ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE SPECIAL

CIO Review

The Navigator for Enterprise Solutions

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IN MY OPINION

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CIO INSIGHTS

MIKE ANDERSON,
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SPARX SYSTEMS

INTELLIGENTLY ARCHITECTING THE INFORMATION SILOS

Geoffrey Sparks,
CEO & Founder

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CIO REVIEW
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SPARX SYSTEMS:

INTELLIGENTLY ARCHITECTING THE INFORMATION SILOS

By Arun Kant

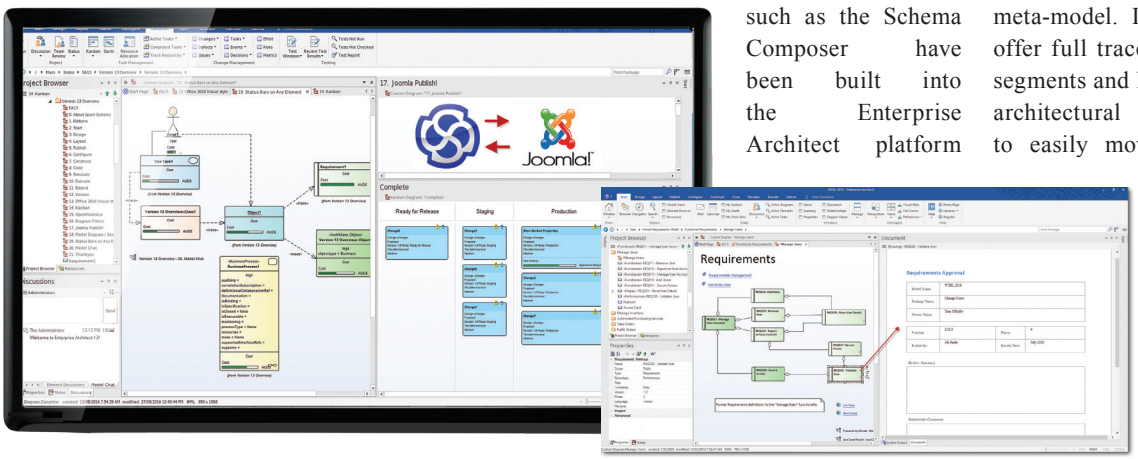
Enterprise Architects are visionaries by nature. They morph complex ideas into reality, which includes transforming a complex architecture into an ecosystem of aligned, and well-controlled business processes and IT strategies. The current "technology rush" is raising the bar for the enterprise architects as they have more technologies to map and a variety of information to scour. "The IT landscape is buzzing with cloud, mobile, IoT, and with unprecedented online interactivity through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which is at the heart of major variations in Enterprise Architecture (EA) practice and solutions," explains Geoffrey Sparks, Founder and CEO, Sparx Systems.

With a vision to assist organizations in a complex and demanding environment, Sparx Systems developed its Enterprise Architect tool that carefully maps adopted technologies into clients' existing enterprise landscapes. "The ability to leverage the latest technologies, to easily consume rich sources of business information, to quickly interact with new partners and communicate with customers on a far more personal level than ever before, are the hallmarks of our platform," says Sparks.

"We have worked with many standards based organizations to define new data models and standards that are at the epicenter of the information revolution"

Geoffrey Sparks,
CEO & Founder

Sparx Systems Enterprise Architect seamlessly implements cloud-based models and re-usable asset services without compromising the flair of the mobile environment. "By providing collaborative tools that work effectively, across the Windows, OS X, and Linux desktops, with connectivity to models hosted within the cloud, we are helping distributed teams to work together and realize their strategic enterprise goals," adds Sparks.



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Offering Full Traceability

Unlike tools providing a limited and singular viewpoint, Sparx's platform incorporates multiple viewpoints and technologies tied together to form a comprehensive, end-to-end map of any arbitrary solution space. It is built around a rich and integrated set of standards such as Unified Modeling Language (UML), Business Process Model and Notation, and the Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) that provides an educated approach for planning, implementing, and governing enterprise information technology architecture. "We have worked with many standards based organizations to define new data models and standards that are at the epicenter of the information revolution," says Sparks. Tools such as the Schema Composer have been built into the Enterprise Architect platform to facilitate the rapid development of information exchange 'contracts', from standard based models such as those promulgated by Common Information Model (CIM) and Universal Business Language (UBL).

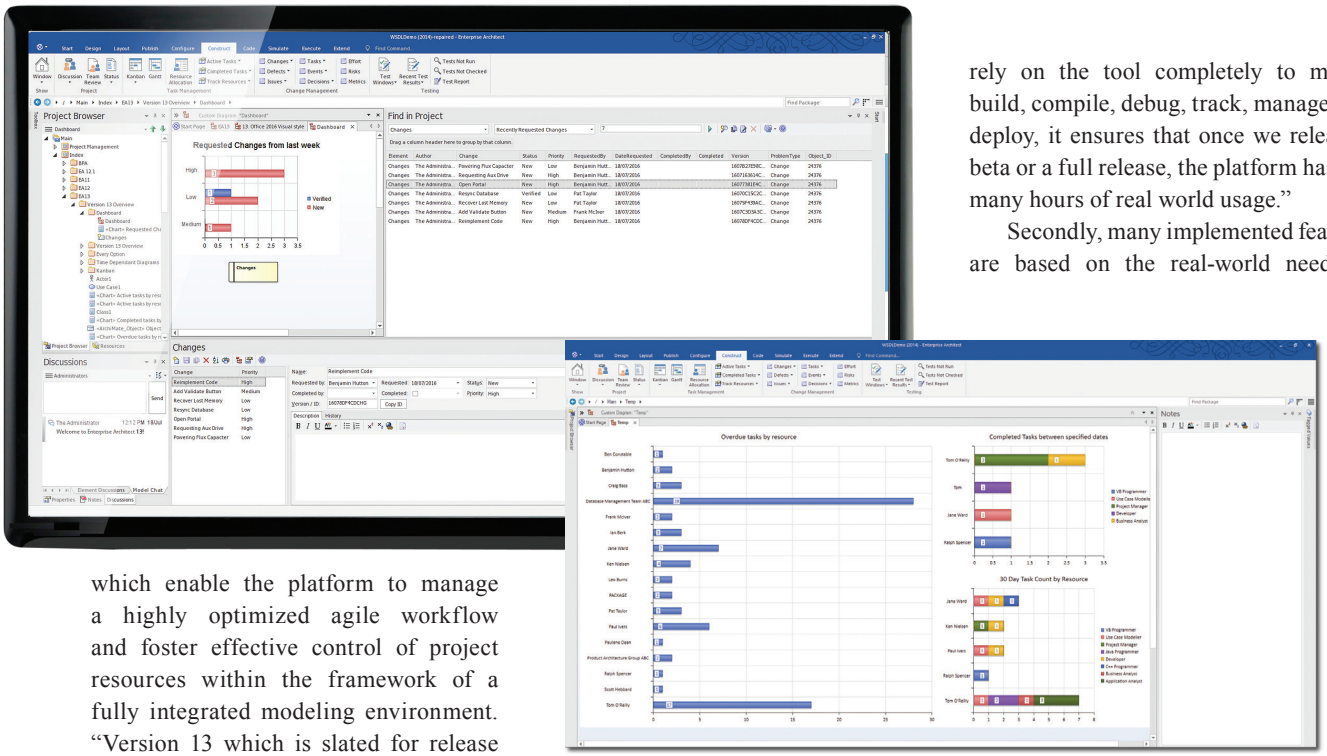
"UML is used as the base modeling dialect with multiple frameworks, profiles, patterns, and tools built on top," Sparks notes. With a common meta-model and shared behavior, it becomes possible to easily shift between process and structural views, to model enterprise architecture or embedded systems and build code or engineer databases. This enables enterprises to simplify the managerial aspects of defining and implementing their different processes and architectures.

These open and standards based technologies, form the core language of the Sparx platform, providing a rich set of domain specific modeling, and design tools with a common underlying meta-model. It allows the platform to offer full traceability between different segments and layers of an organization's architectural model. "The ability to easily move from broad strategic models into possible solutions, simulations, deployments, and managed roadmaps of future states, is a compelling and successful formula to enable positive outcomes for evolving enterprises and forward thinking businesses."

New Features and Improvisations

The highly competitive performance-cost ratio makes Sparx Systems Enterprise Architect a viable solution. "From its inception, the tool has maintained an economical price point to support its roll out to entire teams of architects, developers, managers, and other stakeholders," points out Sparks. It is a tool that speaks the same language for every function in a company, presenting the layers and extensions on the same page. "Democratic access to models and architectural information amongst teams provides the stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute, comment, test, and validate the working model and the underlying creative solutions and assumptions."

Latest version of Sparx Systems Enterprise Architect supports full resource tracking and Kanban diagrams,



which enable the platform to manage a highly optimized agile workflow and foster effective control of project resources within the framework of a fully integrated modeling environment. "Version 13 which is slated for release in Q4 2016, has a visual interface that brings a lot of the powerful tools and features of Enterprise Architect to the surface, making them more accessible and optimizing the overall user experience," reveals Sparks. This new version will be laced with updates and enhancements to handle enterprise architectures, simulations, data models, and resource management more effectively.

Sparx Systems is a tool vendor and does not directly provide solutions in the traditional sense. "We provide a non-prescriptive modeling and design platform that facilitates a wide range of methodologies and approaches to create innovative and successful solutions, to meet organizational goals and strategies," says Sparks. Over the last 16 years, Sparx Systems and its tool suite has evolved, alongside its customer base. "Scouring through past feedback and dialogs with our clientele, we have refined and optimized our solution suite to move forward and serve our diverse but active community in the best way possible."

The Next Chapter

With close to 400,000 licensed users across a broad spectrum of industries, Sparx Systems continues to offer the best solution for agile and collaborative teams seeking to implement EA practice through effective use of innovative technologies. The major industry verticals where the company has developed its strength from, include among them banking, government, aerospace, manufacturing, automotive, and utilities.

To keep its performance ahead of the expectations of the outside world, Sparx Systems implements a simple company innovation using its own EA tool for managing its enterprise architecture and execution of it's strategies. "We use our tool to host our entire knowledgebase and resources, and export the information as a rich and compelling library of topic based PDF documents and as a reservoir of over 4,000 help topics," adds Sparks. This decision provides two very important and direct benefits to the company. Firstly, it ensures the usability and robustness of the tool by rapidly uncovering any shortcomings or awkward interfaces. "When customers rely on the tool completely to model, build, compile, debug, track, manage, and deploy, it ensures that once we release a beta or a full release, the platform has had many hours of real world usage."

Secondly, many implemented features are based on the real-world needs of Sparx Systems in modeling, developing, and managing the construction of Enterprise Architect.

Sparx Systems is anticipating waves of change that will challenge the company to continuously prove it's mettle. "The key to successful outcomes is both a sound knowledge and understanding of the new technology, coupled with a depth of understanding and a well-developed roadmap of the current enterprise space," says Sparks. Shared knowledge is a key predictor of success when a company has to transition with new technologies and solutions.

The pragmatic approach would be to look beyond the appeal of reigning technologies. "The mistaken belief that new technologies are somehow simpler and more self-correcting can quickly lead to project failures or cost overruns," explains Sparks. With these cautious approaches, Sparx Systems intends to keep its growth trajectory and learning curve aligned with its vision, to satisfy the growing needs of Business/IT environment. CR

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20 Most Promising Enterprise Architecture Technology Providers - 2016

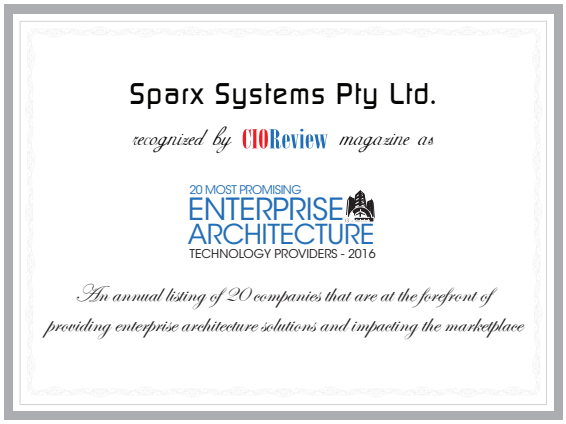
The role of Enterprise Architecture (EA) has steadily grown over the last two decades. Although, many EA teams operate as part of their IT departments, others are taking a more active approach in strategic planning, investment, and transformation at the enterprise-level.

EA, as a discipline, has reached a stage where it is well established within many enterprises as a core capability. But, more importantly, the reach of EA is today extending beyond organizational boundaries. Leading companies use EA to recognize, evaluate, recommend, and resolve their architectural problems. To drive the digital transformation, companies are on the lookout for modern EA tools and software that bridge the gap between business strategy and execution. Meanwhile, today's enterprise architects need high-level skills on analyzing information, building architectural models, and implementing integrated EA solutions.

To help organizations find the best-of-breed EA solutions that suit their business needs, in this issue of CIOReview, we present the 20 Most Promising Enterprise Architecture Technology Providers 2016, featuring the best vendors offering EA technologies and services that aid enterprises in their business processes. The firms featured in this issue have exhibited vast knowledge and in-depth expertise in managing EA.

A distinguished panel comprising of CTOs, CIOs, analysts, and the CIOReview editorial board has selected the top players from the competitive field of EA. The listing provides a look into how these solutions work in the real world, so that you can gain a comprehensive understanding of what technologies are available and right for you.

We present to you 20 Most Promising Enterprise Architecture Technology Providers 2016.



Company:
Sparx Systems

Description:
Specializes in high performance and scalable visual modeling tools for the planning, design, and construction of software intensive systems

Key Person:
Geoffrey Sparks
CEO & Founder

Website:
sparxsystems.com