



(TECHNOLOGY Firms to Watch in 2010)

# FEATURE



We meet hundreds of interesting lesser-known vendors every year but we just don't have room to write about all of them. Here, with the help of analyst firm MWD Advisors, are some companies worth keeping an eye on next year

● **The Judges:**

■ **Angela Ashenden, principal analyst, MWD Advisors**

**Bola Rotibi, principal analyst, MWD Advisors**

**Neil Ward-Dutton, research director, MWD Advisors**

**Martin Veitch, Editor in Chief, CIO**

➔ **Online communities firm Jive Software** ([www.jivesoftware.com](http://www.jivesoftware.com)) manages to bridge the gap – both in terms of its technology and its strategy – between the many startups in this market and the software giants. Its Social Business Suite provides a comprehensive set of capabilities, packaged in a solutions-based model that will enable the company to scale quickly and effectively. Jive is also unusual among smaller collaboration software players in that it targets buyers on the IT side, as well as business leaders, with strong messaging around hosting, integration and security,

rather than focusing solely on end-user functionality. *AA*

**Sonoa Systems** ([www.sonoasystems.com](http://www.sonoasystems.com)) is one of a clutch of small vendors focusing on helping companies manage and govern cloud-based services – specifically they provide a set of offerings that monitor, analyse and govern quality-of-service related to cloud APIs. This is a critical space, because application and platform security and reliability are key concerns for those looking to invest in cloud computing. It recently launched Apigee.com, a SaaS version of the technology, as a free taster. *NWD*

**Nimbus Partners** ([www.nimbuspartners.com](http://www.nimbuspartners.com)) is a UK-based specialist vendor in BPM and business transformation programmes. It doesn't take the full-on automation approach that most of the specialist tools vendors do: rather, it offers a capability that you might call 'actionable knowl-

edge management'. Authors use the tools to map out and solidify business processes; but rather than being automated at runtime these processes are made available to users as interactive guides. Users can step through processes and call up guidance documentation, interact with back-end systems and so on – but the runtime system is lightweight, non-invasive and designed to keep the user very much in control of their own work environment. *NWD*

**Original Software** ([www.origsoft.com](http://www.origsoft.com)) is a small testing vendor with good technology and customer reach. Possibly one to watch out for in the acquisition stakes. *BR*

**Brightcove** ([www.brightcove.com](http://www.brightcove.com)) is already the 800-pound gorilla in the emerging market for online video platforms (OVP), the software service layer underlying the use of digital video for sales, marketing, collaboration and communication.



**...AND FIVE YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT WILL ALSO BE WORTH WATCHING**

Its recent bold move in making available a low-cost entry-level edition could be the catalyst for online video to go from the YouTube generation to money-making content category. In the same field, open-source outfit **Kaltura** ([www.kaltura.org](http://www.kaltura.org)) is worth watching as is, from left field, **Flix-media.tv**, helping retailers like John Lewis, Amazon.com and dabs.com handle content types like videos, images and reviews. **Impact** ([www.impact-europe.com](http://www.impact-europe.com)), a systems integrator specialising in business video implementations, also has the right look about it as videoconferencing and other B2B video applications finally grip. *MV*

**IntraLinks** ([www.intralinks.com](http://www.intralinks.com)) is one of those companies you wonder why you had never heard of. The firm uses the SaaS model to host workspaces on demand. Companies in the process of M&A could employ it as a platform for securely swapping information, for example. It turns over more than \$120m very quietly indeed until now but is now pushing hard for more publicity – an IPO would help. *MV*

**Google** ([www.google.com/a](http://www.google.com/a)) is hardly a secret but its business-to-business side has been obscured by the huge success of its search and ads offerings. With Google Apps picking up a series of customer wins in 2009, more blue-chips can point to precedents for leaving Microsoft's shadow. Next year could see a major breakthrough. *MV*

**Alfresco** ([www.alfresco.com](http://www.alfresco.com)) is already well known to open-source types and has the giants of the enterprise content management space coming over all defensive. It already has a large user base and converting that mindshare into real money is the challenge for 2010, assuming it doesn't get picked off by one of said giants. *MV*

There are lots of third-party datacentres ready to reduce your server-room admin burden but **The Bunker Secure Hosting** ([www.thebunker.net](http://www.thebunker.net)) stands out by using decommissioned military facilities to protect the critical data of customers. Makes you feel safer, somehow... See also **Interxion** and **Equinix**. *MV*

**Neon Enterprise Software** ([www.neone-soft.com](http://www.neone-soft.com)) has earned the left-handed compliment of upsetting IBM this year with its radical take on mainframe computing. By

**Salesforce.com** ([www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com))  
This is a company that is on a bit of a roll. Its software-as-a-service model is proven and successful and its Force.com platform has attracted a lot of support, with many clients achieving tangible value and return on investment. With the launch of its ServiceCloud offering and other cloud solutions, Salesforce has set its sights on delivering applications that leverage widespread connectivity and the social computing phenomena which in our opinion is sensible, timely and innovative. *BR*

**IBM** ([www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com))  
A strong all-rounder with a smart focus on the value of connectivity between businesses, communities and governments. The company's play in the systems engineering market as a result of its acquisition of Telelogic will start to strengthen with the launch of a more connected software tooling portfolio. *BR*

**Cisco** ([www.cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com))  
IP connectivity and investing in infrastructure networks is on the ascendant, as is the management capability and leverage that can be achieved through IP networks (for

example in home and building automation services). The environmental advantages that can be gained from broader network bandwidth and connectivity are becoming more obvious, with virtual interactions leading to reductions in travel. *BR*

**Adobe** ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com))  
The company's technology, product portfolio and focus on experience and engagement place it well in key technologies and services that CIOs will be looking to support in the next 12 months. Also, Adobe has forged strong partnership relationships and good vertical industry solution support and its focus on mobile devices is a wise strategic direction. *BR*

**Microsoft** ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com))  
The launch of Windows 7 and other server products like Exchange, SharePoint, Windows 2008 R2 (with strong focus on virtualisation) along with the release of the Visual Studio 2010 platform place the company in a very strong position to address many of the top CIO concerns. Microsoft has a number of strong initiatives focused on aiding businesses and startups in tough economic times. *BR*

moving workloads to speciality processors, the company offers a clever workaround on IBM licensing, potentially saving customers literally tens of millions of pounds. It will be very interesting to see how IBM handles this challenge. *MV*

Software as a service continues to be a happy hunting ground for discovering hot companies. Outside of Salesforce.com's large shadow, I expect **NetSuite** ([www.net-suite.com](http://www.net-suite.com)) to continue making progress in the back-office applications of mid-sized firms and **Success Factors** ([www.successfactors.com](http://www.successfactors.com)) to become an even more attractive way to run human resources and monitor employee performance. *MV*

**Endeca** ([www.endeca.com](http://www.endeca.com)) is fast becoming the Google of enterprise search for e-commerce sites. The company is much beloved by customers as a fast and friendly way to release business information, much

of it turning up surprising discoveries. It offers perhaps the friendliest way to do ad hoc BI and customer analytics. *MV*

BPM company **Cordys** ([www.cordys.com](http://www.cordys.com)) is keenly watched for one major reason – founder Jan Baan. Having made a big splash in ERP with his eponymous company and then making smart investments in WebEx and TopTier, the Dutchman has the golden touch. The signs of him pulling it off with Cordys are good. This is a company that takes a very modern software approach to managing business operations. *MV*

Few firms bar Red Hat have successfully translated volume of users into profitability but, of today's open-source generation, database firm **Ingres** ([www.ingres.com](http://www.ingres.com)) has a solid chance. With the future of fellow OSS RDBMS player MySQL shrouded by the Oracle-Sun pending deal, the time is right for Ingres to step into the light. *MV* ●

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