

World® in Oracle®'s Kingdom: To Believe or Not to Believe

By Cordell M. Kirk

W Editor's Note: *With his ears to the ground at Collaborate 08, Cordell Kirk kept notes on what other JD Edwards® World customers were saying about the future of World software in Oracle's ever-growing dynasty. Was the future bright? Or was World doomed? Cordell took the questions and concerns that arose out of the sessions he attended, plus the word on the showcase floor, and brought them to 15 World customers for their "take" on Oracle's commitment to their beloved software. In this article, he presents his findings.*

Let me begin by saying that the thoughts conveyed in this article are not shared as the perspective of Fike Corporation, but rather represent my personal observations of Collaborate 08 as a conference attendee and a long time JD Edwards World customer. I have attended numerous user conferences over the years, but the thing that struck me as odd about this conference was the fact that there seemed to be a great deal of skepticism at a time when the World product seems to be making a comeback. I didn't completely understand the concern, which is what led me to write this article. I thought it would be interesting to form the concern that I picked up on into questions, and then pose those questions to other World conference attendees and ask for their feedback. I'm glad I took the time to ask questions and solicit responses from other long-term customers, as it's given me a more well rounded perspective, which I share with you in this article.

A Little History

Before I share my thoughts about Collaborate 08, I thought

it might make sense to share some history about the events that helped shape this conference, and future conferences. Also, sharing history reminds us, as World customers, of where we have been and helps us to better understand where we are going. My hope is that not only will you find this brief history lesson informative but that by the time you finish reading this article, it will all make sense. Hang in there and keep reading. Figure 1 shows a quick snap shot of the history.

JD Edwards software was originally coded for the IBM System 36/38. The year 1979 marked the launch of Elegant Software. In 1982, old faithful, World, was launched. Distribution for World followed in 1983. In 1988, IBM launched the AS/400. The World application was upgraded to support the AS/400 and renamed WorldSoftware™. By the late 1980s, WorldSoftware was the firm's leading product, offering a comprehensive and tightly integrated package of business applications.

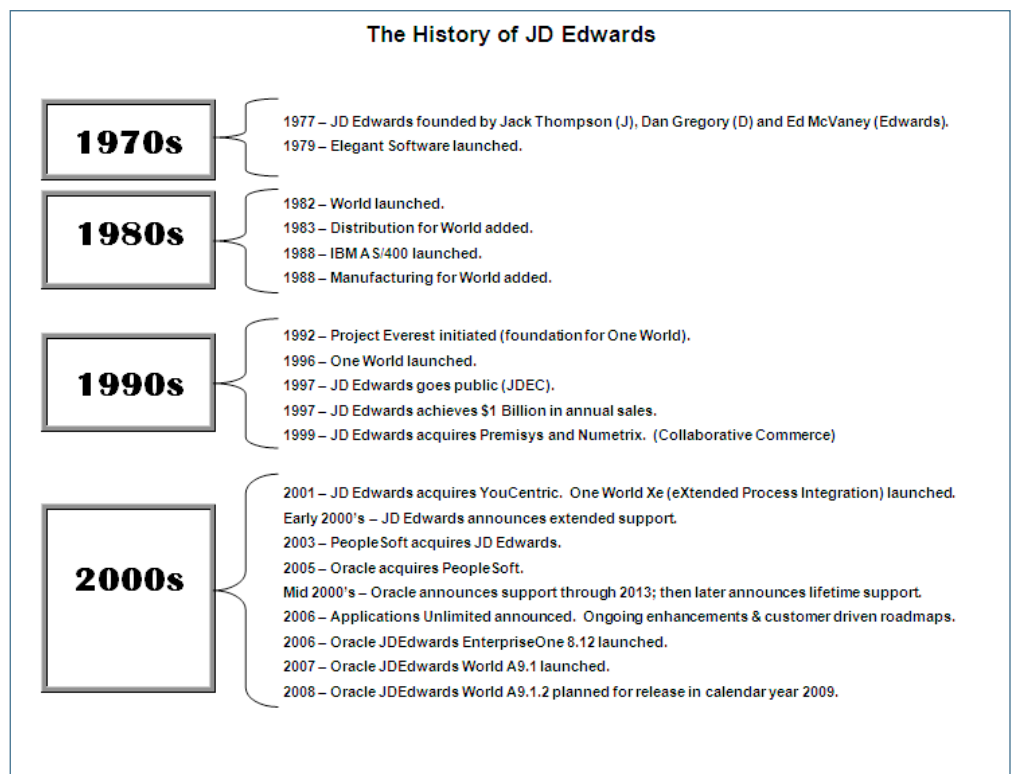


Figure 1: History of JD Edwards World

In 2003, JD Edwards was acquired by PeopleSoft®, and life as a JDE® World customer in the PeopleSoft era began. Not much changed during the PeopleSoft years. The underlying code for both World and OneWorld® saw little change. OneWorld did go through another brand change, being dubbed EnterpriseOne® as a result of the PeopleSoft acquisition.

In 2005, Oracle acquired PeopleSoft. With the Oracle acquisition of PeopleSoft, both products, WorldSoftware and EnterpriseOne, were rebranded respectively as Oracle JD Edwards World and Oracle JD Edwards EnterpriseOne. Shortly after Oracle assumed ownership, Oracle promised to continue support for all current applications (JD Edwards and PeopleSoft) through 2013. More recently, Oracle has announced “Lifetime Support” (regulatory and bug fixes) for all versions.

Life with Oracle

Since the Oracle acquisition, Oracle JD Edwards World has gone through a resurgence and seems to have a very bright future. The announcement of Lifetime Support provided a huge boost to customer confidence. In 2006 at the Collaborate conference in Nashville, TN, Oracle announced “Applications Unlimited” – Oracle’s plan to enhance JD Edwards, Oracle, PeopleSoft, and Siebel applications on an ongoing basis and to provide customer driven roadmaps. Translated – this means that JD Edwards World customers have a commitment from Oracle to protect, extend, and evolve our investment in this tried and true application. From a customer perspective, that is great news.

Has Oracle delivered by following through on their commitment to their World customer base?

What Have You Done for Me Lately?

Lip service is easy. Following through on a commitment is what really counts in personal relationships and business relationships. Has Oracle delivered by following through on their commitment to their World customer base? Absolutely! Case in point:

In January 2007, Oracle’s World A9.1, dubbed the Renaissance Release, was officially announced. This major upgrade delivers on Oracle’s commitment to Applications Unlimited – to continually provide customers with new functionality while enhancing customers’ ability to seamlessly integrate the application in diverse IT environments. At Collaborate 07 in Las Vegas, NV, Oracle announced the general availability of A9.1, delivering over 1250 enhancements. We, Fike Corporation, were selected as one of the three “Early Adopter” companies. I personally have been working with the World application since 1995 and would completely agree that A9.1 is very solid and that huge strides have been made in improving the overall quality of the upgrade experience.

In addition to the recent release of A9.1, Oracle has already delivered their “Statement of Direction” for World A9.1.2, with the expected release scheduled in calendar year 2009. The A9.1.2 Statement of Direction is available on Customer Connection.

→ **Implement, Optimize + Upgrade**

→ **Upgrade Guide**

→ **JD Edwards World Upgrade Resources**

→ **Evaluate**

→ **Statement of Direction A9.1.2.**

To Believe or Not to Believe?

Now to share my thoughts and perspective... As I recall it, the prospect for World customers didn’t look all that promising a few short years ago. We were all being asked to migrate from World to OneWorld and a real threat of WorldSoftware reaching end-of-life was being discussed. Fast forward to 2008 and I think you would have to agree that the future is bright. But there are still some questions remaining.

I thought Collaborate 08 was a solid conference and worth the investment. I didn’t do a lot of talking, but I did do a lot of listening. As I sat through various sessions, I started picking up on what I perceived to be a common theme among World customers – a lack of faith. More specifically, skepticism as to whether or not Oracle will follow through on their commitment to the World application. I arrived at this conclusion by listening to the questions being asked by World customers. After returning home from this year’s conference, I took a few minutes and jotted down those questions that were most frequently asked:

1. There was some concern expressed by World customers at Collaborate about the fact that Oracle no lon-

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