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From the Editors: Is 'big data' analytics in your future?

By Craig Stedman

Time will tell whether “[big data](#)” develops into the data warehousing and analytics force that many IT analysts and vendors are predicting (and in the latter case, dearly hoping) it will become. The IT landscape is littered with the wrecks of other widely hyped technologies. Will the industry buzz around big data, and big-data analytics, turn out to be justified?

One company putting its money where its mouth is on big data is Yahoo Inc. It has been the biggest contributor to the development of the open source Apache Hadoop software, which enables distributed processing of large data sets. Now Yahoo is [spinning off a new business called Hortonworks](#) that will focus on Hadoop development and support services. Hortonworks CEO Eric Baldeschwieler, formerly VP of Hadoop software engineering at Yahoo, said he expects more than half of the world’s data to be stored in Hadoop within five years – a big prediction indeed.

Another former Yahoo executive, Usama Fayyad, spoke at last month’s Netezza user conference. Fayyad, who was Yahoo’s chief data officer and now is CEO of consulting firm Open Insights, laid out a case for why [the future of analytics is rooted in big data](#). But it won’t be easy: He cautioned that the volume and complexity of big data are testing the limits of traditional data warehouses.

Fayyad also took part in a [panel discussion on big data analytics](#) at the Netezza conference. Panelists agreed that there’s a place for big-data technology in the enterprise software toolbox. But Fayyad said some companies are using Hadoop and its companion MapReduce unnecessarily. And Shawn Rogers of consulting firm Enterprise Management Associates said he’s starting to see a backlash around Hadoop – perhaps a sign that all the hype is giving way to a more realistic appraisal.

What’s your take on big-data analytics? Feel free to send me an email on that and other business intelligence and analytics topics.

--[Craig](#)

Twitter: [@BizAnalytics_TT](#)

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