city's streets were accessible to emergency vehicles at all times. He also said that notices were sent around to senior buildings to make sure that any shut-ins could get their medications and "Meals-on-Wheels" deliveries.

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