

# The Shape of Things to Come

By Debra Lilley, UKOUG Deputy Chairman, Fujitsu Services

**O**K, now that I have your attention this article is for everyone – whether you are pure technical, applications or a hybrid please read on. It seems as if Oracle has been talking about Fusion forever and it still isn't here yet ... or is it?

Oracle has traditionally been a technology company but now derives most of its revenue from applications. In 2005, in order to increase market share, they announced "Project Fusion" – a new generation of applications. The strategy included acquiring some major application players such as PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, and more recently Siebel. The Fusion application will bring together the best of all these products including Oracle's original E-Business Suite.

Did you know that UKOUG is unique? The UKOUG is the only Usergroup in the world that covers all technical and application areas in its geographical area. This unique position gives us an unparalleled insight into how the Fusion journey touches each organisation. The UKOUG white papers on what people wanted in Fusion have been given as the standard by Jesper Andersen SVP Fusion Strategy.

Project Fusion initially seemed to be focussed on applications, leaving technology people feeling disgruntled, but they were not the only ones. Organisations had invested in their chosen ERP system because it suited them at the time, and probably still does.

users of recent versions of current software to upgrade at their own pace. Of course, one hidden issue was that stand-alone database upgrades would invalidate the applications support – an easy trap to fall into.

For those who did not want Fusion, this seemed to be a problem-free solution, but after the initial excitement faded users realised that not only did they want to remain on their product, but that they wanted this project to continue to develop in line with legislation, innovation and enhancements.

To address this came 'Applications Unlimited', where instead of all applications simply merging into Fusion, they are now continuing on their own roadmaps but with jumping points to Fusion at every stage.

Once the first Fusion Application is available, your next business case is not simply about an upgrade, but about the choices. And if you are looking at choices do you stop at those from Oracle? To reinforce this choice, Oracle has appointed a General Manager and head of strategy for each product line, tasked with ensuring their product line continues to meet the needs of their existing customer base whilst also ensuring Fusion is attractive.

simple as the merging of these existing applications – it will require a complete rewrite in the latest Oracle technology, taking advantage of acquisitions such as iflex and portal. Some of this technology is already available to customers.

I think the message that the Fusion Application will use the new Fusion Technology is getting through to IT Directors, but do we appreciate that this technology is available NOW for our inhouse IT? Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (the acquired Siebel Analytics) is leading edge technology and soon OBIEE Plus with Hyperion (a more recent acquisition). Similarly there are prebuilt links between their applications with Application Integration Architecture or AIA. These and other Fusion Middleware technologies should be embraced now, you may have heard of Oracle Fusion Middleware and its Service Orientated Architecture but are you making the most of it and its Open Standards now? DO you have the training plans in place? Gartner estimate that over 20% of IT budgets in 2007 will be spent on SOA, Web Services and Web 2.0 technologies. If this is exciting CIOs worldwide it should be grabbing your attention too...

The International Oracle User Council has a quarterly call with Jesper Andersen. In June, we talked about education and documentation for Fusion, and delivery of this. This demonstrates where Oracle are in the process, and they have recently given responsibility for this area to Cliff Goodwin, leaving Jesper to focus on the content. If you have any queries on this article or any other Fusion-related information please email me at [debra.lilley@ukoug.org.uk](mailto:debra.lilley@ukoug.org.uk)

"We appreciate the effort that the UKOUG Fusion Focus groups have invested in the white papers that have been submitted to Oracle. It's obvious that the participating customers devoted considerable time to write these papers. This type of detailed input is extremely valuable and timely, as we finalize requirements and begin designing Oracle Fusion."

*Jesper Andersen, Senior Vice President,  
Oracle Applications Strategy*

Oracle had to listen to these users who had concerns about Fusion, the potential loss of their customer base to competitors would have been devastating.

Oracle chose a User Group event in early 2006 to announce 'Lifetime Support', allowing

In January of 2007 the latest releases of all the products were unveiled; Oracle had kept its original promise at acquisition that these planned releases would be honoured. There was also a new release of JD Edwards World, the first new release for nine years. However, Fusion is not as

## About the Author

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Debra has been a director of the UKOUG since 2004 and is currently Deputy Chairman. She is also responsible for the Product Development Committees at both EMEA and International Oracle User Councils.