

Fast Forward

Informix

In the mix, news and views on Informix strategy

Volume 1, Issue 1 - October 2008

## Message from the Director



In the coming months, there will be several important customer conferences around the world. In October, we'll participate in a first ever three-day User Conference in **ShenZhen, China**. In the past year, the local team in China has done a tremendous job of reviving the Informix business. We've had significant wins this year and are competing for new wins in Telco, banking, and other industries in China. We expect a large turnout for the User Conference and we're hoping to convey a strong future for Informix in China.

Our support organization is also leading a series of user group meetings in **Mexico** and **South America** planned for Q4. We've seen many early adopters of IDS 11 in Mexico and South America.

Of course, we cannot forget that the biggest event will be the IBM Information On Demand Conference in Las Vegas. We will host our **Customer Advisory Council**, where select Informix partners and customers have been invited to provide feedback on our technology, share their usage of our products, and discuss future requirements for their business. The IOD conference is an outstanding opportunity to share our strategy and future plans with our customers and other IBMers.

I'd like to share with you the vision and strategy for Informix. IBM has a multiple database strategy, offering a broad range of database servers optimized for different types of workloads and tasks. IDS is optimized for near **hands free** administration and **high performance & availability** for transaction intensive solutions. Blazing OLTP performance is a hallmark of IDS, which is why online retailers, telecommunications service providers and financial services companies choose IDS. The great technology we've developed over the years to solidify our OLTP characteristics is all wrapped up in a product that is the clear leader in ease-of-use and ease-of-administration. Informix is a dominant player in a number of industries and should be the choice when IBM competes for new business, especially in environments where the customer has to manage a large number of databases. For example, many of our customers in the retail industry have one or two databases running in each store. Telecom service delivery providers and financial services rely on the realtime capabilities and high volume transaction processing provided by IDS. Hospitality reservation systems, shipping and distribution are other solution areas where the characteristics of IDS fit well with the needs of the industry. When IBM leads with Informix in these industries, we all win.

Solution providers value IDS because they can deploy applications that are easy for their customers to manage. Customized configuration and deployment options allow them to easily deploy IDS with their applications and minimize footprint requirements even further. Ongoing maintenance is reduced overall for them and their customers, making their solutions the most cost effective. Developers can easily incorporate administrative tasks from within the application, making the database invisible and reducing manual DBA activities. This is why customers with large deployments can manage an average of 2,000 IDS databases per DBA. Remote GUI administration with the IDS OpenAdmin Tool (OAT) provides easy centralized administration of global deployments. The small footprint of IDS allows companies to do more with less hardware - reducing hardware investments as well as saving on energy costs. All of these reasons also make IDS affordable and ideal for small businesses with minimal IT staff.

Over the last several months I have had many opportunities to discuss IDS 11 with customers, partners, and analysts. Their responses have been extremely positive. Many analysts have asked for follow-up briefings to better understand our MACH 11 (Multi-node Active Clusters for High Availability) technology. With MACH 11, IDS offers update anywhere via Shared Disk and Multiple HDR secondaries. Customers can achieve continuous availability and scalability on commodity hardware with the ease of administration that they have come to expect from Informix software. I was just in Spain last week meeting with a retailer who wants to use MACH 11 to build clusters in Portugal and Spain, with secondaries in each country for disaster recovery. MACH 11 should garner more interest and bring customers to the table who previously were not considering an IBM Database solution.

Naturally, we are very proud of all of the technology and usability improvements we have delivered into the market with IDS 11. We recognize that partners and end user customers are looking for a complete end-to-end solution. We are working hard with the product teams across IBM Software Group to integrate IDS with more IBM products and drive business value for our market. In the past few months we have announced support for solidDB, Optim, Data Studio, WebSphere Remote Server to name a few. There are several more integrations in the works - stay tuned for more announcements in the coming months.

These are exciting times for the Informix business. We have had 11 consecutive quarters of double digit growth through the first half of 2008. This is reflected in growth in our install base as well as new partners and customers. Thank you for continuing to contribute your part so we can keep this trend going strong. As we close Q3 and enter Q4, let's make sure that we continue to respond as needed to help sell and finish 2008 strong.

## News

### What IDS Fans Rave About

By Kevin Brown

STSM, Lead Architect Informix Database

Many people have told me how surprised they are by the loyalty of our Informix customers. In fact, I've even heard some say that we have a "cult" of followers. What is it about Informix that makes our customers love our products so much and how do we continue to retain this loyalty? I believe it all comes down to the "key strengths" we have been building on since Informix was created in the early 1980s. We have remained focused on what we do well without becoming a niche database that is stagnant in the market. When we go after new opportunities, we build on our key strengths.

So, what are our key strengths? I believe we have a large number of strengths, but if you were to group them they fall into three categories: "agility", "invisibility", and "resiliency".

Let's look at what each of these mean; first, agility - meaning quick and nimble. I can't imagine that there was a time when computing speed did not matter. Today fast query performance is essential to most applications. Informix has always concentrated on performance and has led the way with many innovative features. For example, Informix was the first database to use a multi-threaded architecture which allows for fast context switching as well as simplifying load balancing. We have concentrated on performance from the beginning, and I believe what we have achieved is second to none. After talking with countless customers over the last several years, it's clear they agree.

Next, let's look at invisibility - meaning to disappear. Functionality is certainly important, but what if the functionality is so hard to use it requires an additional dedicated human resource? More and more companies are paying closer attention to their human costs. They look not only at what the technology can do but also at the cost to maintain that technology. Informix has always had a great story around ease of use and we continue to build on it. It is quite common to have customers claim that their system runs so well that they only need a part time DBA to run their entire enterprise. In fact, we have one customer that administers over 12,000 servers with only 6 DBAs. When we build features we always keep this in mind. It is not enough to deliver new functionality; we also must ensure that it is simple, self maintainable, and easy to use.

Finally, we come to resiliency. One definition of resiliency is the ability to recover readily from adversity, another is to adapt to a changing environment. working conditions. Whether it is changing workloads, disasters, or planned down-time your database must be able to respond. In the case of an eCommerce site; it is quite common to have a drastically different workload during holidays than other times in the year. If the load goes up ten fold during winter it is not reasonable to keep enough resources online all year just to handle these seasonal spikes. Instead customers may want to add or remove additional resources as needed to develop the continuous availability feature while allowing customers to dynamically add or remove servers on demand. Customers want to know that if a catastrophe occurs at one site that they can continue to run at another site. This is why many emergency services run on Informix. IDS is able to run multiple sites and keep them all in synch. If one site goes down the other sites can automatically take over the workload of the down site. I regularly hear from customers that have not had a crash in many years.

All this leads to the question "if we are so good why not just sit back and bask in the glow of a job well done?" Right. We may be leading the way now in the areas mentioned above but we will always have work to do. Our key strengths will remain our focus but we can always do more. We are currently in the process of planning our next release and we use the understanding of our strengths as a guideline to make sure we are on track. The strengths do not limit the directions we can go but rather define the framework within which we construct our new features. For instance we will continue to focus on autonomic and self-tuning that can be turned on or off. There are many areas where this applies including the query optimizer, storage handling, memory handling and diagnostics. We will continue to give powerful yet simple tools for DBA's to maintain and monitor the database. We had the API's and now have Data Studio support. Let's make sure that developers come to love Informix as much as CTOs and DBAs do.

The future for Informix is bright as long as we continue to focus on our key strengths and pay attention to our customers.

### Business Partner Enablement

By Ted J. Wasserman

Data Management ISV Solutions Enablement - Americas

The IBM Data Management ISV Solutions Enablement team is available to assist Business Partners who enable their solutions on IBM Data Management products.

Our mission is to enable Business Partners (ISVs, SIs, etc.) worldwide to develop and implement solutions using IBM Data Management technology. The team consists of Solution Evangelists and Enablement Consultants. Solution Evangelists have an extensive understanding of the entire Data Management portfolio of products and can help business partners understand how to integrate them in their solutions to create business value. Enablement Consultants are project-based resources with deep skills in their particular area of expertise (IDS, DB2, InfoSphere Warehouse, Optim). They can assist a business partner in a number of different areas including porting/migration assessments, technical integration assessments, porting/migration assistance, application development assistance, application architecture reviews, database design reviews, installation and configuration, performance tuning, customized education, early-adopter support, and more.

To find out if you qualify for this service, please contact your local IBM software sales representative.

## Sales

### Spotlight: Informix Sales Team

By Terri Gerber

Business Unit Executive - World Wide Informix Sales Manager, Information Management

For those of you whom I haven't met yet - I'd like to introduce myself, Terri Gerber. I am the new manager of the Informix Worldwide Sales team. If you haven't already heard, we reshuffled the Informix sales team in Q3 2008. The key players on our team include Gary Proctor as the World Wide Channels Leader and Barbara Benis as the World Wide Informix Direct Sales Leader.

Gary will be focused on recruiting and revitalizing the Informix Partners as well as building an environment that attracts partners to build solutions with Informix and IBM Software. Many of you may know Gary he has a long history with Informix and has spent the past two years in IBM Informix Partner Marketing. Gary already has a great pipeline of new partners and has had significant success in making sure our current partners are moving to IDS 11.5!

Barbara, a 25 year veteran of DB2, has quickly become a leading advocate for Informix. Her high energy, enthusiasm and understanding of the database market have allowed her to quickly become a valuable asset to our sales team. This month Barbara is in China with Jerry Keesee for our International Informix Users Group meeting. I am sure she'll have a great update for us next month.

Our third quarter performance for Informix was very strong continuing the double digit growth we have had over the past 11 quarters. Looking forward to the Q4 2008 and 2009, we will need to keep up momentum and growth and in this economy focusing on Informix Dynamic Server strengths. Now more than ever the value of Informix is even more relevant our low administration, low memory use, small foot print and scalability are important to our customers and our business partners as we all look for return on investment for our purchases and saving money in our current operations. Try the IDS ROI tool for Continuous Availability: <http://www-01.ibm.com/software/data/informix/ids-roi-availability.html>. The tool can help you understand the cost savings resulting from using Informix Dynamic Server over competitive offerings in the area of High Availability or Continuous Availability with a cluster environment or even with a remote geographic deployment.

Going forward you will continue to see our focus on bringing you the benefits of the continuous availability feature, and encouraging our long time customers and partners to upgrade from IDS version 7.0 to IDS version 11.0. Time is of the essence as IDS 7 has gone end of marketing this month and will go end of support in September 2009. In addition, you will see more programs and solutions in Retail & Distribution, Telco, and Network Equipment. We will be looking for new applications and bringing them to our customers as well as recruiting new partners.

You may know that we had kicked off the year announcing the availability of IDS 11.5 on MAC OS X, also known as Leopard. To quote the Informix Zone "Welcome to the Cats Party Cheetah meets Leopard, Great news for all MAC and IDS Fans." The combination of these two platforms gives us the opportunity to grow into new markets and attract a new generation of Informix developers. As Apple moves into the enterprise space just like us - Apple developers will want to 'set it and forget it.' They need a reliable database that provides high-volume transaction processing and continuous data availability and doesn't require constant monitoring. Informix is a perfect fit for what Apple developers have come to expect from reliability and availability. Imagine the possibilities managing your database with the IDS OpenAdmin Tool (OAT) from your iPhone. What new applications can you dream up? Please feel free to send your ideas my way ([terri\\_gerber@us.ibm.com](mailto:terri_gerber@us.ibm.com)). We look forward to hearing from you.

### Customer Wins

By Barbara Benis

Worldwide Informix Sales Leader

#### Konkan Railways

IBM India won a very important IDS deal with Konkan Railways for their Railway Application Package. This win represents the first implantation of IDS 11 and the first live site for IDS 11.5 beta testing in India. The win comprises Informix Dynamic Server Enterprise Edition and Express licenses.

Konkan Railway's Railway Application Package (RAP) consists of modules designed on Informix for the Operations and train running, on-line train positions on web, commercial applications like ticketing, and freight, Financial modules for on-line accounting of station earnings and balance sheet generation, stock and inventory maintenance, asset maintenance, and a Human resource management module. These systems have resulted in a reduction of manpower at all levels within Konkan Railways and is attributed to cost reductions as well as providing information to make better decisions.

During 2006 and 2007, IBM managed to restrict the competition by doing a POC on IDS 11 and showing improved results by a factor of approximately 40%. IM Brand's continuous engagement the customer were all key to this win, including inviting them to the 2007 Technical Seminar in Bangalore and the 2007 IOD Conference in the US, providing them with the Informix roadmap (Ambuj Goyal's letter), involving the SWG Services team in migration and testing, involving Labs team to support Informix critical issues, and testing newer Informix features with the Konkan team.



Under the leadership and persistence of Hitesh Soni, the DM representative, this deal took almost a year of sales effort. This would not have been possible without the contribution of Pravin Kedia (SWG Services) who helped KRCL decide on the architecture for IDS 11 and tested their application on IDS 11, and Reno H Rayan from Labs who supported KRCL on Informix technical issues during critical situations.

## Marketing

### IDS 11.5 Discovery DVD Now Available!

Meeting with customers, partners or university contacts? Plan ahead and take along collateral and other giveaways for your visit. Get IDS in their hands with the latest IDS 11.5 Discovery DVD (now available), and IDS 11 and IDS 11.5 books by Carlton Doe. Some IBM Database magazines featuring Informix, and a few posters and other items are also available while they last. Contact Cathy Elliott ([cathyll@us.ibm.com](mailto:cathyll@us.ibm.com)) or Tricia Stewart ([tricias@us.ibm.com](mailto:tricias@us.ibm.com)) to pick some up in Lenexa or have them shipped to you.

Thanks to everyone on the team who worked hard to make the Discovery DVDs a reality. This important piece of customer collateral includes the IDS Developer Edition for Windows (32 and 64-bit), Linux (32 and 64-bit) and Mac, along with technical materials, white papers, demos and links to developerWorks articles and tutorials.

### New Informix book from Carlton Doe - Now Available!



Watch amazon.com to order the latest book from Carlton Doe, [Administering Informix Dynamic Server : Building the Foundation](#). This comprehensive 400 page book focuses on basic skills required to administer IDS, and covers major functional areas in depth. Carlton will also be signing copies at the IBM Information On Demand conference in October.

### IBM Information On Demand Conference

Many members of the team are working hard to finalize presentations, demos and other plans for the [IBM Information On Demand Conference](#), which will be held in Las Vegas the week of October 26-31, 2008. The conference is bigger and better than ever, with over 5,000 attendees already registered and 254 who have indicated Informix as a community of choice (already more than last year). Customers will have 22 different time slots to fill with over 400 sessions of interest to Informix customers. These choices include 74 technical sessions, 36 hands on labs, and 15 Birds of a Feather that will include Informix material. We have 7 customers talking about their success with IDS, including Finish Line, Barclaycard, ProSieben.Sat, Fonterra, American Forests Hilll, and VSDVAA. Special events include the data server Community Reception on Sunday evening and an Informix reception sponsored by Intel on Monday evening. Our presence in the EXPO will be enhanced with a live blade server failover demo in the IBM STG booth, a choice of 15 demos at the Informix pedestal, and opportunities for customers to sign up for 1:1 demo presentations or meet the experts sessions.

### Informix Related blogs

Check out these relatively new blogs in the Informix blogosphere:

Rajesh Nair: [Virtual Worlds, MMOGs, Serious data - Informix Technology for Persistent Worlds](#)

Spokey Wheeler: [Random Informix Ramblings](#)

Keep up with our other bloggers too:

[IDS Experts blog](#)

Guy Bowerman: [Informix Application Development](#)

Jacques Roy: [Informix and Computing](#)

Madison Pruet: [Replication Roundtable](#)

Fernando Nunes: [Informix Technology](#)

### Customers and Partners say it best...

"Our latest benchmarks show that in terms of transactional performance, Informix Dynamic Server is considerably faster than Oracle, so there is a real opportunity for ISVs to deliver better value by porting their solutions to the IBM platform."  
*Duncan Crabbe* Division Manager for IBM SoftwareBell Micro

*Jon Tasker - Project Manager* at leading intelligent driving services provider, *Trafficmaster*, UK, said: "We selected Informix to enable us to put together a large-scale datawarehouse that would provide our customers with smarter satellite navigation and shorter journeys. We needed to manage data from up to 100,000 vehicles about driving speeds on 3.5 million road segments at all times of day - this was a huge data challenge, and one that was likely to increase. In our benchmarking process, Informix came out above all other leading solutions for its performance, scalability and reliability."

"We ... know that our customers will appreciate the new functionality, which will help them dramatically improve response times, speed the development of new applications, and reduce costs and hardware requirements. In our tests we have seen a 150 percent increase in performance when using Cheetah [2]'s improved clustering features, which will allow our customers to do more transactions and raise availability with the same hardware cost."

## Expand your knowledge with new on demand Informix Dynamic Serve webcasts

### [Developing applications for Mac OS X](#)

Do you love your Mac? Need enterprise computing capabilities? Now you can have both. IBM has announced the availability of Informix Dynamic Server (IDS) on Mac OS X, which brings the high volume transaction processing, low cost administration, and high availability to the Mac platform. Learn about options for application development, and get tips and tricks for creating low cost and low administration applications.

### [Developing and managing transaction intensive solutions for your industry](#)

Do your applications need to deliver high volume transactions in real time? Do you need to manage hundreds or thousands of users and applications? Learn how you can design your applications to handle these workloads, and make long term deployment and management simple with IBM Informix Dynamic Server (IDS). Tips include how to design for optimum performance, and how to tune and perform administrative tasks dynamically from within the application.

## Resources

### Informix Resources

By Jacques Roy

One question that comes up regularly is about the availability of technical resources for IDS. The common question is, "Why aren't there more Informix books available at bookstores? There are walls full of . . .". Today's world is web oriented so the Informix team takes advantage of that. The IBM Redbooks are a great technical resource and can be downloaded for free! If you insist on spending money for the books, you can also order hardcopies. The main site for IBM Redbooks is at . You can find the latest Informix Redbooks with the following URL:

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/cgi-bin/searchsite.cgi?Query=Informix&SearchMax=250&SearchOrder=4>

Here are a few of the latest publications:

- [Informix Dynamic Server 11: Extending Availability and Replication](#), SG24-7488-01, Redbooks, published 24 June 2008  
This book provides an overview of the high availability and enterprise replication features (ER, HDR, RSS, SDS).
- [Customizing the Informix Dynamic Server for Your Environment](#), SG24-7522-00, Redbooks, published 11 June 2008  
This book provides an overview of some of the capabilities of IDS version 11 that enable it to be easily customized for your particular environment. Although many capabilities are available, the focus of this book is on the areas of ease of administration and application development. It describes and demonstrates these capabilities with examples to show how it can be done and provide a model as you begin your customization.
- [Security and Compliance Solutions for IBM Informix Dynamic Server](#), SG24-7556-00, Redbooks, and published 7 March 2008  
This book discusses, in detail, the security features available in IDS. These enriched IDS security features provide you with the capability to protect your data and comply with regulatory requirements.
- [Informix Dynamic Server 11: Advanced Functionality for Modern Business](#), SG24-7465-00, Redbooks, published 4 September 2007, last updated 9 October 2007  
This book provides an overview of IDS 11. IDS is designed to help businesses leverage their existing information assets as they move into an on demand business environment. It enables customers to use information in new and more efficient ways to create business advantage.

With Redbooks we are just scratching the surface of what is available. More next time.

This newsletter is published quarterly by the Informix team for the Informix community. The Informix Newsletter is used to raise awareness about the Informix product to a community of users, developers, customers, and business partners.

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