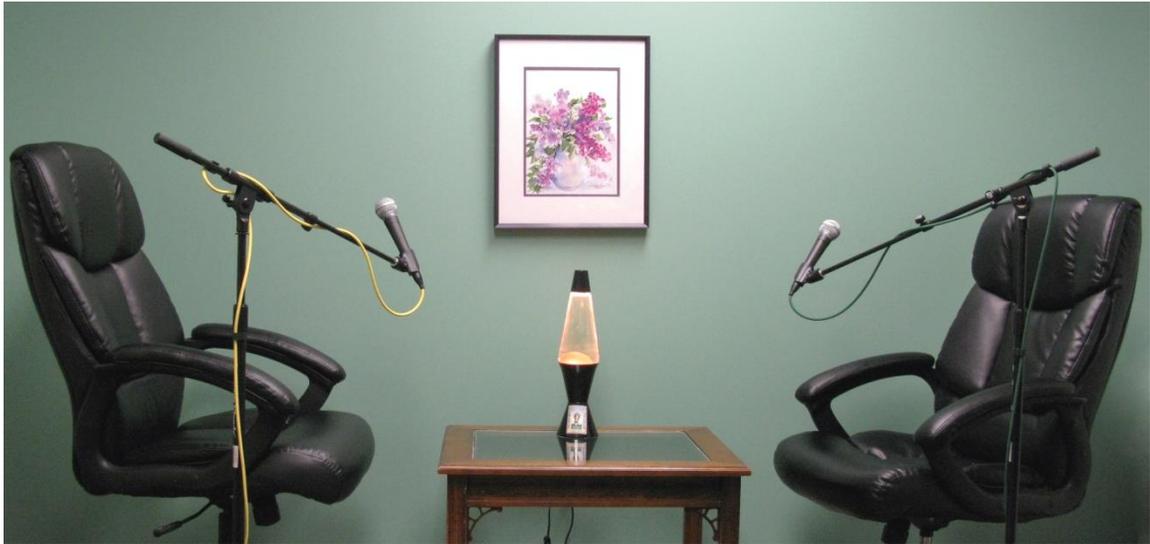




BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBBT, was founded in 2006 by Claudia Imhoff. Its mission is to leverage business intelligence for industry vendors, for its members, who are independent analysts and experts, and for its subscribers, who are practitioners. To accomplish this mission, the BBBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

For more, see: www.bbbt.us.

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Claudia Imhoff: Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust, or the BBBT. We're a gathering of international consultants, analysts, and experts in business intelligence, who meet with interesting and innovative BI companies here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. We not only get briefed on the latest news and releases, but we share our ideas with the vendor on where the BI industry is going, and help them with their technological directions and marketing messages. I'm Claudia Imhoff and the BBBT podcasts are produced by my company, Intelligent Solutions.

I'm pleased to introduce my guests, today. They are Emma McGrattan and John Santaferraro. Emma is the Senior Vice President of Engineering, and John is the Vice President of Solutions and Product Marketing for Actian Corporation. Welcome to you both.

Emma McGrattan: Thanks. It's a pleasure to be here, today.

John Santaferraro: Yeah. Great to be here, Claudia.

CI: All right, John, let's start with you, and kind of an overview of Actian. It's been on kind of a buying spree. It started with Ingres and then it moved on to acquire a number of companies, Vectorwise, Versant, Pervasive, ParAccel and maybe some others that I don't know about. A lot going on there. Tell me why, first of all, and what are you doing with all these things?

JS: Yes. It was about three and a half or four years ago, that we announced a plan for a unified analytics platform and so we have made those acquisitions with the idea that we can do just what we've done over the last several months -- bring those together into a single unified Actian analytics platform -- including all of the capabilities, everything that you can do to connect to data, blend and enrich that data, all of the data science analytics and operational BI, everything that you need from an analytics platform. So, we've brought those together as Actian Analytics Platform.

CI: Well we're going to get to that in a moment. So let me stay on that theme for a little bit, because you mentioned the strategy was to turn data into transformational value. Lots of big words there, multisyllabic. What do you mean by that?



JS: Our customers, when we bring them our platform, usually, have some very valuable data. But it really exists as noise. They want to turn that noise into signals, to create value that changes the way they do business, and really looking at four areas. One, they want to delight their customers, and so, we provide them with customer analytics that does that. They want to create world class risk management, to be able to do things like calculating global and market risk every two minutes, and changing the way they do business.

They want to be able to introduce disruptive new business models where they can come in, for example, and do market basket analysis on demand so a store manager can do whatever they want, whenever they want, with data and with that algorithm. They want to be able to do things that help them sustain competitive advantage. Not just gain it, but to be able to remake themselves over and over again with new data and new analytics to sustain competitive advantage over time. Those are transformational kinds of things.

CI: Yeah. I like it because it's not just turning data into analytics, which everybody says. You're actually going beyond that and saying it's using the analytics to change your business. Yes, you have to have the analytics, but you use them in your business to transform it, right?

JS: Exactly. Everybody has data, and everybody has a number of things they want to do with it, but when you give them a high performance platform that allows them to move rapidly through the iterative process of discovering what's in the data, fine tuning an algorithm, then, that becomes transformational, and it's...again, it's continual transformation. It used to be that you could take every five years to be able to transform yourselves, and then, it got down to a year, well companies today have to do that continually.

CI: Yeah, change on the run. You mentioned the Actian Analytics Platform, and that is this culmination of all of these acquisitions. If you don't mind, let's go into a high level overview of exactly what is that.

JS: The Actian Analytics Platform provides companies with end-to-end capability of everything they need to do to run analytics in their company. Everything from being able to connect to the data, to be able to use a



visual framework, to drag and drop operators, and do all of the data blending and enriching they want to do to take from libraries of algorithms that allow them to apply data science, or advanced analytics, or text analytics, or sentiment analysis, or whatever they want to do, to run it against that data, right where the data lives.

And then, to be able to put it into a high performance, low latency, analytic engine that allows them to push that into real time systems, to be able to embed it in business processes, to be able to embed it in machine to machine, communications, and really push that analytics into real time. The platform does all of that in a single platform.

Cl: I guess we do need to emphasize that this is Hadoop SQL. This is a Hadoop based platform, right?

JS: Right, so what we have had up to date, until the recent announcement, was a platform that did this outside of Hadoop. We're now doing it 100 percent inside of Hadoop. This is the first end to end analytic platform that turns Hadoop into a fully functional analytic platform, everything that I just described all running 100 percent in Hadoop via YARN.

Cl: Alright. Well Emma, let me bring you into the conversation a little bit here. A bunch of claims made in today's BBBT session. The first one was that your analytics platform is the highest performing, and the second one was is that it was the most industrialized, SQL on Hadoop. Let's start with the first one, the highest performing. What do you mean by that?

EM: Traditionally, Actian Vector has had the lead spot on the TPC H benchmark. As we parallelized Actian Vector and took it to Hadoop, we looked at the TPC DS benchmark that had been done by Cloudera with a view to coming up with numbers that were comparable to what Cloudera had done, and what we found, to our great delight, was that we were on average 16 times faster than Cloudera, and a lot faster than Cloudera when it came to queries that involved complex joins. That's where we get up to 30 times faster than Cloudera.

Cl: Alright. Let's take on the second part of that, the industrialized SQL on Hadoop. Exactly what does that mean?



EM: So we have a long legacy at Actian of supporting customers with SQL deployments. We understand what it is to run enterprise scale databases that require 24/7 operations to run the business. If our products fail, the business stops making money, it's just not acceptable.

What we're able to take to SQL on Hadoop is that industrialized support for not just the SQL support in terms of the language elements that it supplies, but also looking at security aspects. Hadoop is known to have security issues. We're able to take the database administration and security aspects over to Hadoop so we can do things like roll separation.

Your database administrator should never be able to look at the contents of a database. Right? He should be able to back it up, he should be able to optimize it, but he shouldn't have access to the salaries table, for instance. What we're able to take in our solution is the knowledge that we've built up over decades of supporting enterprise deployments and now bring that to Hadoop for the first time.

CI: Wonderful combination, like you said, of the maturity, the sophistication, that we're used to in bulletproof databases, and bringing all of that into this new, free, sort of chaotic world in some ways, of Hadoop. Right?

EM: That's very true. I think of it a lot like Linux in the early days, right, where people were trying to bring Linux into the enterprise and it didn't have the maturity that was required, and we're building all of these components now on top of Hadoop and running inside Hadoop.

CI: Excellent. Well let's get back to the analytics platform again. This is Hadoop SQL Edition. If you don't mind, I know it's a difficult task, it's a very beautiful stack, and I'm sure people can look at it on your website, but we're going to use our words. See if we can describe the architecture behind this new platform, if you don't mind.

EM: Yes, of course. So the platform is unique in that it builds from connecting through to data sources, whether they're on premise, in the cloud, whether they're applications or databases. We have support a couple of hundred data sources you can connect to.



You can then take that data and blend and enrich it, do some data quality, do some data mining, some data analytics, and then write the data out into Actian Vector running on Hadoop. The data at this point is running inside data nodes in the Hadoop environment, and we have modified the vector engine so that now we can deploy it in parallel across all of the data nodes that are running inside of the Hadoop cluster.

The innovation that is inside Actian Vector, from vector processing through to smart compression algorithms, through to smart data store and positional delta trees for fast updates in a read-only environment, all come to the Hadoop environment as part of the solution, and it gives us unrivaled performance, and, as I said earlier, that industrialization that's not typical on Hadoop today.

CI: Yeah, it's a really interesting environment that you bring. Making Hadoop bulletproof has not been an easy thing for many people to deal with. There are, though, a lot of competitors today that all claim they have some kind of "Hadoop thing", whatever you want to call it, that they all run on Hadoop, or they use Hadoop, or whatever. How do you see Actian's version of this, how is it differentiated from all of these other competitors of yours that make very similar claims?

EM: Everybody has a Hadoop story to tell today, and that will be something from ticking the box saying, "We have Hadoop support because we have a connector that allows us to take data from Hadoop into our own clustered environment for query execution," through to the guys that are building new technologies from scratch on Hadoop, like Hive and like Impala.

What we've done that's unique is we provide that end to end platform that I previously described, that connecting to data sources, the tool that enables on the desktop, to build out a workflow for data processing, to deploy the analytics in the environment, and then the performance and the robustness for which we're known.

CI: All right. Excellent, by the way, of describing a very complex environment. I thought you did a terrific job. One question that did come up, this is the Hadoop world, everybody wants to know is there a free evaluation copy of



the Actian Analytics Platform that I can download, or use in the cloud, or whatever it is?

EM: The product is going to be released on June 30th. One week after that, we will have an evaluation version, which is good for 30 days. There are no limitations in terms of data volumes, the number of nodes you deploy on. It's a fully functioning version of the product and that is free, available for download from www.actian.com.

CI: Excellent.

EM: If people want to sign up in advance, they can do that now, and we'll make sure, as soon as it's available, we'll notify them of the availability.

CI: They can pre ask, pre request. All right, John, let me end with you. Let's look at what's coming for Actian. What are we going to see in the near future for the company?

JS: Action, through and through, is an analytics company, so moving forward, one of the things that you'll continue to see is we will invest in the platform, and furthering out the capabilities of a unified analytics platform, being able to support that entire analytic process, making sure that everything runs together, that everything works smoothly, and, really, that we're enabling the masses to be able to do analytics on a single platform, not just the data scientists, not just the big companies with deep pockets, but bringing this capability to everyone.

Then, second, you're going to see us investing more in analytics. We already have quite a number of functions, over a thousand analytic functions that you can choose from as you build out these analytic applications. We're going to continue to build those and we're going to start stitching them together in solutions where you have entire workflows and entire applications coming together around our technology. Those are the two main areas, unified platform and more analytics that drive more value for our customers.

CI: Excellent. I think that's a very good future, a very bright future, and spot on. Alright. Unfortunately, we're out of time, so that's it for this edition of the BBT Podcast. Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff. It has been a great pleasure to speak



with Emma McGrattan and John Santaferarero of Actian Corporation today.
Thanks so much.

EM: It was a pleasure, Claudia. Thank you.

JS: Thanks, Claudia.

CI: I hope you enjoyed today's podcast. You'll find more podcasts from other vendors at our web site www.bbbt.us. If you want to read more about today's session, please search for our hash tag on Twitter. That's #BBBT. And please join me again for another interview. Good bye and good business!