Infor Innovation Summit—Infor OS Ready for Prime Time

CIMdata Commentary

Key takeaways:

- *Infor continues to invest heavily in "Infor OS," a strong platform technology stack that includes AI ("Coleman"), Data Lake and Analytics, BI, Cloud, and Common User Experience among others.*
- *Numerous Infor applications are being rewritten to leverage the capabilities of Infor OS, combining them into a seamless SaaS Cloud offering for their users.*
- *Infor has made a major commitment to embedding AI and data analytics within their full product suite and providing the tools to help their customer through the digitalization journey.*

CIMdata recently attended Infor's Innovation Summit 2018 held March 19 and 20 in New York City, New York. Charles Phillips, Infor's CEO, was the keynote speaker and kicked off the Summit with an overview of Infor's achievements for the past year and set the stage for the Innovation Summit. Mr. Phillips stated that Infor currently has over 16,000 employees, delivered 176 new products during the last 12 months, and has over 71 million users subscribing to the Infor Cloud. Mr. Phillips described Infor's strategy's five focus areas:

- Artificial intelligence—using their Coleman platform and Reveal applications
- Analytics delivered—Birst BI
- Network—supporting commerce and IoT
- Cloud suites for selected industries
- Industry last mile solutions

He described how Infor has built a platform—Info OS—upon which most Infor solutions are, or will be, delivered. CIMdata was impressed with the work Infor has done to date in creating Infor OS. It is a full platform and includes Soho (UX), Ming.le (collaboration), ION (process integration), Federated Services (security), Data Lake (data management), Local.ly (digital compliancy), Mongoose PaaS (extensibility), Search, Graph, A.I.(Coleman), IoT, and Document Management. This is a comprehensive suite that crosses all of Infor's major business solutions: PLM, ERP, and CRM.

CIMdata was also impressed with how Infor is embedding AI, machine learning, and cognitive recognition within their solutions. Using their Coleman AI platform and Reveal applications they want their clients to be able to understand and answer (automatically whenever possible) the following:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen"
- What will happen next?

We believe that AI will become a core capability within business solutions and we applaud Infor's leading efforts in this area.

Following Mr. Phillips, Mr. Massimo Capoccia, SVP Infor OS, discussed the Infor OS and Data Lake. He stated that Infor's objective is to create an environment with a uniform behavior of micro-services to deliver a consistent user experience and to connect data for

multi-consumption throughout the business. Mr. Capoccia noted that this has been a seven-year journey to get all of Infor's ERP modules on the platform.

Infor is transitioning from "versions" of software towards a SaaS model with monthly updates to the cloud version, running on a single code base. He stated that they have 7,000 plus Infor OS customers running on-premise and via their cloud suites. Users' deployments can be via a variety of options: hybrid, on/off premise, or single tenant cloud-based solution.

Mr. Capoccia indicated that the Infor Data Lake is a multipurpose service—a multi-tenant service—that is part of the OS and CloudSuite. Infor uses ION and direct streams to get data into the "lake." Customers can have multiple, federated data lakes and can consume that data with:

- Birst BI—creates data warehouses
- Elastic search index—cloud search
- Mongoose PaaS—build apps linked via ION
- Coleman AI PaaS—build Machine Learning (ML) models

CIMdata believes that Infor's data lake and AI approaches can provide valuable capabilities for their customers to better understand their business and their customer's needs and to react to them more quickly.

A session CIMdata really enjoyed was that of Infor's AI program presented by Mr. Rick Rider, Product Director, AI Technology. Infor's enterprise intelligence platform is Coleman, named after Ms. Katherine Coleman Johnson, the NASA research mathematician featured in the book and movie "Hidden Figures." Mr. Rider stated that Infor wants to provide AI at all levels of the enterprise, that runs by itself, is inexpensive to compute, automates for all, and available through both a voice UX and a hands-free UX. The objective is to have a seamless connection within the Infor OS environment.

He stated that they plan to deliver three experience levels; Advisory, Augmentation, and Automation. Coleman and associated science applications are or will be linked to Infor's Data Lake and help feed Birst BI technologies. Reveal is intended to answer questions (in anticipation). It is designed to enable customer to ask questions such as:

- What happened? e.g., KPIs by sub-sets of micro-industries, anomaly detection
- Why did it happen? e.g., correlation analysis, causal factors, insights
- What should I do?—use Coleman science apps—forecasting, optimization, etc.

The Coleman AI PaaS for building augmentation and automation models is in development, not yet in general release, but will be embedded within many of Infor's business solutions. Figure 1 shows an example of Coleman AI for Predictive Maintenance on a pump with IoT sensors. CIMdata, as stated earlier, thinks AI will be a key capability going forward and is excited to see Infor making a strong commitment to these solutions.

Mr. Marc Scibelli of Infor described their approach to Digital Services and Infor's focus on helping create the networked digital industry. They want their customers to be able to do more than just digitize—they must go through digitalization and the business transformations that it will drive. To be successful in the digital age, Mr. Scibelli stated that the "How" is as important as the "What." Infor's intent is to provide their customers with the tools to address the "How" as they go through the digital journey.
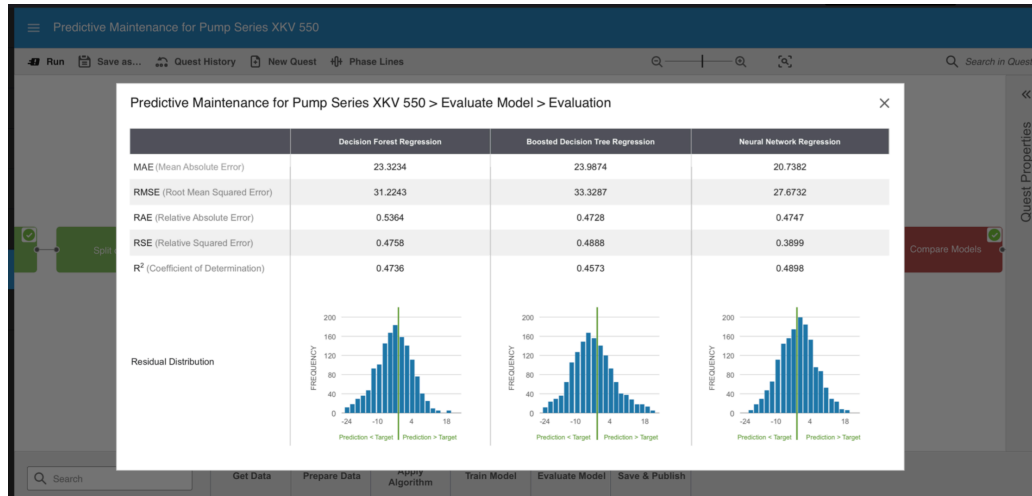
Figure 1—Predictive Maintenance Example Using Infor OS AI Capabilities
(Courtesy of Infor)

Throughout the remainder of the Summit the focus was on deeper dives into other Infor OS components as well as Infor Industry vertical solutions and customer case studies focused on health care, retail, and manufacturing.

CIMdata is pleased to see Infor developing a strong platform architecture and transitioning its major solutions to that platform. We are also excited to see Infor's commitment to AI and how they are embedding those capabilities within all their solutions. We think that Infor OS provides Infor users with a compelling set of platform capabilities. We also strongly support Infor's focus on helping their customers through the digitalization journey. Infor may have even overrun their client's ability to absorb all the new changes. Infor's next major challenge will be in communicating these capabilities—to the market and most importantly, their clients.

About CIMdata

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