Data Aggregation, Business Intelligence, Business Analytics, and How These Things are Being Delivered in the EDI World.

Business intelligence / analytics coupled with data aggregation are not new terms. They have depended directly on the business system (like SAP) hence indirectly on the EDI system. They go back before EDI: a lot of them were once called "Decision Support Systems". I wanted to find one that did all this and was directly tied into an EDI system, but I didn't have one in mind. Then I "ran into" one in a "Webinar" sponsored by Loren Data.

I**nfoborders** is a business intelligence application designed to support trading partner electronic relationships. The focus is to improve data quality, provide visibility into supply chain and monitor business processes. By monitoring electronic transactions you already exchange with your business partners, like orders, invoices and ASNs, Infoborders will provide you with notifications and reports to help you reduce vendor chargebacks, improve cash flow, and optimize business processes.

Infoborders is a business intelligence application designed to improve trading partner electronic relationships. Infoborders monitors and sorts current and historical documents you already exchange with you business partners, such as orders, invoices, shipping advices; and, applies sophisticated business rules across multiple transactions to expose problems. Users are notified of existing or potential problems via email and through actionable, online reports. Infoborders is simple and quick to implement, uses B2B transactions, including EDI, as the main data source and provides visibility into the supply chain problems in real time.

Infoborders consist of several components working together to provide one complete solutions for business intelligence. Here are some of the business problems that could be addressed with Infoborders.

- Scorecarding: Infoborders empowers businesses to track their performance across business processes and across various retail partners, resulting in improved performance through internal corrective procedures.
- Chargeback Avoidance: Infoborders empowers businesses to discover and fix electronic transaction errors before they accumulate into costly chargebacks. By monitoring each transaction, Infoborders also provides clear visibility into the root causes of data error by employing easy access reporting and audit trails.
- Compliance Testing Service: Infoborders empowers businesses to view the changes in various retailers' compliance guides online, as vendors will receive email updates and tasks to test transactions before they go into production.
- Contract negotiation: During contract negotiations, major customers will use B2B process compliance to negotiate product pricing and payment terms. By analyzing electronic data exchanged with customer, rather than looking at information in the backend system, Infoborders will show you your compliance performance the way the customer sees it.
- Shipment Tracking: Visibility into inbound or outbound shipments can be critical to satisfy customer needs or optimize internal processes.

Infoborders provides a truly collaborative effort between various enterprises within the supply chain network. Our custom-designed software provides a collaborative platform that will assist supply chain management by evaluating scorecard performance and identifying electronic transaction errors. Not only will Infoborders improve supply chain relationships in discovering and repairing transaction errors, it will allow both vendors and retailers to gain greater visibility regarding partner performance. Unlike other business solutions, Infoborders not only identifies vendor and retailer supply chain problems and concerns, but the supply chain management process provides the solutions necessary for both vendor and retailer.

I didn't want you to think there was only one company doing this, so I set up a search and looked at some other possibilities. I discarded industry-specific providers (Maxiom Group is an exception because I liked their presentation) , plus those not directly tied into EDI, and found several other good ones. I will use the hackneyed expression "best of breed".

"**CONTEXT!**" from EMANIO is a Cloud-based product. EDI is well interfaced because EMANIO is also an EDI vendor. They bill themselves as a "Self -service Business Intelligence Platform" which lets you produce hundreds

of reports without having to involve IT.

As one of the most successful implementers of open source software, **Levementum** has formed a strategic partnership with Magento, the world's leading open source eCommerce solution and platform.

Progress DataDirect provides solutions for both corporate IT organizations and software vendors - both of which are facing constantly shifting demands from both a technology and business perspective.

Pervasive ETL tools reduce development costs, increase efficiency and reduce risk for data aggregation projects, MDM, CDI and BI.

Allyn Technology Group employs a powerful platform that encompasses a suite of key enterprise-focused features into a single application that speed the tasks of systems integration, performing in hours and minutes things that traditionally take weeks and months.

Their platform includes features such as:

- Business Activity Monitoring - tools to monitor your enterprise information bus and report boundary conditions, exceptions and trends.

- Supply Chain Event Monitoring - from warehouse management to fleet management, tools that can interact with hardware and software systems, and notify the people and systems necessary to keep your company running smoothly.

- Governance, Risk and Compliance - features like Audit Reporting, Benford's Law analysis, and instant notifications keep you on top of regulatory and policy compliance issues.

- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) - process EDI message formats and convert them to XML documents, store them in back-office applications, or perform other tasks with features that make EDI integration a snap.

- Extract, Transform, and Load (ETL) - built-in functions that simplify cross-system integrations, including connectors for SAP, Oracle, MS SQL, JDBC, SMS/WAP, HTTP/FTP, and many, many others.

Maxiom Group utilizes a wide range of integration technologies including multi-vendor systems integration using standard application programming interfaces (APIs), custom development, form development, and XML-based integration. We also assist in data aggregation, analysis and presentation through the design and development of data warehouses and implementation of business intelligence, analytics and dashboards.

Interestingly, these are mostly "young" companies. I hope they all have a long:profitable life and do not get swollowed up into big companies.