

## Global IDs has global ideas for data governance-focused management stack

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**Global IDs** is an eight-year-old private company on a mission to make its mark with a data management platform that is focused data governance and geared to solving a wide variety of needs. Management contends 15 functional areas are required by its target audience – global enterprises with complex wide-ranging data management issues. For that reason it includes all these areas – spanning classification, discovery, profiling and verification of data, data quality and data integration, master data management (MDM) and data governance – in one modular stack. **Global IDs Data Governance 6.0** is the next release of its massively parallel and agent-based platform, due in September, which sports numerous enhancements to each layer of the stack (see below).

### The 451 Take

Global IDs has a number of factors on its side, including the ability to grow without venture capital (a boon in the ongoing turbulent economy), a fairly broad and deep product, and a focus on data governance, a hot-button topic these days. But it also suffers from a low profile, and is an emerging entrant into a well-established market with some heavyweight competition from data management veterans including IBM.

### Context

Founded by former **IBM** executives in November 2001, Global IDs' roots are in IT services, providing consulting for data management and integration projects. At the same time as engaging in these consulting projects, the privately held firm began building out its data management platform, which now has 48 application modules, and is essentially built for global multinational enterprises with sophisticated and diverse data management problems. We're told it tends to sell four to five modules of the platform (see below) at a minimum in the initial deal, with a view to upsell opportunities.

Product-led revenue reportedly started to predominate in the company's sales mix some three years ago. Global IDs now has 15 paying customers. The firm's roots as a consultancy – it transitioned into a software vendor in 2006 – mean some of its 15 paying customers are on the services side of the business. Less than 10 are on the product side. Average deals are on the rise and currently less than \$500,000. Most of its customers are global leaders in their respective industries, according to management.

Reportedly profitable for the past four years, management intends to grow the company organically without external venture capital. It is currently hiring, and has about 50 employees. Global IDs' present sales model uses a combination of direct and indirect routes to market – with systems integrators falling into the latter category. However, it is looking to grow its partner network to help with globalization efforts.

## Technology

The Global IDs data management platform was built from the ground up to handle discovery, profiling, classification and verification of data, data quality, mapping, movement and integration of data, in addition to MDM, data governance, data stewardship and analysis.

The stack is agent-based and uses massively parallel computing in a distributed environment. The agents, which are designed to work together and in parallel, handle a specific type of profiling or discovery task. We're told it has agents to handle 12 different types of profiling, above and beyond statistical – the most common form of data profiling. Some agents handle structured data in relational or XML formats, while others are designed to handle semi-structured and unstructured data. The latter two areas have been improved in the 6.0 release (see below). The platform is written in 100% Java code. Large-scale parallel processing is handled within the software environment, and is a key factor behind its reported scalability. We're told it is also platform-independent since the Java Virtual Machine can run on any operating system.

So how does it work? First, it reverse-engineers the physical database environment, scans it, and then takes a detailed profile of the data within it. Data assets such as domains and objects are then classified. Next is the creation of data-quality metrics and the application of business rules and verification to these metrics, followed by the mapping of data. We're told mapping occurs at the schema and domain level, and there's also semantic object mapping and lineage mapping, so data stewards know where all the relevant data resides.

All this information is poured into the integration layer, which handles a number of integration-related tasks including data synchronization and distribution, semantic integration and modeling, integration of metadata and data lineage. It's in this layer that MDM also occurs, including merge, purge and cross-referencing of master data. After that, data stewardship and analysis can take place as the platform monitors change, establishes controls and monitors deviations by creating, for example, quality monitors, profile monitors and metadata monitors. It also surfaces exceptions for a data steward to inspect and analyze in a Web-based interface.

## Products

Global IDs Data Governance version 6.0 – the next release due in September – contains a number of improvements to the current 5.1 release. They pretty much span every functional domain within the stack.

The data-discovery module now supports the ability to scan, index and search for a number of unstructured data sources including PDFs, **Microsoft** Access, Word and PowerPoint

documents. Database administrators can now register and initiate data-discovery tasks from a Web interface. It also sports separate data-discovery modules, which have been customized for each type of database supported. Improvements to the profiling component mean it can now catch character set outliers and subtypes. Special handling of codes and code tables is also supported, as is Web-based inspection and verification of outliers and errors that have been thrown up by the profiling module.

Enhancements to the classification module take the shape of support for much larger numbers of global and industry-specific domains, and the verification of domain profiling results through a Web interface. There's also a Web-based facility for the display and correction of verification results and improved handling of verification of timestamps, phone numbers and other key global semantic entities.

The data-quality layer has been bolstered via the debut of a multi-column, rules-based data-quality module, while data movement, transformation and synchronization capabilities have been made over by making them more visual. The import of generic XML data is also now supported in the data movement layer of the stack.

The addition of automatically established semantic maps for all key dimensions of an organization such as customer, product and employee, has been poured into the mapping module. There's also the debut of a multi-step master data integration process with provisions for periodic monitoring and synchronization in the integration element of the platform. Version 6.0 also sports Web services on master objects, domains and internal metadata to enable integration with third-party tools.

## Competition

We're told most of Global IDs' customers already have a data management platform from **Informatica**, **IBM/Cognos**, **SAP/Business Objects**, **SAS Institute** or **Harte-Hanks Trillium Software** division. But it aims to solve a new class of problems than these incumbent providers by bringing new layers of functionality within its integrated all-in-one, but modular, data management stack.

There's no doubt that Global IDs' offering is bulging with functionality, and it certainly covers areas that many of the above don't. We think IBM's data management lineup within its ever-expanding Information Management portfolio is the closest, although Global IDs makes the point that Big Blue's has been mainly crafted via acquisitions and as a result isn't necessarily as integrated as its own. That's arguably true of some of the newer data management purchases such as **Exeros**, for data discovery, but not for all. However, we would say IBM's data governance is served more by consulting than products right now – not the case with Global IDs.

Other vendors with a strong data governance focus include SAP/Business Objects, **Kalido**, Informatica and SAS Institute. While SAP/Business Objects has a broader product girth than Global IDs, given its focus beyond data management to other arenas including enterprise applications and BI, its data management feature set isn't as deep and doesn't extend to data discovery or sophisticated data profiling – the same is arguably true of SAS

Institute. Informatica, on the other hand, does cover many of the bases that Global IDs serves – although not quite all. Kalido has more of a MDM and data warehousing-based approach to data governance. That said, we think all these vendors have an edge because they are established incumbents with existing customer bases and higher market profiles than Global IDs. **Oracle** is the other behemoth in many of these arenas. It recently moved to up its heterogeneous data management game via the acquisition of **GoldenGate Software**. Data management is also an increasing area of focus for Microsoft – another leviathan.

There are a number of other vendors that are competitive at some level since they focus on one element of the Global IDs data management stack. **SypherLink**, for example, has been making headway in data discovery and mapping, particularly in the public sector. **Expressor Software** is one of the newer breed of data-integration players alongside **Talend**, which is taking an open source-based approach and has expanded into adjacent arenas including real-time integration, data quality and profiling. Midmarket integration stalwart **Pervasive Software** has headed up stream into the enterprise, where **Ab Initio Software** is an established veteran. **Datanomic**, **Netrics** and **Datactics** are some data-quality and profiling pure plays.

### SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
There is no doubting the breadth and depth of Global IDs wares. The company appears to be judiciously run by an experienced management team.	It is a little-known player with a nascent customer base.
Opportunities	Threats
The company's addressable market is global organizations with complex data management requirements that want to buy an integrated modular stack to address all their needs.	There are an awful lot of vendors that provide at least some piece of the pie Global IDs is serving up, and partner for the rest. IBM provides the main all-in-one alternative.

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