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Editor's Comments

Jack Rockart
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, jrockart@mit.edu

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

We open this issue of MISQE with an article that sheds light on a growing trend in the information technology field – the increasing use of open-source software. This article on JBOSS won third prize in the 2005 annual SIM Paper Awards contest. It is the first article that we have published on open-source, but I strongly suspect it will not be the last.

Today, Linux and Apache are well respected and widely utilized open-source capabilities. Behind these two in the public eye, however, there is a significant number of other open-source offerings that are making solid progress. Their potential has even attracted the attention of the *Economist* which, in its July 16th issue, noted that:

"…today, unlike a decade ago, open-source software has become just too good to be ignored. Mysql or Postgresql, two powerful open-source databases running on Linux, have become attractive alternatives to commercial products such as Oracle 9 or IBM. The same goes for open-source servers such as Apache, JBOSS or Samba."

Clearly, the major hardware vendors have also focused in on open-source products. IBM, HP, Sun, Dell and others support many of the open-source offerings. And IBM recently bought Gluecode Software, a competitor to JBOSS, that includes the free Geronimo application server. This was a clear recognition of JBOSS' market presence as discussed in our opening article.

Why all this attention to open-source software? There are many reasons. To cite just a few:

- The software is free. While the price is obviously right, there is more to it than this. Customers get to inspect the software and try it with a simple download. For small and medium-sized companies, this is very attractive.

- The software companies can leverage the work of programmers worldwide who are interested in contributing.

- Each "user" company is a prospective source of additional and improved code since their programmers have access to the code.

- Sales and marketing expenses are lower, often very much lower, since the software is available on the Internet and can be tested easily.

- Through support contracts with hardware vendors, many of the open software companies have gained world-wide presence.

To date, most of the open-source software has been in the technical underpinnings supporting application software. But this is changing. SugarCRM in the CRM arena and Compiere (ERP) are just two examples of the movement of open-source into applications. More will come.

Of course, the eventual success of open-source is far from assured. Microsoft, among others, will fight hard to maintain its current status. And, there are questions about this still new field. Will programmers continue to support open-source as the companies move into profit-making machines? Will customers move from the safety of household-name companies to more uncertain, limited function, open-source companies, even if they are supported by some of the biggest names in the hardware field?

The bet here is that open-source is on the move. Venture capital firms are increasingly supporting companies such as JBOSS, SugarCRM, Alfresco and others. And a recent report sponsored by the UK's National Computing Centre reported that more than two-thirds of senior IT people questioned expect their companies to develop an open-source strategy in the next five years. Thus, I hope you enjoy the article on JBOSS. I suspect that it is the first of many on open-source to appear in MISQE.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our other three articles in this issue deal with the perennial subject of implementation. Each of the articles is based on extensive study of organizations as they worked to implement new capabilities. Hsiao and Teo both define the barriers to effective e-procurement implementation and suggest a process to enable success. Ryan Nelson reports that project failure can be heavily attributed to the failure to study the outcomes of previous projects. And Soh and Sia present a broad study of enterprise systems package implementation. They center on the need to identify possible mis-

alignment of the structure of the package and the structure of the organization. They also provide guidance in determining whether the package or the organization should be changed.

NEW LEADERSHIP (AND THANKS!)

It was about four years ago that work was begun to create MISQE. It has been my pleasure to have the responsibility of being Editor-in-Chief for this journal during its early years. During this time, we have gone from two issues a year to four, have found readership among both academics and practitioners growing and use of our articles in the classroom to be increasingly widespread. This could not have been done without the hard work from our SEs (Cynthia Beath, Carol Brown, Ray Hoving, Mary Lacity, Allen Lee, Jeanne Ross, and Mike Vitale) and a responsive and thoughtful group of Editorial Board members. A special vote of thanks goes to Ray for his excellent advice throughout the years. I also want to thank the Society for Information Management (SIM), our major sponsor, whose support made MISQE possible. Thanks also to AIS, the University of St. Gallen, and the City University of Hong Kong all of whom, have contributed to making this young journal a success.

Finally, I leave MISQE with the best possible new leadership. Jeanne Ross has a deep knowledge of the practice of IT from many years as an outstanding researcher. She will undoubtedly draw on her broad network of both CIOs and academics as she moves MISQE forward. She has been a highly valued colleague of mine and will make an outstanding Editor-in-Chief.

Jack