UniNews

UniForum. The International Association of Open Systems Professionals

Data Warehouse Backlash?
Smaller solutions appear

By Jeffrey Bartlett

For nearly two years now, vendors of all types—server systems, RDBMS and tools—have been stampeding user organizations toward data warehousing. Their main cattle prod has been the electric shock of the buzzwords *competitive advantage*. Customer service and decision support are the most widely touted applications for achieving this goal. To judge from the recent DB Expo, held in April in San Francisco, the herd is in full stampede.

One of four conference divisions was dedicated to data warehousing and parallel computing, and it included as many sessions as the omnibus database and client/server division. Clearly, the expo organizers and the vendors and consultants who led the conference saw a need to jump on the subject with both feet. But the rush to sell these solutions may be running into its first wall. Customers know they have a problem with data access, but they're not sure building a warehouse is the answer.

The data warehouse generally is understood as an enterprise-wide system; by definition it almost has to be. As a new, large-scale construction, it is expensive, complex to understand and complicated to implement and maintain. To do it right requires outlays of time and money that not every company can afford, no matter how worried they are about competitive advantage. The idea of starting such a project at the top of the IT infrastructure could seem to be just too much.

Enter the Data Mart
Vendors show signs of realizing this and, ever resourceful, are proposing warehouse-style solutions on a smaller scale. The concept of the *data mart*, a department-size data repository tailored for specific users and their applications, was on everyone's lips. There were a couple of obvious reasons for this. A data mart can be built faster and more cheaply than a warehouse, and it does not require revamping the entire architecture. Instead, it can serve as the proof of a concept that lets a supplier get a foot in the door.

This tactic reveals another vendor strategy.

SCO and OEMs Standardize on UnixWare
Plan for standard enterprise-level servers on Intel

The series of announcements from SCO, beginning with its purchase of UnixWare from Novell last fall and including the joint-agreement announcement with Hewlett-Packard at UniForum '96 to develop Unix for a 64-bit processor architecture, continued with a press briefing in San Francisco on Apr. 23. At that meeting, Alok Mohan, SCO president and CEO, introduced senior officers from Data General, ICL, NCR, and Unisys, as well as others on videotape, each of whom spoke about their company's decision to commit to SCO UnixWare as a standard, high-volume Unix operating system based on Intel processors.

Mohan stressed that the announcement signaled real progress towards his goal of a collaborative process that preserves innovation. This innovation, he said, will come from the work that manufacturers will do to provide value-added features. At the same time, independent software vendors (ISVs) will have fewer ports with which to contend. Mohan said he expects this to result in many more applications being developed for the Unix platform. A number of industry-leading ISVs were at the meeting to lend their endorsement, including Acucobol, BEA, Computer Associates, Information Builders, Informix, Netscape Communications, Oracle, Platinum Technologies, SAS Institute and SAP.

An SCO technical white paper, "SCO UnixWare 2.1, Enabling the Enterprise" is available on the Web at http://www.sco.com. ◆

Distributed Computing Conference Presents Benefits of DCE
Open Software Foundation brings its message to San Jose

The OSF DCE User & Developer Conference, held Apr. 16-18 in San Jose, CA, offered a wide-ranging, comprehensive look at the Distributed Computing Environment (DCE) and its applications across the enterprise. The well-attended conference offered visitors a variety of useful presentations arranged in four concurrent tracks: DCE Technology, Tools and Products; DCE Deployment/End User Stories; DCE Client/Server & Objects; and DCE Security and the World Wide Web.

All-Star Program Committee Plans
UniForum '97 Conference

Discussion begins on new and expanded conference topics

Work is already in full swing to help make sure that next year's UniForum Conference is better than ever, and that includes a recent planning session by the UniForum program committee on May 4-5 at Carmel Valley, CA. The committee members determine the content of each year's conference, basing their selection on what they feel are the most important issues and technologies of the day.

Although details about next year's plans are not yet available, members were optimistic going into the session about what they hoped to accomplish. "We've assembled an outstanding international group of people this year," says Richard Jaross, UniForum executive director. "The committee represents a broad spectrum of the industry: hardware and software developers, analysts, the press and end users." Jaross also points out that the committee is balanced between experienced and first-time members, ensuring a welcome diversity of viewpoints.

Each year, the program committee analyzes the previous year's conference in detail, discussing attendance patterns and the written comments provided by attendees after the sessions. Based on this information, they plan next year's track sessions, seminars and tutorials. This planning effort is an impressive challenge because, in effect, the committee has to predict what will be leading-edge technical issues almost a year in advance. However, it is a challenge that the members are well suited to handle. As David Bernstein, consultant and committee member, put it, "We have a lot of the people here who are inventing the future."

In addition to Jaross and Bernstein, attending committee members include Jeffrey Bartlett, executive editor, UniForum; James Bell, CEO of The Open Group; Kim Biel-Nielson of the Denmark Unix User Group; Andrew Binstock, editor-in-chief, *Unix Review*; Rebel Brown, president, Cognoscenti; Marie Burch, director of conferences, Softbank Comdex; Tsvi Gal, senior VP, Bank of America; Rob Gingell, VP, Sun Microsystems; Don Harbert, VP, Digital Equipment Corp.; Michael Harrington, systems administrator, Beth Israel Hospital; Phil Johnson, director of advanced operating environments, IDC; Derek Kaufman, middleware manager, Levi Strauss; Deborah Murray, conference manager, UniForum; Ted Prindle, director, open computing, Softbank Comdex; Dan Slavin, VP, Open Market; Richard Shippee, director of publications, UniForum; Cathie Smith, president, UUNorth International; and Tim Yeaton, director of strategic planning, Digital Equipment Corp. ◆

50,000 Attend Virtual Trade Show
Online format a model for future shows

Tired of traveling around the country for yet another trade show? Then you might be interested in InterAct'96, the world's first virtual trade show and conference which was introduced on the Internet on Apr. 23-25. Located at http://www.interact96.com, the event drew a crowd of over 50,000—and that's actual registered visitors, not just hits on the Web site.

Sponsored by *InfoWorld* and *Time* magazines and Stratus Computers of Marlboro, MA, the show provided visitors with a fast, convenient—and free—way to check out some of the latest news and technology through virtual exhibits, conference rooms and online chat sessions. Participants logged on from as far away as Munich, Germany, as well as from all parts of the United States.

At the conference, participants could download text, video and sound clips, as well as participate in discussions about topics including Web site building, virtual reality markup language (VRML), cyberspace and, of course, the ubiquitous Java technology.

At the trade show, visitors with the necessary software (downloaded from the Interact'96 site) could visit a virtual exhibit area which included three-dimensional booths, multimedia theaters and interactive product demonstrations. Visitors could see and talk with computer-generated figures that represented other attendees and exhibitor personnel. And if visitors became tired of "walking" through the trade show area, they could even "fly" over the aisles if they wanted to.

David Bernstein, a San Francisco Bay Area consultant, helped lead a chat group on electronic commerce on Apr. 25. He reports that although the technology was still a bit "creaky" (the password system developed problems, for example), the experience was valuable. "This could easily serve as a model for future shows," Bernstein says. "The Internet is ideal for this sort of thing, and it's a great way to get tons of information easily." ◆

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Instructors: **Dr. Brian Boyle**, Managing Director, NOVON Research
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For more information about registration, please call: Karen Clapes, 408-986-8840 ext.30

The complete program with session and tutorial descriptions is available on the UniForum Web Page:
URL: http://www.uniforum.org

Special Board Election Interviews:
Candidates Discuss Ideas, Agendas and Issues

In June, elections for four seats on the UniForum Association board of directors will take place. All general members soon will receive ballots by mail. Terms are for two years. In this issue of UniNews, *we bring you brief interviews with four of the seven candidates. The next issue will include interviews with the other three candidates. If you are a general member, these interviews can help you in understanding which candidates you feel you should support. And remember: It is critical that you vote. The future direction of the Association is in your hands!*

Jeanne Baccash
VP of Enterprise Network
and Systems Management
AT&T/NCR

Baccash is seeking a second term as a board member. In describing her qualifications as a candidate, she points to over 20 years of experience in the open systems industry, 12 years of experience in managing Unix strategy and plans at AT&T and two years of running an AT&T software development organization involved with Unix and Windows NT.

"I can offer a broad experience of the Unix industry from many perspectives," she says. "That includes being a developer, an architect, a strategist and also a customer of open systems." She adds that she and her division have worked directly with software developers and end users for projects designed for banks, retail institutions and other businesses, giving her first-hand knowledge of user needs in these industries.

Baccash feels that organizations like UniForum have a valuable role in helping users satisfy what are sometimes conflicting needs. Today's open systems users, she says, are looking for two things: competitive, best-of-breed technology on the one hand and the freedom of not being locked into a restrictive environment on the other. "They like one-stop shopping," she says, "so they like coming to a single provider who has integrated technologies, but they don't want the restrictions of doing business with a single vendor."

If reelected as a board member, Baccash will focus on providing education to members to help them deal with these paradoxical requirements. She cites as an example the need to learn about the new Internet-based Java technology. "There's so much new technology out there, people need to know what it means and what their options are."

More education, she notes, can help users make better decisions. "Just because the Internet sounds like the biggest thing out there now, does that mean that we have to necessarily go to company X to get that technology?" she asks. "Possibly not, because if you know enough about the technology, there are a lot of choices and options. UniForum can help people get up to speed and demystify a lot of this stuff."

Although she sees her role as being an advocate for both users and vendors, Baccash wants to focus on providing in-depth, up-to-date information for "people in this industry who aren't necessarily the big vendors but the IT managers and players in the banks, the retail businesses, the telecommunication and transportation areas, and others." UniForum should continue to "keep the channels of technology information open and strengthen its position as a vendor-neutral forum for getting that information out."

Randall Howard
Chairman and CEO
Mortice Kern Systems

Randall Howard is also seeking a second term. Being an experienced board member is a benefit, he says, because "it sometimes takes a couple of years to learn the orga-

nization." He cites his experience in working with Unix and Unix standards bodies, his role as a software vendor of Unix-based products, and his desire to expand the identity of UniForum, its trade show and its conferences.

Howard's background with Unix goes back to his student days in the early 1970s. He has worked with a number of Unix standards organizations for IEEE and POSIX standards as well as ISO standards. He has also been involved with X/Open Co., helping to represent software vendors.

In talking about his background with Unix technology, Howard cites in particular his experience with Mortice Kern Systems. "At MKS we've worked with people in the Unix marketplace and in the enterprise-computing marketplace," he says. "We've also worked with hardware and software vendors and with many of the large users, so we have a strong track record of dealing with people who make open systems technology happen in the industry." As a result of his experience at MKS, Howard asserts that he can bring to the UniForum board a valuable perspective based on representing a wide range of interests in the industry.

In discussing what issues he would like to focus on in the next two years, Howard emphasizes that the Internet and intranets represent a new model for open systems and that this model should be reflected in how UniForum positions itself to its members and to the industry at large. Referring to this year's trade show and conference, Howard declares that "a lot of the potential customers saw UniForum '96 as a Unix show; they didn't see it as a Unix show with a lot more." He says that more work has to be done to reposition UniForum's image in the industry as "more than Unix."

Howard also states that UniForum is more than the trade show and conference. "It's a service organization that offers valuable training and education for members. The world isn't getting simpler for IT people. They need help in sorting out today's issues, and UniForum is a well-equipped organization to continue to help them do these things."

When asked why he was running, Howard declared, "I've had a glimpse in my first term of a job that involved the transition of the orga-

nization. I'd like to see it through to the next step and help UniForum assume its proper role in this changing world. If UniForum is successful in that one goal, everything else will fall into place."

Jerry Popek
Chief Technology Officer
Platinum Technologies

In running for a first term as a UniForum board member, Popek stresses inclusiveness and the importance of working with the widest possible range of industry players. "We don't need a battlefield mentality," he says. "If you're going to be a success in the industry, you need a view of open systems based on strong alliances and coordination with other solutions."

Popek has worked in the open systems arena since 1972. He mentions that, among other things, he ran one of the first Unix systems, designed and built the first distributed Unix system, and developed the technology that enables shrink-wrapped Windows applications to run on Intel/Unix systems.

Describing his business background, Popek pointed out that he founded Locus Computing Corp. and currently works with a variety of users and vendors as CTO of one of the largest software companies in the world. "My role at Platinum," he says, "gives me additional perspective on what's important in the industry in terms of issues and how to get these issues addressed."

If elected to the board, Popek would like to emphasize the business and technical aspects of the Internet and intranets. "The kinds of pressures, tensions and requirements that drove open systems in the first place at the operating system level now apply at the Internet and intranet level," he says. "UniForum would be very well served if it applies its open systems energies and perspectives a bit more broadly than it has in the past. There already is a movement in that direction, but the industry, the customer and the Association itself need to have this movement continue."

More specifically, Popek says that an ever-broadening perspective must be based on cooperation with all technologies, regardless of whether they are perceived as "open." "Many UniForum members and players have viewed other operating systems as the enemy," he asserts. "But we have to realize that the real goal of serving UniForum members is serving UniForum member customers. The customer is faced with a heterogeneous world and is best served, in my opinion, by a heterogeneous environment of suppliers and technology."

Popek adds that when customers can mix and match products in their environments, they can choose what is best for their needs. "If we don't cooperate with different technologies, then the customer will become a closed shop, and we all lose by that kind of thinking."

This all-inclusive approach to openness is, Popek says, one of the main reasons that he is running for the board. "I believe deeply in the open systems model. It's an extraordinarily important philosophy, and it's at the core of what UniForum stands for. As a board member, I'd like to influence the direction the industry takes so that open systems does indeed prevail in the long term."

Michael Prince
Chief Information Officer
Burlington Coat Factory

Mike Prince has been an ex officio and later a full member of the UniForum Association board for the past two years. When asked what he might bring to a second term, he referred to the fact that, unlike most board members, he offers a strong background as an experienced end user of open systems technology.

"I've been working with Unix and open systems for a long time," says Prince. He points out that Burlington Coat Factory helped pioneer the use of open technologies for commercial business applications in the 1980s, long before many other organizations adopted open system platforms. "We are and have been firmly committed to open systems; we have no proprietary mainframes here."

He adds that this background as a Unix customer allows him to think in "real-world terms" about open systems. "I work with a number of system administrators, programmers and database administrators at Burlington," says Prince. "We have to think in terms of what works or what doesn't work, rather than in terms of a particular product or area of the technology." As a result, he feels that he is accessible to a variety of viewpoints and approaches, based on the different solutions he has helped develop for Burlington. He also mentions that in his role as an end user he has accumulated a number of both vendor and user contacts, an important factor in the growth of a professional organization like UniForum.

In speaking of UniForum, Prince asserts that the Association is at an important crossroads this year. "I think UniForum is dealing with basic issues of identity," he says. Many of these issues, according to Prince, are prompted by the fact that Unix has become so widely accepted. "It's not hot news anymore. People have accepted it. The term 'open' has lost most of its meaning. The real focus now is the Internet and intranets and Windows NT and Java." These topics will, says Prince, define the identity of UniForum and the trade show, and he looks forward to helping the Association in this process of redefinition.

He adds that UniForum is already in the process of redefining and expanding its role, citing the excellent educational seminars and tutorials that it now offers, as well as the recently founded UniForum Press.

Summing up, Prince says, "We need leadership, insight and a real-world perspective. I think I've proven I can do that effectively during my first term, and I'd like to continue to do that for a second term." ◆

Data Warehouse Backlash?

Apparently everyone—from hardware and RDBMS giants to small consulting shops—involved in the current data access frenzy has implementation teams who can take the customer through the whole process, from defining needs to building a pilot to managing a warehouse after it is built. Consulting is a growing source of revenue for vendors in general, and in this arena, where knowledge of fast-changing technology is scarce, they see a major opportunity.

But the data mart itself raises crucial questions, particularly in the area of integration. Following the metaphor, how do you tie all the local data marts into the corporate distribution center? Ultimately, the central data warehouse has to populate the data marts, but marts often spring up in departments independently of the overall corporate structure. Potentially, user organizations and their IS departments are looking at a reprise of the rivalry between the data center and departmental LANs—a situation that many enterprises are still struggling to overcome and are not anxious to see happen again.

Back on the Big End

Despite the interest in data access on a smaller scale, conference sessions on the very large database (VLDB) and parallel computing, in which I was interested, seemed to draw well. There's no doubt that data keeps growing like mushrooms in the forest, and the IS pros who attended DB Expo are seriously engaged in trying to deal with it.

One consultant leading a conference session tried to pinpoint the state of the art at the high end. Nagraj Alur of Data Base Associates of Morgan Hill, CA, posed the rhetorical question, "Are corporations really exploiting parallel processing technologies?" In response he answered, "Yes, they *expect* to."

This equivocation may not be what anybody wants to hear, but it probably is accurate. Those on the supply side of the equation can run out all the new strategies they want, but from the implementation side we're not there yet. ◆

Distributed Computing Conference Presents Benefits of DCE

Other highlights of the conference included a presentation by Maj. Gen. William H. Campbell on the U.S. Army's use of DCE for its global command and control effort, and a "DCE-enabled" product showcase where attendees could run DCE-based applications on a variety of different platforms. Products were available from several of the industry's principal vendors, including Digital Equipment Corp., Hewlett-Packard and SunSoft.

At the show, *UniNews* spoke with Joseph Maloney, director of technology marketing for OSF. He filled us in on the ongoing work of OSF and The Open Group that focuses on the advancement of DCE technology and implementations. He told us that work is concentrating in three major areas of technology: the World Wide Web, objects and client/server. OSF has carried out significant work in each of these areas, which Maloney says has had "a major effect on the direction of DCE."

Maloney stressed that the presentations at this year's conference show significant growth in the number of companies that are actually in production with DCE-related products. "For the first time," he said, "a large number of companies and organizations are talking about full production use of DCE." Maloney specifically cited MCI, which currently has 8,500 DCE users throughout its organization; IBM, which is integrating DCE's time, directory and security services into its CORBA model; the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA, which has just made a major investment in DCE; and the U.S. Army, which is planning procurements of DCE technology that will amount to some $2 billion over the next few years.

"At previous shows, participants were talking about their early work with DCE: testing, prototyping and so on," Maloney said. "A critical mass appears to finally have been reached in the productization of DCE. This is also reflected in what the industry consultants and analysts are saying." He cited a recent industry market research study from Input of Mountain View, CA, that estimates a 100 percent compound annual growth rate for sales of DCE-related products and services. The study valued the DCE market at $50 million at the end of 1994, and it states that it will grow to $1.65 billion by 1999. Maloney said that OSF "considers these figures to be conservative," particularly in light of the level of government DCE-related procurement.

According to Maloney, "DCE technology is finding adoption in so many application areas that its explosive growth can no longer be ignored. DCE is gaining this tremendous acceptance because it provides something vitally important to open systems: real interoperability. After all the hype and argument," he said, "there are only two things that users of open systems really want: portable interfaces across platforms and interoperability. DCE is positioned to deliver in both those areas." ◆

News Flash From UniForum!

The *1997 Open Systems Products Directory* will move to CD-ROM this coming year. Data acquisition has already begun on the new edition so that revised and updated versions, with improved functionality, may be produced as we use this more flexible technology.

Watch future issues of *UniNews* for more information on this exciting new project.
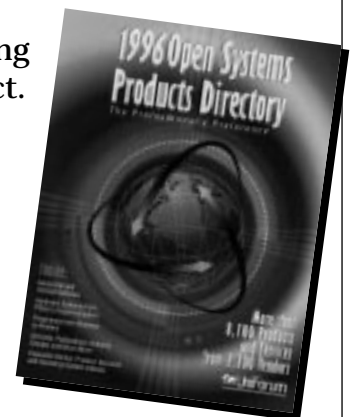
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