Technical Paper

What makes Infor ION tick?

The top 10 things you should know

Ten questions—and answers

Infor's Intelligent Open Network (ION) technology allows systems, both Infor™ and non-Infor, to be easily integrated through a platform that provides heavyweight functionality on a lightweight and adaptable framework. This platform loosely couples systems together so they speak the same language but are not dependent upon each other. Much like the Internet, one application can be upgraded, replaced, or even fail without taking down the entire network. Built using non-proprietary standards, Infor ION provides an open architecture that is flexible, scalable, and adaptable. Below are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about the Infor ION platform.

1. You describe Infor ION as having an open architecture. What do you mean by that?

Open architecture is a type of computer or software architecture that is designed to make adding, upgrading, and swapping components easy. This type of architecture allows data to be easily moved from point A to point B, reused for multiple purposes, and delivered to any application without writing custom code.

Infor ION integrations are built using open, non-proprietary standards like OAGIS (industry-standard XML forma) to ensure that Infor applications can talk to each other in the same common standards. Non-Infor applications are easily connected and can also be configured to talk the same standards, even if they do not natively do so.

2. What are the benefits of an open architecture?

- Faster integration and upgrade times—Infor ION reduces the amount of time required to create and manage application integrations and upgrades because each application uses a single connection point. Data can be published once and consumed by multiple applications, without the need for point-to-point modelling. A significant advantage of this "loose coupling" is that publishing applications are not affected when other applications become unavailable. Rather, the messages simply queue. Integrations and reports also don't break when you upgrade or change the underlying application schema.
- Access to real-time information—Business object documents (BODs) are event-driven (e.g., add a customer, update a sales order, cancel a purchase order, etc.) within Infor ION , meaning that the information travels in real-time. Information can be delivered to users much faster than through traditional tools and technologies.

- Simplified business process management—Because open architecture does not require complex coding, end users can easily be trained to adapt business processes (e.g., a PO requisition workflow) within the application. This significantly reduces the time required to implement business process changes.
- Reduced burden on IT—With Infor ION , the IT department no longer has to serve as the gatekeepers for business process changes. And with integrations and upgrades simplified and streamlined, valuable resources can focus their time on other projects.
- Immediate access to business services like reporting and mobility—Infor ION allows these services to become immediately available from the moment you turn them on, providing the basis for an information-driven enterprise rather than one that relies on a single transactional system.

3. What are the architecture design goals of Infor ION?

Infor ION is designed to simplify integration. It goes beyond the traditional boundaries of middleware, providing key capabilities in the areas of business process and exception management. These capabilities work together to create a platform that gives end users greater flexibility and control, reduces the burden on IT, and extends the value of existing technology investments.

Integration	Business process management	Exception management
Infor apps and Infor Business Cloud—out of the box	Business document flows	Rules-based monitoring
Third-party, custom, and legacy apps	Human work flows	Monitors and alerts
Existing middleware	Work distribution and approvals	Unified logging and error reporting
Master data		

4. What technology components are used by Infor ION?

Infor ION is built using powerful and proven technology components including Java, JMS, Grid, SQL Server and Oracle native connections, and HTML 5. This makes the product extremely flexible and ensures integration fundamentals, like guaranteed delivery, auditing, scaling, and failover support, are provided out of the box.

5. Why has Infor chosen to build Infor ION using these components?

These components allow us to make Infor ION a truly lightweight technology platform that combines an engaging and intuitive user interface with an extremely flexible and adaptable framework. They were chosen because they support our goal of creating a technology platform that is open, flexible, and agile.

6. Why is XML Infor's format of choice?

XML is a universally translated language of the Internet. Its simplicity allows Infor applications to parse and decipher business data with ease. It is widely accepted as an industry standard, and no documentation or specific applications are required to work with it. Infor's use of this standard makes our architecture open and enterprise business processes easier to modify.

7. What is Infor's position on HTML 5?

Infor is incorporating HTML 5 during the next releases of the Infor ION technology platform. One of the major benefits of HTML 5 will be its ability to deliver platform-agnostic portability for mobile devices, which will result in more choices for our customers. HTML 5 is poised to become the new industry standard and is directly in line with our goal of making Infor ION as open and flexible as possible.

8. What are OAGIS standards and why does Infor use them?

The Open Applications Group (OAGi) is a not-for-profit standards development organization that builds data exchange standards for business-to-business, application-to-application, and cloud integration. The Open Applications Group Integration Specification (OAGIS) is another industry-accepted standard that Infor has used to create the open architecture of the Infor ION platform. For more information about the standards, visit www.oagi.org.

9. How will Infor ION "future-proof" my organization?

Infor ION provides an ideal foundation for a mixed application or best of breed investment strategy. Additional functionality can be added as necessary, without causing lengthy upgrade cycles, and new software applications, both Infor and non-Infor, can be on-boarded and deployed quickly. In addition, the ability to test new applications with live data flowing into your test system can significantly reduce implementation and cutover timeframes. You can also maintain data continuity across your business as you roll out new applications.

10. How and why will investment in the Infor ION platform save me money in the future?

ION reduces costs by simplifying integration projects and allowing you to re-use application connections. The investments you make (time, dollars, resources) aren't lost when you introduce new systems or upgrade existing ones. When you implement Infor software, the integration is already done for you.

In addition, Infor ION's workflow and event management capabilities automatically push the right information to your employees more quickly, allowing them to make better decisions and improving business outcomes as a result.

Plus 10 more

1. How does the Infor ION platform support future advancements in technologies like social, mobile, cloud, and others?

Infor ION provides a unified platform for social business, mobile, and cloud technologies. Because ION allows for a seamless flow of information between applications, it provides a foundation for integrating new technologies at your own pace and in-line with your specific business needs. In addition, the combination of Infor ION and Infor Ming.le, our social business platform, allows collaboration technologies to co-exist with your existing applications. You get collaboration embedded into core organizational systems, allowing you to capture vital corporate knowledge and change the way employees work together.

2. How does Infor ION help me leverage my existing technology investments?

With Infor ION, you no longer have to rip and replace existing technologies to accommodate new ones. You can constantly add on to and enhance systems within your existing environment, without sacrificing the investments you have already made. The introduction of new systems or additional functionality can happen at your own pace, no longer requiring lengthy implementations, extensive customizations, or complex upgrade cycles.

3. How does Infor ION simplify reporting and business process management?

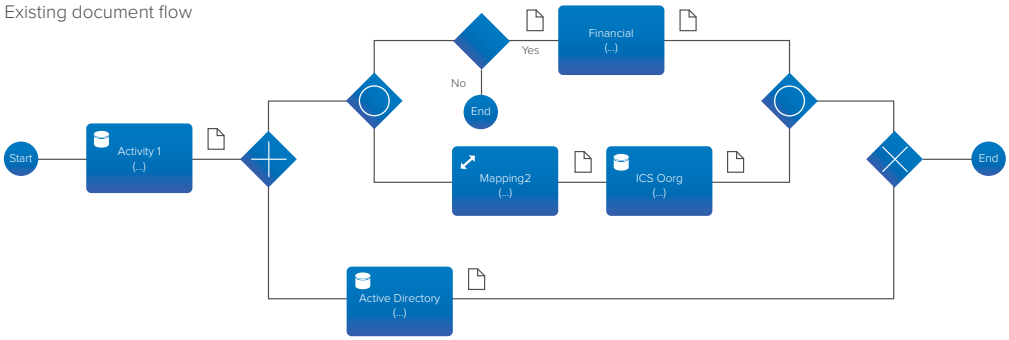
Role-based access and intuitive modelling tools ensure business users can build event monitors and workflows, as well as modify business processes, as needed. ION also provides a user-friendly, drag-and-drop interface and does not require coding. These capabilities allow business processes to be shaped by the people with the most knowledge of them.

4. How is Infor ION different from other integration strategies and platforms?

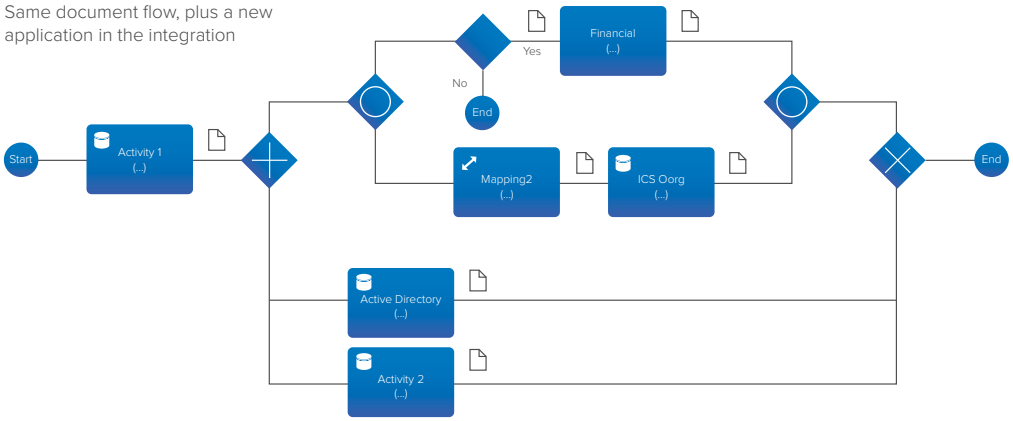
Infor ION differs in a number of ways from other, more expensive integration products. One of the most important distinctions is its lightweight approach that loosely couples applications together, allowing you to connect systems without breaking your integrations. As a result, Infor ION offers a very fast time to value.

In addition, Infor ION provides a highly intuitive user interface that reduces training time and allows power users to get productive quickly. It also delivers event management and workflow capabilities out of the box, while providing a foundation for enterprise reporting and analytics. You get a highly powerful set of tools delivered in a cohesive, affordable package.

Existing document flow



Same document flow, plus a new application in the integration



In this example, one application was added to the integration without impacting the environment or resulting in downtime to alter the process.

5. What connectors are supported?

Infor ION supports the following connection types: JDBC, JMS, Infor Cloud, Database, Flat File, web services, EDI, Microsoft® CRM, Salesforce.com, SAP®, and Oracle® EBS. Customers can extract greater ROI on their existing enterprise assets by de-coupling their ecosystem via these connectors.

6. How does Infor ION handle version control and compliance?

Infor ION offers two key capabilities that provide the foundation for version control and compliance—backward compatibility and a solution known as OneView. Because Infor ION is backward compatible, workflows and processes from older system versions remain compatible with new ones. You never lose the work that was done before.

This concept of continuity is also supported by OneView, which allows documents to be tracked as they progress through your systems. You can see the entire story of every document from beginning to end, with visibility into what happened in every application that it touched. This capability simplifies compliance with SOX and other regulatory standards.

7. What degree of scalability does Infor ION provide?

Infor ION delivers a highly scalable platform through the use of Infor ION Grid technology, which allows for horizontal and vertical scaling. Infor ION automatically distributes and balances the workload among available servers to add or conserve processing capacity as warranted, resulting in optimized performance and a high degree of flexibility.

8. How does Infor ION handle failover and availability?

Failover and availability are also managed using the Infor ION Grid technology. When failures occur, work is automatically routed to other functioning working units within the Infor ION Grid, so that systems do not go down. Infor ION can support 24/7 operations and continuous business process execution.

9. One of the benefits of Infor ION is guaranteed delivery of information. How do you accomplish that?

Infor ION uses Java Messaging Service (JMS) to ensure that messages are delivered between applications without fail, every time. Infor ION has a built-in control mechanism that tracks every data transmission until getting confirmation that the information has been accepted by the appropriate system. In cases of problems or delays, Infor ION automatically continues trying to deliver the message until it is successful.

In addition, Infor ION uses JMS for message sequencing that can be used to support workflows. For example, a sales order might require less processing time within an organization's systems than a purchase order (PO). However, to accommodate the desired workflow, the PO should be received and processed first. Infor ION uses sequencing to allow these messages to be delivered in the desired order.

10. How is security managed with Infor ION?

Infor ION provides role-based permission capabilities that allow a broad audience to benefit from the solution while keeping your data secure. Users can be allowed to view information and use Infor ION's features (such as running reports) but be prevented from making changes to the system. You can easily manage permissions from a centralized location with a user-friendly drag-and-drop interface.

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