

# HP Unveils New Data Warehouse, BI Services

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The new storage and business intelligence system, designed for Global 2000 companies, features high-performance analytics and high-capacity storage.

Hewlett-Packard, putting together resources it has been cultivating since it acquired business intelligence vendor Knightsbridge Solutions last December, introduced on April 24 what it calls a "next-generation" data warehouse platform and new business intelligence services aimed at Global 2000 companies.

Knightsbridge, which brought 700 new employees with it into the HP realm, is a Chicago-based services subsidiary focused on the information management areas of business intelligence, data warehousing, data integration and information quality.

The new platform and services, which a company spokesperson described as "central" to the company's ever-expanding business information optimization catalog, were introduced at parallel launch events here and at Technology@Work in Berlin.

HP's new Neoview data warehouse is an integrated hardware, software and services platform consisting of an HP Integrity or ProLiant server, HP's StorageWorks storage server, HP's home-cooked Non-Stop SQL database, Knightsbridge business intelligence software, and a new set of dedicated services to support the package.

Although it is designed as an open standards system, HP wasn't volunteering any other company's hardware or software as swap-outs for this deployment.

Neoview, which comes as its own box appliance, is designed to serve as a business-monitoring engine, providing its owner with a comprehensive view of key real-time business information, such as metrics on product sales, customer trends, or production and operational effectiveness.

Unlike many legacy enterprise data warehouses, Neoview is designed for a 24x7 environment in which decision making is integrated into business operations at multiple levels and across numerous users within the organization, said Ben Barnes, vice president and general manager of HP's business intelligence group.

Features and benefits, according to Barnes, include: high performance in handling high numbers of complex queries, mixed workloads and high concurrency; 24x7 availability and risk mitigation with no offline windows required; and scalability to hundreds of terabytes.

Neoview is aimed at retail, banking, insurance, health and life sciences, communications, and energy companies. HP plans to use this new platform to help these high-end enterprises consolidate data warehouses from departmental silos, obtain better returns on direct marketing and establish a single version of the truth for business information, Barnes said.

## **Neoview put to the test**

About five or six companies have been testing Neoview over the last few months, Barnes said.

One of them is Bon-Ton Stores. Jim Lance, CIO of the large regional

department store chain based in York, Pa., said that his company has doubled in size (to 279 stores) during the past three years and that the data explosion mandated that the company look at an entirely new data warehousing concept.

"We had started with a Tandem data warehouse in 1995, updated it in 1997, and then decided to move to the Neoview in 2006," Lance said. "We needed the ability to think and learn more about the business information we had. We had lots of data, but not all the knowledge about how to use it to improve our business.

"For example, say we knew we made \$75 million last week, but we didn't used to know that it was \$3.2 million more than we made last year at this time. That helps us immensely in our planning and product stocking. The new BI we have summarizes all this information into numbers we can use," Lance said.

Dan Vesset, research director of business analytics software for IDC in Framingham, Mass., told eWEEK that the Neoview represents a major change in product strategy for HP.

He said that the company has focused primarily on selling storage and servers in the past and had consciously decided not to get into the data warehousing and software business.

"But now with Neoview, and with Non-Stop SQL, which has been in the company since it acquired Compaq/Tandem, they are consciously getting into that market at the high end," Vesset said.

"It's very competitive positioning ... it's going against Teradata, high-end IBM, and others. From that perspective, it's new."

Is data warehousing, which was a hot IT topic in the late '90s, making a

comeback of sorts - thanks to faster processors, better analytics, and less expensive, denser storage arrays?

"Data warehousing never went away," Vesset said. "It wasn't as sexy for a while, because there were other interesting things to talk about. There are some very large data warehouses, in retailers like Wal-Mart and Bon-Ton, telecommunications companies, banks, insurance companies ... what's changing is that there's more of a businessy focus on the same topic.

"There's more awareness among business executives and managers that this can help them make better decisions. It's not just an IT project," Vesset said.

HP Business Intelligence Service offerings includes strategy and planning, information quality, information integration and information delivery. HP's partner network includes Ab Initio, Business Objects, Cognos, Informatica, MicroStrategy and SAS.

Barnes said the Neoview's pricing would start at about \$645,000 for a 16-processor storage system with 4TB of raw (about 2TB of usable capacity)

## **Not everybody enamored with HP**

Not everybody is happy to see HP get into the data warehousing business.

Startup GreenPlum, which has partnered with Sun Microsystems to offer a competing data warehouse that uses open-source software, such as the PostgreSQL database, told eWEEK that HP's strategy to use proprietary hardware and software in a lock-in system will ultimately fail.

"With this news, it seems that the data warehousing smackdown has officially begun," Greenplum CEO Bill Cook told eWEEK via e-mail. "While most of the coverage focuses on how HP will take on the other DW gorilla, Teradata, little has been said about its 'same thing - as Teradata - , different name' approach."

Cook said that regardless of the claims made by HP, the long-established IT institution's proprietary model is the wrong one, and is destined to lose.

Cook said that Greenplum's petabyte-scale interconnect can cluster hundreds to thousands of general purpose systems together and is based on an open-systems architecture, unlike Neoview's Tandem-based, Itanium-based, closed architecture.

"Neoview announced its 4TB system at \$645,000, which is \$161,250 per terabyte. Greenplum's open-systems appliance with Sun has price points at under \$20,000 per terabyte today," Cook said.

Greenplum's focus on using PostgreSQL, an open-source database community, provides access to global development resources and allows customers to avoid vendor lock-in, whereas the Tandem Non-Stop SQL database is a proprietary database system that lacks a vibrant developer and partner community, Cook said.

However, Barnes said that HP is employing 3,000 support personnel worldwide to handle Neoview customers.

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