

Cool Vendors 2008: Innovation From Around the World

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Cool Vendors in 2008 come from many parts of the globe. Innovation will require an understanding of cultural differences and how social computing affects us all.

ANALYSIS

Cool Vendors in 2008 remain innovative and potentially impactful. However, this year, our Cool Vendors are representative of companies that highlight the fact that global innovation is alive and well. One indication of this trend is that sourcing continues to be dominated by a growth in job opportunities in India and China. In addition, employees from the U.S. and Europe are increasingly applying for jobs in India, as much of the IT work moves in that direction. Investors see these trends as opportunities to seek out innovative companies and products wherever they may be.

Once again, our reports cover everything from application development to process management, to virtualization and IT operations vendors. Few areas are not represented —172 vendors are covered in 41 reports by approximately 125 analyst authors. This is a testament to the growth in popularity of Cool Vendors; but it is more a statement of the health of innovation for startup companies. Investors, users and technology providers seeking interesting partners or acquisition opportunities will find fertile ground. We do not present every Cool Vendor as a guaranteed success. In fact, some will not survive. Instead, we offer these vendors as a look into the labs, so to speak.

As in last year's report, innovations in process management, consumer communication technologies, and data manipulation and management herald the movement toward technologies that increasingly support collaborative human interaction and large social communities and networks. In addition, community-based "social" computing paradigms are continuing to grow. The Web remains one of the largest catalysts for changing the way that computing is approached by people.

Many of the Cool Vendors included in the report didn't necessarily have amazing innovations or make leaps in technology. Common threads this year include the movement of innovation across nations, and the expansion of social computing in the workplace. Israel is now one of the most prolific countries for startups and investment, and the workplace is becoming less recognizable as different from the Web. Socialization opens up opportunities for companies to leverage a global community of interested people. So, remote and distributed management of information and systems will continue to be a need.

Sample vendors from this year's report include:

- **WSO2**, Sri Lanka, U.K. and U.S. (www.wso2.com): An open-source middleware company providing a Web service engine (Apache Axis2), a lightweight enterprise service bus (Apache Synapse), and an identity management system following the card space specification and implementations of the Web services protocol stack for Web 2.0 languages such as PHP and Ruby (see "Cool Vendors in Web Technologies, 2008").
- **System One**, Vienna, Austria (www.systemone.net): System One combines Wiki technology, social networking, mashups and Semantic Web technology with an interesting and easy user experience (see "Cool Vendors in the High-Performance Workplace, 2008").
- **Decideware**, North Sydney, Australia (www.decideware.com): Features include the ability to survey internal and external stakeholders for performance feedback; the capture and recording of qualitative and quantitative data; the circulation of the proposed scores for review and approval; the publication of results on a password-secured supplier portal; and the tracking of progress against an action plan (see "Cool Vendors in Procurement and Finance").

- **Bomgar**, Ridgeland, Mississippi (www.bomgar.com): Bomgar's Remote Support software is a remote control and troubleshooting tool that enables IT service and support staff to resolve end-user issues with remote PCs faster and more efficiently (see "Cool Vendors in IT Support, 2008").

Gartner believes that global innovation will be a feeder for larger companies seeking partnerships in technology. Likewise, these small companies are in need of larger companies to legitimize much of their offerings. The serious technology watcher will look for innovations in the way people approach the use of technology, the linkage between people and machines, the manipulation of increasingly large bases of information, and the formalization of how we use processes to deliver our business solutions.

This special report will help:

- User clients stay ahead of the IT technology curve and make better strategic decisions about technology
- Vendors examine alternative technologies that can enhance their current products and create road maps for future offerings
- Investors discover the next great business and investment opportunity

Gartner's definition of a Cool Vendor is a small company offering a technology or product that is:

- Innovative — It enables users to do things they couldn't do before
- Impactful — It has or will have a business impact; it's not just "technology for the sake of technology"
- Intriguing — It has caught our interest or curiosity during the past six months or so

Our research is structured so that you can quickly determine what is cool about the vendor, what its challenges are and who in the buyer organization will benefit from the vendor's offering.

The list of Cool Vendors is by no means exhaustive; there's no way we can introduce every company that's making waves. Therefore, we've selected some to highlight based on our sense of how impactful they can be today and in the near future. We focus on independent companies and do not discuss small vendors that recently have been bought by larger companies. Finally, we do not repeat vendors from previous Cool Vendors reports so that we can continue each year to illuminate underexposed vendors.

For many, Cool Vendors will be their introduction to these small vendors — but it probably won't be the last they hear about them.

Conclusion

Many of our Cool Vendors will either change markets during the next five years, be acquired or fail to succeed. However, focusing on these few would be a mistake. Instead, we encourage users to consider new technology offerings from these vendors as an opportunity. Vendors should seek out this list to locate potential partnering opportunities and even acquisition targets. Investors should use this report as a starting point for investment prospects that open new markets or extend old ones.

As for the Cool Vendors, building customers and sales will always be a primary goal, but partnerships and alliances often provide the best foundation for growth. Global partnerships will continue to be a growth opportunity and small players will need big friends to succeed.

Cool Vendors Reports

“Cool Vendors in AD, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Application Security and Authentication, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in the Automotive Industry, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Business Intelligence and Performance Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Business Process Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Client Computing, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Collaboration and Social Software, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Compliance and Risk Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Consumer Goods, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Content Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in CRM Customer Service, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in CRM Marketing and Analytics, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in CRM Sales, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Data Management and Integration, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Data Protection, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Emerging Technologies, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Energy and Utilities, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in the High-Performance Workplace, 2008”

“Cool Vendors for Human Capital Management Software, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Identity and Access Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Infrastructure Appliances, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Infrastructure Protection, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Intellectual Property, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in IT Operations, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in IT Support, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Life Sciences, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Manufacturing, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Master Data Management, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Mobile and Wireless, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Platform and Integration Middleware, 2008”

“Cool Vendors in Print Markets and Management, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Procurement and Finance, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Retail, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in SCM and ERP, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Security Services, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Semiconductors, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Server Virtualization Management, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in SOA Governance, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Sourcing and IT Services, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Storage, 2008”
“Cool Vendors in Web Technologies, 2008”

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