

Serving Customers or Shareholders?

Our history of independence means best-of-breed applications that offer full interoperability and integration.

All the major application software vendors have now added business intelligence (BI) software to their offerings. The latest move was IBM's announcement on November 12 that it was purchasing Cognos for \$5 billion. This followed SAP's agreement to buy Business Objects for \$7 billion in October, and Oracle's acquisition of Hyperion Solutions for \$3.3 billion back in April.

This is great news for shareholders. But where does it leave customers?

For decades, innovation in the software industry has arisen from best-of-breed companies focused on the specific needs of their markets. This industry is now dominated by a handful of giants, each of which maintains a vast portfolio of products.

As *BusinessWeek* reported, IBM's acquisition of Cognos is the continuation of a "growth through mergers and acquisitions" strategy. Since February of 2006, IBM has bought 23 software companies as part of its Information On Demand strategy.

Meanwhile, SAP's CEO Henning Kagermann told *BusinessWeek* (October 7) that acquiring Business Objects is in keeping with SAP's strategy to double its addressable market by 2010. Business Objects' customers will gain the advantage of "application alignment for business analytics." That sounds beneficial for SAP users, although

it's hard to say how other organizations will fare.

Oracle's acquisition of Hyperion is part of Fusion, a decade-long development effort that aims to knit together the best parts of its homegrown software with an array of products amassed through its acquisitions of PeopleSoft, Siebel Systems, and dozens of other companies.

While IBM, SAP, and Oracle have only just recently recognized the value of BI technology, Information Builders has done so for more than 32 years. Our software technology powers the largest BI deployments in the world in all areas of business, government, and education. Some of these BI deployments reach millions of users.

In our experience, organizations generally don't invest in just one software platform. That's why we have always focused on interoperability and integration. We take standards seriously, and we know that most IT leaders value open, non-proprietary systems.

Information Builders will continue to bring you the types of BI innovations you have come to expect from a technology leader.

Stay tuned for another great year of innovation! 