



New Approach to Corporate Decision Making with xACT™

Senior executives now have a new tool in their armoury, xACT™ which helps predict the outcome of strategic decisions, solve complex corporate issues and resolve deep rooted problems affecting business performance. It is a proven and effective solution which can be deployed rapidly to bring immediate benefits to a corporation by reducing cost, risk and development cycle time.

In a newly merged company and in this volatile business environment how do you decide which infrastructure and processes provides the most efficient base for your future business? Is this done on the basis of cost or capability to drive future growth or both? If optimising costs is the priority what is the impact of the decisions you make on cutting resources, can you predict the impact on the corporation and its ability to deliver its current products and service to its distribution channels and customers ? Or as is often the case, can the existing system manage the combined business volumes of the new merged business?

Is there a common environment where teams from your business divisions can work closely with their colleagues in IT, Strategy, Human Resources and Finance to gain a shared understanding of a problem opportunity or business event? How do you know what the bottom line impact and true cost will be of the decisions made and will the resultant service sustain the strategic goals of the business? What are the potential operational and regulatory risks?

Accretive Technologies Inc have developed xACT™, a unique, proven and effective methodology and modeling technology. The xACT™ toolset provides a capability to rapidly develop an accurate mathematical model that precisely emulates a corporation, its lines of business, end to end service, business processes, underlying IT infrastructure, human resources and financial budgets. The model allows the executive to run multiple scenarios to assess what impacts change will have at any level in terms of throughput, quality and total direct and indirect associated cost. It bridges the gap between IT and the business by representing all aspects within one easily created model environment. This can then be used to determine the dynamic return on investment for any project, change program or internal or external business event.

The mathematical basis for the technology and patents has been used by Accretive in over 350 successful client engagements in major corporations, financial institutions and government bodies around the world. Clients include BT, IBM, First Data Corporation, Reuters, McDonalds, London Stock Exchange, Italian Stock Exchange, Credit Agricole, Society General, Predica Insurance, Renault, AT&T, Sprint, French Social Services.

This year the founder and CEO Dr Nabil Abu El Ata was awarded a prestigious Computerworld Gold Laureate Award for the creation and development of xACT™.

The Benefits of Using xACT™

The xACT™ portfolio of tools, associated methodology and libraries have been developed to bring this capability to the wider market. The algorithms, technology and methodology are based upon the patents granted to Dr Nabil Abu El Ata. In the past, use of these algorithms had been supported through sophisticated but complex tools which required highly skilled consultants to use them. Accretive Technologies Inc has made large scale investment and development leading to the release of xACT™. The xACT™ portfolio now enables the client to rapidly build and run emulation models within their own organisation without the continued need for specialist skills to build and maintain the models.

Accurately modeling the enterprise through the xACT™ portfolio will quickly bring significant benefits to customers. Whether deployed to solve an existing problem or to qualify a new project or system change a typical xACT™ emulation will accurately

- Predict the limits of the systems infrastructure supporting the corporation
- Identify potential bottlenecks and constraints.
- Emulate behaviors and performance under different business events and conditions including location based activities such as data centre consolidation.
- Compare the relative benefits of changing architecture and design strategy
- Compare the relative benefits of changing hardware and software components and associated service delivery models (particularly relevant to mergers and acquisitions).
- Determine the effect of ageing on current systems and suggest remedial action to improve the environment.
- Link the end to end transaction and service process to the business process, business system and corporate objective.
- Assure that the benefits of transformation projects can be accurately predicted at the outset including the benefits of, consolidation and virtualisation programs .
- Measure the overall effectiveness of any service process or project in terms of throughput, quality, cost and risk.
- Deliver a Corporate Dashboard to assess performance against key business metrics.

The toolset presents the user with an easy to use graphical interface to build models and run scenarios. The toolset is linked to a library of over 7500 technology and process components commonly used in business today. This enables the rapid construction of models to solve immediate business problems and plan how best to exploit new opportunities.

xACT™ enables a business to determine what cost, capacity, limits and risks exist in the end to end service as it is deployed today. It can then predict what impact any change to the service processes and underlying infrastructure may have in the future. xACT™ creates a mechanism to ensure the business grows safely and to budget while maintaining and improving the overall customer experience delivered by the deployed resources.



Implementing xACT™ Solutions

The success of each project is assured by following the proven xACT™ MBA methodology to define the scope and output of the modeling process. The methodology defines five clear stages within each engagement.

Stage 1 Capture

Accretive will lead a series of workshops to capture key data and information about the business problem. If a broad review is being undertaken this data and information extends to the business, its current and future performance requirements, architecture, policies, constraints, processes and infrastructure. These workshops will follow the defined xACT™ MBA process and investigation questionnaire technique. During the process we identify any constraints and aspirations for the service, qualify and quantify where possible the types of technologies utilised, how they are currently deployed, determine appropriate management objectives and critical success factors for the emulation to achieve. Any key assumptions are noted at this stage and the likely predictive scenarios described.

Stage 2 Structure

In Stage 2 we concentrate on building the representative model as defined in a statement of works. The xACT™ MBA process is followed to input and structure information into the model using the xACT™ Design tool. The team will use data from the client supplemented with information from the xACT™ Libraries to build a representative model as defined in the Stage 1 Capture phase. We use this model to incrementally qualify that it is representative of the environment as defined in Stage 1. At the end of this phase the model is able to compute performance for emulation purposes but is not triangulated from a real world measurements perspective.

Stage 3 Emulate

In Stage 3 we begin to focus fully on triangulation and measurement to gain confidence in the computed model ensuring that it is accurate, representative and produces consistent results. The team will build a system resource model based upon non intrusive measurement from the existing environment using xACT™ model reader. Having proved that the two models are consistent and representative of the real world environment they converge to become the Reference model and the baseline for the xACT™ emulation.

Stage 4 Predict

The reference model will be available to run scenarios to determine the systems limits, determine the cause of the limit and consequently identify solutions to stretch the limits of the existing environment by selected area. It is normal to prioritise these at this stage in to quick wins, and medium/long term solutions.

Stage 5 Exploit

The core models can then be enhanced and developed to perform a variety of functions both within the IT and Corporate environments. This can result in cross functional performance management and optimization dashboards which link the performance of the corporation to its business systems and underlying infrastructure providing invaluable predictive input to strategic decision making.