Misleading Gartner report on Informix

A new Gartner report "IBM Informix's Twilight Years" contains numerous inaccuracies and dramatically misleading information about the IBM commitment to Informix products, customers and partners.

Summary:

- ✍ The Gartner document is in accurate and misleading
- ✍ IBM support for Informix is unchanged; in fact it is stronger than ever
- ✍ Informix Dynamic Server (IDS) 9.40 is a major new release, not an insignificant one, as the report suggests.
- ✍ IBM Competitors may try to leverage this document to misinform customers

To begin, the title suggests a doomed future for Informix, followed by a summary statement suggesting that IBM will be phasing out Informix products within the next five years. Customers are warned to not make long-term Informix product plans. This outlook is simply **not true and unnecessary**. IBM is squarely committed to support and enhance Informix products in order to maintain customer and partner loyalty and revenue. Since acquiring Informix in 2001, IBM has updated over 30 Informix products, including IBM Informix Dynamic Server (IDS). In fact, we have more people working on IBM IDS and U2 extended relational database technology now than at the time of the acquisition.

In our first full year with Informix as part of the IBM family, we saw many positive results. For example, the Informix business is helping IBM DB2 Information Management modify the way we do business. We are better able to serve our small and medium business (SMB) customers, we have expanded our business partner community, and we have started to introduce Informix advancements into our DB2 technology base. We also brought Informix into the IBM fold and fully integrated its products into the IBM Passport Advantage system.

IBM's commitment to Informix customers is further underscored in marketing efforts that are tailored specifically to the Informix customer base. Current activities include:
- ✍ The WW InfoBahn Road Show, which touts the ongoing support of the Informix products is being executed in over 26 countries worldwide (more info. at: ibm.com/informix/infobahn)
- ✍ The Informix e-Newsletter, which is becoming apart of the "Information Management Today" newsletter now, further demonstrating the integration of Informix into IBM.
- ✍ Monthly outreach from the Information Management executive team, sent to over 80,000 people worldwide
- ✍ Mail campaign will encourage IDS customers to upgrade to IDS 9.4
- ✍ Pro-active telephone campaigns informing customers of the new releases available for IDS, Red Brick, XPS and U2
- ✍ Various Webcasts, some of which have been hosted by the International Informix Users Group (IIUG), to support these efforts

The report also says that IBM's commitment to our DB2 product line "effectively degrades any remaining enthusiasm among partners and independent software vendors (ISVs)." Our experience with Informix partners and ISVs indicates no significant displeasure with IBM and the Informix transition into IBM. There is a also a Business Partner Forum session, running worldwide with the **InfoBahn Road Show**, specifically geared towards energizing the Informix partner base, and telling them about all the new enhancements to the Informix product line, as well as new contractual arrangements that have been designed with the way Informix did business with partners, the help them be more successful.

Gartner also claims that Informix customers are being "aggressively" enticed to migrate to DB2 with sweetened "no cost" deals if they are willing to commit to a migration plan. Again, this is misleading. While it's true that DB2 is our flagship product for next generation applications, customers can still choose to lead with Informix as their database software. In addition, IBM has tightened integration between IBM Informix software, such as IDS with DB2 Universal Database and WebSphere infrastructure software in an effort to help customers drive more value from their database investments. Features and functions from IDS are being added to DB2, and vice versa.   For example, Informix-style high availability data replication (HDR) will appear in the next major release of DB2 UDB. This will afford DB2 customers another best-of-breed reliability and availability enhancement, at no additional cost. IDS users have benefited in the 9.40 release from the IBM Unicode library for full multi-language support.

Another misleading statement by Gartner is that IDS 9.4 is not a significant new release. To the contrary, IBM Informix Dynamic Server, version 9.4 is the fastest IDS release in the product's history, with an 8-15% increase over any previous version. The software includes new features including increased scalability, automatic administration functions and enhanced replication capability. In 9.4, IDS continues to automate many tasks traditionally associated with database maintenance.   For example, a new automated backup and restore function frees database administrators from manually performing this task, enabling them to focus on other critical aspects of the production environment.   Customers can also take advantage of increased scalability, simplifying the configuration and administration of the database by removing the limitation of data file sizes, enabling management of very large databases -- up to 128 petabytes (this is the equivalent of 12,800 Libraries of Congress!) For more information on IDS 9.40, go to: ibm.com/informix/ids94.

In regard to Informix employees, Gartner "believes that 20 to 25 percent of the original Informix employees have left the company or have been reassigned within IBM, thus reducing the support infrastructure." This is rumor and speculation. The truth is that more people are focused on Informix now than before the acquisition. It is our belief that the combined teams represent the best minds in the database business. IBM is obsessed with providing the best customer support in the industry. In fact, some development people are now working on features that will implement in both IDS and DB2, this type of 'feature specialty' ensures that the best possible code is added to both software products.

We also have a rich tradition of supporting customer investments. For example, IBM has supported and enhanced the IMS product for 35 years and counting.   Our experienced Informix support engineers continue to provide quality technical support services, continuing Informix's support leadership as measured by Prognostics, a third party customer satisfaction survey firm. Three times in the past twelve months, Informix outscored the survey average in the monthly software benchmark survey, which measures time to reach technical support personnel, time to provide solution/work-around, skill level of technical personnel, and keeping customers advised of problem status. IBM also deepens its commitment to Informix customers through continuous enhancement of the Regency Premier Support programs.

New offerings from Informix education and consulting services continue to be developed and delivered to support our customers in fully optimizing on Informix technologies.

The report also makes some scathing remarks about U2 Product Development. We are continuing to enhance and support the U2 product line. A new release of IBM UniVerse, version 10.1 is planned for later this year. IBM UniData enhancements in the next planned releases will revolved around SQL and XML support. The U2 products are very unique; partners that OEM these solutions into their products have performance and

feature/functionality they cannot get any other way. As far as future development goes, the unique characteristics of the IBM U2 extended relational database family do not lend themselves to native integration into DB2. To best leverage the combination of U2 and DB2, the U2 databases are evolving to support tightly bound XML- and SQL-based interfaces to access, store and retrieve data directly from DB2.

Overall, the Gartner report is very harmful to Informix customers, partners and employees because it attempts to erode the commitment and loyalty that IBM has made to this $1 billion dollar investment. It is also confusing to due to contradictory statements. While Gartner expresses many negative statements about the declining health of the Informix line, other parts of the report contain much more positive views. For example:

- "IBM continues to receive a support/maintenance revenue stream from the Informix products."
- "IBM has pledged to support the Informix line…"
- "Current (Informix) clients need not panic because IBM has extensive experience maintaining and supporting legacy DBMSs…"

Please take this opportunity to educate yourself about IBM's steadfast commitment to the Informix product suite, and to our customers' needs for enhanced and extended information management solutions.

To get all the details from the source, look for a comprehensive white paper on the Informix product road map – available on the web at ibm.com/informix/whitepaper.

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