Is Bring Your Own Software (BYOS) a New Trend?

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With our feet in two camps—consulting and software development—we frequently see huge amounts of tension between business users and IT. Many IT organizations initiate software procurement by developing what amounts to a “Chinese menu” of requirements and issuing RFPs that include lengthy check lists of features, leading to what amounts as a “bake off” or beauty contest among competitors who have relatively scant knowledge of the real needs of decision makers and business users who will be served by the software application(s). This is a reasonable approach when planning backbone ERP, large-scale PLM requirements or generic accounting applications, but not so great for meeting the needs of those who need flexible, domain-specific decision-support solutions, e.g., product development/strategic planning.

The Decision-Maker Revolution

Functional decision-makers and those who support them are revolting, either in the open or under the radar. Like the move to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) they are gravitating to what I call BYOS (Bring Your Own Software) to take advantage of the growing number of applications available in the cloud from hundreds of clever start-up firms at price points considerably lower than investments in enterprise software.

While large enterprise systems are critical to running the business, they are often rigid and inflexible. The BYOS movement is democratizing decision support by bringing planning and analytics to the desks of managers and executives at virtually all levels within an organization. Some would argue that this will lead to organizational anarchy; could be. But it could also be argued that these tools enhance decision-making capabilities, save time and contribute to innovative thinking.

A Marketing Director Breaks the Mold

Here is an example: a marketing department director and her staff have developed a really great Excel model for evaluating the impact of their SEO efforts but to be really effective the model needs to be scaled for use by several dozen team members spread over three continents. The director has tried for more than a year to get the attention of the IT department without results; they have been too busy with other projects and it is not simple to integrate her application into the existing system. She learns that there is software that can take her model, transform it into a web-

“Running a business should not be an excuse to throw money away. BYOD is getting a good look, but people need to consider BYOS too.”

—John C. Dvorak
PC News
Based tool and make it available in the cloud. And she can be up and running in weeks. This BYOS approach will save her team’s time, improve marketing decisions and take a burden off of IT resources; a win-win for all involved.

The marketing director’s situation is hardly unique. I witnessed this during dozens of conversations recently at an event attended by several hundred FP&A (Financial Planning and Analysis) analysts, where various levels of Excel users expressed process pains; analysts who develop models for use by others needed to find better ways to provide the models to a diversified user-base; users who manage many spreadsheets and are overwhelmed by their complexity; and users like senior executives, who want quick access to information distilled from an array of Excel spreadsheets and the ability to perform “what if” experiments on-the-spot at their desks or on the road.

We developed Rangal™ software to address these issues for large organizations as well as for small- to medium-sized businesses who do not have access to enterprise-level decision-support software. After all, data-supported quality decisions are critical at all levels within any organization, large or small, for profit or non-profit, public or private.

**Is BYOS Good or Not So Good?**
Two opposing views: It’s good. It’s not so good.

What do you think?

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Learn how our new product, Rangal, can help you achieve your financial forecasting and planning goals within the high-tech industry.

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