



Unified Information Access: Attivio Advances the Cause With AIE 3.0

October 31, 2011

The world of unified information access (UIA) has seen more than its share of change recently. Two of its biggest players, Endeca and Autonomy, were bought by Oracle and HP, respectively, leaving [Attivio, Inc.](#) and its Active Intelligence Engine (AIE) alone to concentrate on advancing UIA. With its most recent release, **AIE 3.0**, **Attivio** is forging ahead, hoping to help its customers build better applications to deal with often very specific information challenges.

Enterprise search and business intelligence endeavors have often suffered in the face of user expectations. “People love to search,” using a simple box, says **Attivio CTO, Sid Probst**. “Google teaches everyone all day long that this is how the world is supposed to work.” But for years, this just hasn’t been the way things worked in the significantly more complex world of enterprise search. In his report “It’s the Dawning of the Age of BI DBMS,” Forrester analyst Boris Evelson writes, “We know how to address the key business intelligence (BI) challenges of the past 20 years, such as stability, robustness, and rich functionality. Agility and flexibility challenges now represent BI’s next big opportunity.” That’s where companies such as **Attivio** come in.

“Companies need to rethink the way they approach projects,” says Probst. He hopes AIE 3.0 will allow businesses of all kinds to do just that. Based out of Newton, Mass., with about 70 employees, **Attivio** aims to solve problems related to what it calls “extreme information,” which it says big data technologies are not prepared to address because of the variety, velocity, and complexity of that information. Focusing on its core industries—financial services, manufacturing, high tech, government, and ebusiness—**AIE 3.0** tackles these problems head on by supporting the right information access method for every user in the enterprise, including search queries and role-based dashboards for mainstream business users, existing BI investments for power users, and new applications that bring both sides together.

“Business process professionals realize that earlier-generation BI technologies and architecture, while still useful for more stable BI applications, fall short in the ever-faster race of changing business requirements,” wrote Evelson.

“If you buy a piece of enterprise software you should be able to get value out of it quickly,” says Probst, which is, in part, why **AIE 3.0** aims to make it easier for users to build applications with an improved user interface, among other things. Also on the list for this update are SQL via ODBC and JDBC to add unstructured content and text analytics to any existing BI infrastructure; Active Dashboard Toolkit for rapid creation of unified discovery-enabled analytic dashboards; dynamic integration of sources such as SharePoint, Documentum, Exchange, etc.; Google-like

searchability, as well as SQL-powered dashboards; and schemaless design that dramatically reduces the time to onboard new sources.

In the case of one customer, Thumbplay, a cloud-based music distributor recently acquired by ClearChannel, AIE helped deliver the right music suggestions to the right customers. Probstein explains it this way: If a Thumbplay user typed “Michael” into a search, AIE would pull from a variety of data sources to decide what song or artist this user was most likely looking for. Using information from other searches, user purchases, and more, Thumbplay is able to suggest possible matches to the user.

In another case, a financial services firm used AIE to build an application that helped get the average IT response time down from 27 minutes to just 3 minutes. Another global bank uses an AIE app to keep track of the hundreds, if not thousands, of regulations across the globe that it must comply with. When the AIE-based app detects a change in a regulation, it can create a ticket or push a notification to the proper employees and suggest internal policy changes, which can also be made directly inside the application. In other words, the possible use cases for UIA are nearly endless.

With global customers such as these in the mix, **Attivio** is also making it easier to replicate systems across geographic locations, giving users the “ability to deploy a system across multiple offices and countries and keep it consistent,” according to Probstein.

In addition to these other updates, Probstein says the **Attivio** team has also focused on getting AIE 3.0 to understand and take into consideration document formats when returning results. So, when a user searches for a word, **AIE 3.0** will do more than just search for documents with that keyword, but it will also be able to distinguish between a keyword that appears in the actual text of a document, rather than just in a header or footer, and weigh it accordingly.

“Organizations that establish a road map toward a cohesive, application-independent and information source-independent set of information management technology capabilities are best positioned to support long-term enterprise information management (EIM) goals,” says Gartner Research VP, Mark Beyer. “Look for common ways to normalize and extract meaning from all types of content so that it can be exchanged across the organization.”

Probstein says the **AIE 3.0** platform can be used to build just about any type of application you can think of, drawing from any number of disparate types of information. Whether you’re looking to outfit your intranet, create an iPad app, or build a customer-facing application, **Attivio** is hoping you’ll consider its newest release.