

Semantra: Showcase for Corporate Data

By Barbara Brynko
November 23, 2007 10:18AM

Having corporate data is one thing; getting the most use out of that data is quite another story. That's the reason why Semantra's Semantic Enterprise Platform (SEP) digs into that data, finds what you need, and presents it to you in a variety of readable formats, from text charts to graphs to pie charts.

"We're not trying to change the world all by ourselves," said Chris Davis, CEO of Semantra, but the company is making sure that users can reap the full value of the data they already have. Semantra offers a unique solution that blends linguistics, concepts, and relational theory.

According to Davis, Semantra's SEP takes natural language requests (common language questions) and converts them into accurate queries against one or more enterprise data sources, and then returns accurate results in real time. Ultimately, the user can tap into data quickly and get key information for better decision making.

Critical information can be accessed from complex corporate databases through inquiries in the user's business language via a simple search box. Because the SEP does the "heavy lifting" in semantic technology, managers can generate their own questions and compile summaries in minutes; data workers can release reports in record time.

Dynamic SQL queries are generated from common language, and then Semantra's SEP powers the natural language. "It may not be sexy, but it will get you the right answers," said

Davis. The semantic virtualization of enterprise data sources can integrate corporate information without physical data warehouses.

The state of Wyoming uses Semantra's SEP to access information across state databases, generating reports that can drill down into granular data, search for what's needed, and deliver reports that reflect the same depth and breadth. If the query is vague, the user will be asked to refine it after a "Did you mean" box appears with three possible suggestions. The queries are also based on their contextual meaning, reaching into linguistic ontologies, business concept ontologies, and databases as needed.

Semantra has been fine-tuning its technology for many years. Marvin Elder, a well-known database technologist and a pioneer in semantics and natural language query, started Semantra in 2003. In fact, he invented the first PC-based database application with built-in natural language in the 1980s.

Semantra's patent-laden technology now serves the data consumer, according to Davis, unlike conventional business intelligence solutions and data warehouse approaches that serve a small market of knowledge workers.

The software improves the value of critical business applications including CRM, BI, and ERP solutions. "It's what you want when you want it in a form that works for the user," said Davis.