# IDOL-Powered appliance Delivers Better Decisions Via Comprehensive Business Information Searches

*Transcript of a discussion on how HPE's platform and data solutions have been combined by SEC 1.01 for an appliance approach to index and deliver comprehensive business information results.*

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**D**ana Gardner: Hello, and welcome to the next edition to the Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) Voice of the Customer podcast series. I'm Dana Gardner, Principal Analyst at Interarbor Solutions, your host and moderator for this ongoing discussion on digital transformation. Stay with us now to learn how agile businesses are fending off disruption in favor of innovation.

**Gardner**

Our next case study highlights how a Swiss engineering firm created an appliance that quickly deploys to index and deliver comprehensive business information. It performs a simulation across thousands of formats and hundreds of languages and then provides via a simple search interface unprecedented access to trends, leads, and the makings of highly informed business decisions.

We will now explore how SEC 1.01 AG delivers a truly intelligent services solution -- one that returns new information to ongoing queries and combines internal and external information on all sorts of resources to produce a 360-degree view of end users' areas of intense interest.

Join us as we learn how finding and using the best available information can be done in about half the usual time. We're here with our guest David Meyer, Chief Technology Officer at SEC 1.01 AG in Switzerland.

Welcome, David.

**David Meyer:** Welcome.

**Gardner:** What are some of the trends that are driving the need for what you've developed. It's called the i5 appliance?

**Meyer:** The most important thing is that we can provide instant access to company-relevant information. This is one of today's biggest challenges that we address with our i5 appliance.

Decisions are only as good as the information bases they are made on. The i5 provides the ability to access more complete information bases to make substantiated decisions. Also, you don't want

to search all the time; you want to be proactively informed. We do that with our agents and our automated programs that are searching for new information that you're interested in.

**Gardner:** As an organization, you've been around for quite a while and involved with large applications, packaged applications -- SAP, for example and R/3 -- but over time, more data sources and ability to gather information came on board, and you saw the need in the market for this appliance. Tell us a little bit about what led you to create it?

## *Accelerating the journey*

**Meyer:** We started to dive into big data about the time that HPE acquired Autonomy, December 2011, and we saw that it's very hard for companies to start to become a data-driven organization. With the i5 appliance, we would like to help companies accelerate their journey to become such a company.



**Meyer**

**Gardner:** Tell us what you mean by a 360-degree view? What does that really mean in terms of getting the right information to the right people at the right time?

**Meyer:** In a company's information scope, you don't just talk about internal information, but you also have external information like news feeds, social media feeds, or even governmental or legal information that you need and don't have to time to search for every day.

So, you need to have a search appliance that can proactively inform you about things that happen outside. For example, if there's a legal issue with your customer or if you're in a contract discussion and your partner loses his signature authority to sign that contract, how would you get this information if you don't have support from your search engine?

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**Gardner:** And search has become such a popular paradigm for acquiring information, asking a question, and getting great results. Those results are only as good as the data and content they can access. Tell us a little bit about your company SEC 1.01 AG, your size and your scope or your market. Give us a little bit of background about your company.

**Meyer:** We've been an HPE partner for 26 years, and we build business-critical platforms based on HPE hardware and also the HPE operating system, HP-UX. Since the merger of Autonomy and HPE in 2011, we started to build solutions based on HPE's big-data software, particularly IDOL and Vertica.

**Gardner:** What was it about the environment that prevented people from doing this on their own? Why wouldn't you go and just do this yourself in your own IT shop?

**Meyer:** The HPE IDOL software ecosystem, is really an ecosystem of different software, and these parts need to be packed together to something that can be installed very quickly and that can provide very quick results. That's what we did with the i5 appliance.

We put all this good software from HPE IDOL together into one simple appliance, which is simple to install. We want to accelerate the time that is needed to start with big data to get results from it and to get started with the analytical part of using your data and gain money out of it.

## *Multiple formats*

**G**ardner: As we mentioned earlier, getting the best access to the best data is essential. There are a lot of APIs and a lot of tools that come with the IDOL ecosystem as you described it, but you were able to dive into a thousand or more file formats, support a 150 languages, and 400 data sources. That's very impressive. Tell us how that came about.

**Meyer:** When you start to work with unstructured data, you need some important functionality. For example, you need to have support for lot of languages. Imagine all these social media feeds in different languages. How do you track that if you don't support sentiment analysis on these messages?

On the other hand, you also need to understand any unstructured format. For example, if you have video broadcasts or radio broadcasts and you want to search for the content inside these broadcasts, you need to have a tool to translate the speech to text. HPE IDOL brings all the functionality that is needed to work with unstructured data, and we packed that together in our i5 appliance.

**Gardner:** That includes digging into PDFs and using OCR. It's quite impressive how deep and comprehensive you can be in terms of all the types of content within your organization.

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How do you physically do this? If it's an appliance, you're installing it on-premises, you're able to access data sources from outside your organization, if you choose to do that, but how do you actually implement this and then get at those data sources internally? How would an IT person think about deploying this?

**Meyer:** We've prepared installable packages. Mainly, you need to have connectors to connect to repositories, to data ports. For example, if you have a [Microsoft Exchange Server](#), you have a connector that understands very well how the Exchange server can communicate to that connector. So, you have the ability to connect to that data source and get any content including the metadata.

You talk about metadata for an e-mail, for example, the "From" to "To", to "Subject," whatever. You have the ability to put all that content and this metadata into a centralized index, and then you're able to search that information and refine the information. Then, you have a reference to your original document.

When you want to enrich the information that you have in your company with external information, we developed a so-called SECWebConnector that can capture any information from the Internet. For example, you just need to enter an [RSS](#) feed or a webpage, and then you can capture the content and the metadata you want it to search for or that is important for your company.

**Gardner:** So, it's actually quite easy to tailor this specifically to an industry focus, if you wish, to a geographic focus. It's quite easy to develop an index that's specific to your organization, your needs, and your people.

## *Informational scope*

**M**eyer: Exactly. In our crowded informational system that we have with the Internet and everything, it's important that companies can choose where they want to have the information that is important for them. Do I need legal information, do I need news information, do I need social media information, and do I need broadcasting information? It's very important to build your own informational scope that you want to be informed about, news that you want to be able to search for.

**Gardner:** And because of the way you structured and engineered this appliance, you're not only able to proactively go out and request things, but you can have a programmatic benefit, where you can tell it to deliver to you results when they arise or when they're discovered. Tell us a little bit how that works.

**Meyer:** We call them agents. You can define which topics you're interested in, and when some new documents are found by that search or by that topic, then you get informed, with an email or with a push notification on the mobile app.

**Gardner:** Let's dig into a little bit of this concept of an appliance. You're using [IDOL](#) and you're using [Vertica](#), the column-based or high-performance analytics engine, also part of HPE, but soon to be part of Micro Focus. You're also using [3PAR StoreServ](#) and [ProLiant DL380 servers](#). Tell us how that integration happened and why you actually call this an appliance, rather than some other name?

**Meyer:** Appliance means that all the software is patched together. Every component can talk to the others, talks the same language, and can be configured the same way. We preconfigure a lot, we standardize a lot, and that's the appliance thing.

And it's not bound on hardware. So, it doesn't need to be this DL380 or whatever. It also depends on how big your environment will be. It can also be a c7000 Blade Chassis or whatever.

When we install an appliance, we have one or two days until it's installed, and then it starts the initial indexing program, and this takes a while until you have all the data in the index. So, the initial load is big, but after two or three days, you're able to search for information.

You mentioned the HPE Vertica part. We use Vertica to log every action that goes on, on the appliance. On one hand, this is a security feature. You need to prove if nobody has found the salary list, for example. You need to prove that and so you need to log it.

On the other hand, you can analyze what users are doing. For example, if they don't find something and it's always the same thing that people are searching in the company and can't find, perhaps there's some information you need to implement into the appliance.

**Gardner:** You mentioned security and privileges. How does the IT organization allow the right people to access the right information? Are you going to use some other policy engine? How does that work?

## *Mapped security*

**M**eyer: It's included. It's called mapped security. The connector takes the security information with the document and indexes that security information within the index. So, you will never be able to find a document that you don't have access to in your environment. It's important that this security is given by default.

**Gardner:** It sounds to me, David, like were, in a sense, democratizing big data. By gathering and indexing all the unstructured data that you can possibly want to, point at it, and connect to, you're allowing anybody in a company to get access to queries without having to go through a data scientist or a SQL query author. It seems to me that you're really opening up the power of data analysis to many more people on their terms, which are basic search queries. What does that get an organization? Do you have any examples of the ways that people are benefiting by this democratization, this larger pool of people able to use these very powerful tools?

**Meyer:** Everything is more data-driven. The i5 appliance can give you access to all of that information. The appliance is here to simplify the beginning of becoming a data-driven organization and to find out what power is in the organization's data.

For example, we enabled a Swiss company called Smartinfo to become a proactive news provider. That means they put lots of public information, newspapers, online newspapers, TV broadcasts, radio broadcasts into that index. The customers can then define the topics they're interested in and they're proactively informed about new articles about their interests.

**Gardner:** In what other ways do you think this will become popular? I'm guessing that a marketing organization would really benefit from finding relationships within their internal organization, between product and service, go-to market, and research and development. The parts of a large distributed organization don't always know what the other part is doing, the unknown unknowns, if you will. Any other examples of how this is a business benefit?

**Meyer:** You mentioned the marketing organization. How could a marketing organization listen what customers are saying? For example, on social media they're communicating there, and when you have an engine like i5, you can capture these social media feeds, you can do sentiment analysis on that, and you will see an analyzed view on what's going on about your products, company, or competitors.

You can detect, for example, a shitstorm about your company, a shitstorm about your competitor, or whatever. You need to have an analytic platform to see that, to visualize that, and this is a big benefit.

On the other hand, it's also this proactive information you get from it, where you can see that your competitor has a new campaign and you get that information right now because you have an agent with the customer's name. You can see that there is something happening and you can act on that information.

**Gardner:** When you think about future capabilities, are there other aspects that you can add on? It seems extensible to me. What would we be talking about a year from now, for example?

## *Very extensible*

**M**eyer: It's pretty much extensible. I think about all these different verticals. You can expand it for the health sector, for the transportation sector, whatever. It doesn't really matter.

We do network analysis. That means when you prepare yourself to visit a company, you can have a network picture, what relationships this company has, what employees work there, who is a shareholder of that company, which company has contracts with any of other companies?

This is a new way to get a holistic image of a company, a person, or of something that you want to know. It's thinking how to visualize things, how to visualize information, and that's the main part we are focusing on. How can we visualize or bring new visualizations to the customer?

**Gardner:** In the marketplace, because it's an ecosystem, we're seeing new APIs coming online all the time. Many of them are very low cost and, in many cases, open source or free. We're also seeing the ability to connect more adequately to LinkedIn and Salesforce, if you have your license for that of course. So, this really seems to me a focal point, a single pane of glass to get a single view of a customer, a market, or a competitor, and at the same time, at an affordable price.

Let's focus on that for a moment. When you have an appliance approach, what we're talking about used to be only possible at very high cost, and many people would need to be involved -- labor, resources, customization. Now, we've eliminated a lot of the labor, a lot of the customization, and the component costs have come down.

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We've talked about all the great qualitative benefits, but can we talk about the cost differential between what used to be possible five years ago with data analysis, unstructured data gathering, and indexing, and what you can do now with the i5?

**Meyer:** You mentioned the price. We have an OEM contract, and that that's something that makes us competitive in the market. Companies can build their own intelligence service. It's affordable also for small and medium businesses. It doesn't need to be a huge company with own engineering and IT staff. It's affordable, it's automated, it's packed together, and simple to install.

Companies can increase the workplace performance and shorten the processes. Anybody has access to all the information they need in their daily work, and they can focus more on their core business. They don't lose time in searching for information and not finding it and stuff like that.

**Gardner:** For those folks who have been listening or reading, are intrigued by this, and want to learn more, where would you point them? How can they get more information on the i5 appliance and some of the concepts we have been discussing?

**Meyer:** That's our company website, [sec101.ch](http://sec101.ch). There you can find any information you would like to have.

**Gardner:** And this is available now.

**Meyer:** This is available now.

**Gardner:** Well, great, I'm afraid we will have to leave it there. We have been exploring how SEC 1.01 AG delivers a true intelligence services solution, one that returns new information to

ongoing queries and combines internal and external information on all sorts of sources to produce a 360 degree view of any user's interests that they choose.

We've learned how HPE's platform and data solutions have also been uniquely combined by SEC 1.01 for an appliance approach that quickly deploys to index and deliver these comprehensive business information results.

Please join me in thanking our guest, David Meyer, Chief Technology Officer at SEC 1.01 AG in Switzerland. Thank you so much, David.

**Meyer:** Thank you, Dana.

**Gardner:** And thanks to our audience as well for joining us for this Hewlett Packard Enterprise Voice of the Customer Digital Transformation discussion.

I'm Dana Gardner, Principal Analyst at Interarbor Solutions, your host for this ongoing series of HPE-sponsored interviews. Thanks again for listening, and please come back next time.

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