

Appian Enterprise

Version: 4.0

Appian Corporation

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1 Product Overview

Appian Enterprise aims to provide an integrated platform supporting all of a firm's needs for process enabled applications focused on people and the systems/data that they interact with. Effectively, Appian Enterprise provides a web-based, process-enabled workspace that can support both highly structured processes and evolving collaborative projects amongst knowledge workers. It leverages executable process models and business rules through a variety of collaboration tools, content and knowledge management capabilities, sophisticated integration tools, and a highly secure identity framework and organizational model.

All of this is delivered through an integrated portal environment that is designed to help capture and manage change in its original context, rather than necessarily forcing a rigid control ethic on process. The product provides an *ad hoc* environment that supports users as they discuss, collaborate, and evolve their response to inevitable exceptions, helping them to categorize and track them, evolving their process structures accordingly.

To achieve this, Appian Enterprise presents a suite of tools that balance the need for control with the capability to evolve and adapt processes. Overall, the environment is designed to make applications simple to deploy, or to have multiple variants of an application that may be deployed to different environments, for different purposes, at the same time.

Under the covers, it features a standards-based, services-oriented architecture that integrates with third party tools, as needed, and scales to support even the largest enterprises (Appian's biggest customer is the US Army with 1.5 million users and 500,000 logins per day). To appeal to such customers, the product incorporates a rule-driven security and identity management layer that administers access controls and role-based permissions, preventing end users from participating in processes in undesired ways. The architecture also includes a secure document management environment, as well as personalized dashboard-style process analytics based, on real-time and historical reporting.

2 BPM Engine

Appian Enterprise is a 100% web-based J2EE solution that supports emerging process modeling standards such as BPMN, as well as a wide range of Web Services standards, including SOAP, UDDI, WSDL, and XML. The power of Appian Enterprise 4 can also be incorporated into existing portal applications through JSR-168 portlets.

The product consists of a number of replicable engines at the back-end that communicate with the Java interface layer to support the portal presentation layer. State information and information on associated objects such as attachments, assignments, and pages are persisted in the data store. In this way, Appian Enterprise can simultaneously manage multiple instances of a single process definition and ensure that all process data are available for historical reporting and review.



The back-end environment also implements its own independent fail-over and load balancing capabilities. This provides greater control over the way in which functionality can be distributed across technology infrastructure and how it may be scaled to support the needs of the firm.

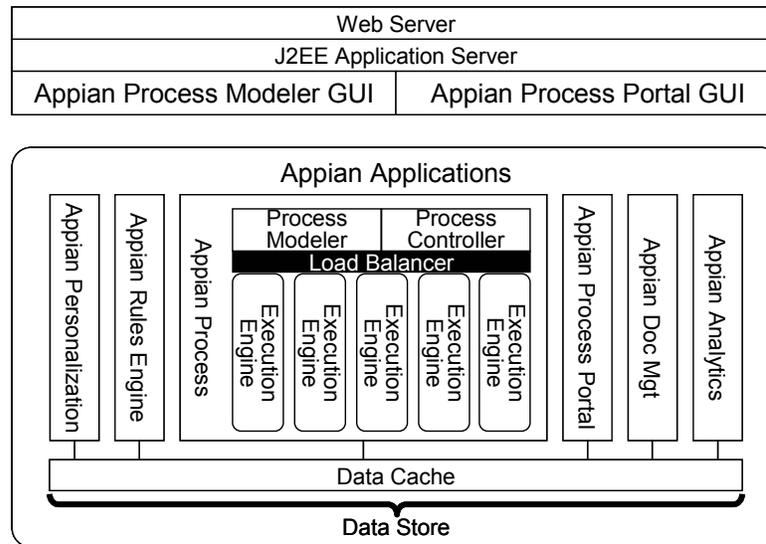


Figure 1 - The Appian Engines sit behind the J2EE Server

Appian Process Modeler provides business users with a web-based environment to create, share, and reuse process objects. It is based on a DHTML drag-and-drop interface accessing a secure library of templates, services, and business rules.

Appian Process Controller is a management tool for starting and stopping processes, rolling back changes, and modifying process and rule definitions (i.e., changing processes in-flight).

Appian Process Engine is the core process execution environment. It utilizes high performance, in-memory technology, to support high volume throughput. Execution Engines can be replicated.

Appian Rules Engine provides a central rules management capability accessible across all other modules. (See Business Rules on page 7.)

Appian Process Portal is a process-centric portal framework that provides users with a centralized web-based resource for information access and collaboration. (See User Interface on page 3.)

Appian Document Manager provides a secure storage mechanism for electronic documents, images, and other files supporting version control, check-in/check-out, and tightly integrated reporting capabilities. It features a delegated security model with community, role, and individual based access controls at the folder and individual document levels. All objects are stored with configurable metadata, which can be modified on the fly as part of a process.

Appian Collaboration provides a number of teamwork mechanisms to facilitate the identification of suitable experts, with sharing information in real-time, including white pages, group directories, an ask-the-expert feature, discussion forums, decision forums, polls, surveys, and group calendars. They integrate with third party collaboration tools such as instant messaging/chat, email, whiteboards, online meetings, etc. These collaborative virtual workspaces allow workgroups to coordinate their efforts and exchange information regardless of organizational and geographical boundaries. They incorporate user-defined subscription capabilities and delegated administration that enable non-technical users to set up and configure collaboration workspaces.

Appian Personalization delivers a secure, web-based framework for managing preferences, attributes, and relationships between people and information, creating ad-hoc and rule-based groups on –the fly, and



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securing content based on user attributes or group membership. This security framework operates as a consistent management layer throughout all Appian Enterprise modules.

Appian Analytics provides visibility into enterprise performance for executives, managers, and analysts. It features secure, web-based reporting dashboards with performance metrics, status channels, exception notifications, and process audit trails.

Web Services can be used to consume, expose, and orchestrate business processes. A step-by-step wizard in the Process Modeler supports the creation of Web Service based *Smart Nodes* that can then be re-used in any process model. Web Services can also be used to support integration through a library of pre-integrated application adapters. (Appian now bundles the iWay adapter set to access third-party enterprise applications such as SAP and PeopleSoft.)

2.1 Platforms

Appian Enterprise 4.0 is completely vendor, technology, and platform neutral. The product uses J2EE technologies to support its 100% web-based approach, which is designed to minimize its footprint (e.g., no client install for the Process Designer). Moreover, it is deployable in both J2EE and Microsoft-centric environments and has been certified to run on all major platforms including Solaris, Linux, and Windows. It is compatible with all major database environments including Oracle, DB2, MySQL, and SQL Server.

Additionally, Appian Enterprise can run on any J2EE-compliant application server and has been certified on JBoss, WebSphere, WebLogic, Jakarta Tomcat, and Oracle. To facilitate deployment in organizations without enterprise application server licenses, Appian Enterprise ships out-of-the-box with JBoss. Appian Enterprise’s runtime browser-based environment is certified with all of the latest browser versions, including Netscape 7.1+, Mozilla 1.7+, and Internet Explorer 5.5+.

2.2 User Interface

Appian Portal is a web-based desktop that provides users with a single point of personalized access to enterprise applications, information, and data sources from within and outside the organization. Appian Portal includes an embedded ‘Work Portal’ where users manage their daily activities.

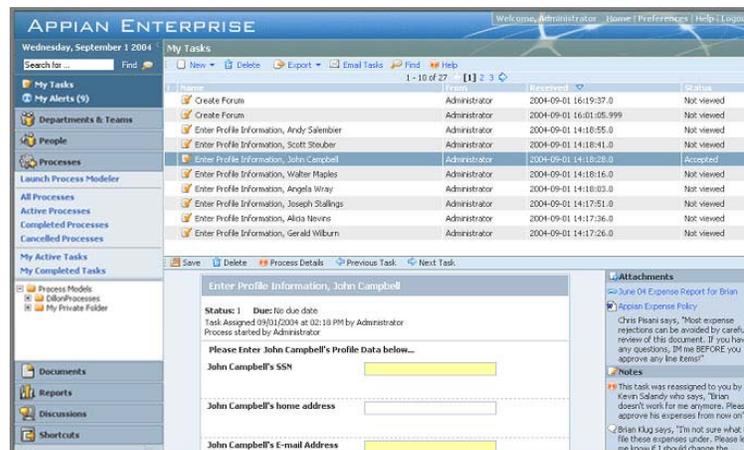


Figure 2 - The Appian Portal environment provides a personalized Inbox that acts as an entry point to collaboration workspaces

The Work Portal provides users with an MS Outlook-like task Inbox interface. Channels within the portal framework may be personalized to meet the specific needs of individual users and groups alike. The task list has a preview pane at the bottom, along with any capabilities provided to that user to re-



assign or edit the way in which the process operates. The left-hand column provides links to different areas of functionality, reporting, micro-portals (for different departments and teams), management portals, personalized views for all users, etc. On the right-hand side, is a meta-data driven area for content that is associated with the task. This could include anything – a note, web site, another application, instructions on how to get help, links to people, links to IM and collaboration interfaces, etc. Personalization options made available to the user include the ability to share, change, edit, add portlets or channels, etc. If the user has appropriate authorization, he or she may change the permissions on the workspace, add new participants, etc.

The portal also includes links to the process workspace where all the related information is gathered and presented (access controlled by the security framework). Here the user can see the people involved, and browse related documents or discussions that have taken place. Of course, the user does not have to come to the workspace directly; as they work; the relevant information and status changes are added to the workspace.

The portal framework contains a *Notifications* service that sends both alerts and tasks from the system to end users. By default, users receive these messages in their Inbox. However, users can build personal rules, potentially relaying notifications to email, wireless devices, and other communication channels at user-specified intervals. The portal acts as a personalized gateway to applications, information, and data sources.

Control and design of this environment is part of the modeling environment. Any action, whether it is creating a new discussion thread, adding a document, or adding a person to a new distribution group is supported out-of-the-box through *Smart Nodes*. (See Processing Modeling on page 4.)

2.3 Scalability

Appian Enterprise powers sites support over 1.5 million users and over 500,000 logins per day. The product set is architecturally designed to maximize flexibility and scalability while minimizing its footprint.

The architecture follows a component-based paradigm, allowing portions to be modified or optimized, based on estimated throughput. For instance, static portions of content (HTML, images) can be stored on servers optimized for serving static content, and more dynamic view-layer pieces can be stored on J2EE application servers. The architecture also allows distributed deployment and high availability through clustering. To prevent single points of failure and bottlenecks, the web servers, application servers, and database servers can be clustered and load balanced to improve performance and availability.

3 Processing Modeling

Appian Process Modeler is a web-based, end-user oriented, process modeling tool that is used to design, edit, and publish executable processes. With appropriate permissions, users may edit both the generic process models (for new cases or all running cases) and the model underpinning a specific instance. The environment provides a number of different modeling palettes from which users drag-and-drop nodes, linking them together to create the desired process without coding or programming.

The overall modeling environment is based on the BPMN specification with standard Activity nodes (Tasks), Gateways, Events, and Notifications. The current version does not include BPMN modeling support for *Compensating Transactions*, although we understand that this will be available in version 4.1 (due beginning of Q2). The semantics support looping, multiple instances, subprocesses, linked processes, and exceptions. Organizations can override default values with their own process notation, if they choose.



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Supplementing the standard BPMN concepts is an extensive set of Appian *Smart Nodes* arranged on various palettes. Smart Nodes are process nodes that facilitate interaction with other Appian Enterprise functionalities. Smart Nodes are divided into four sections – Collaboration, Content Management, Users & Groups, and Integration. The Integration Nodes provided include nodes that enable Web Services-based integration with other systems and interaction with databases. These integration nodes are extensible through the Eclipse-based Java development environment. (See Integration on page 8.) The security framework governs the display of the palettes, and the nodes displayed on them.

All nodes have a complete set of configurable properties that enable designers to define assignment, escalation criteria, data flow, variable mappings, and attach notes or documents. Processes can use Smart Nodes to kick-off message board discussions, create/update documents, launch/modify portal pages, etc.

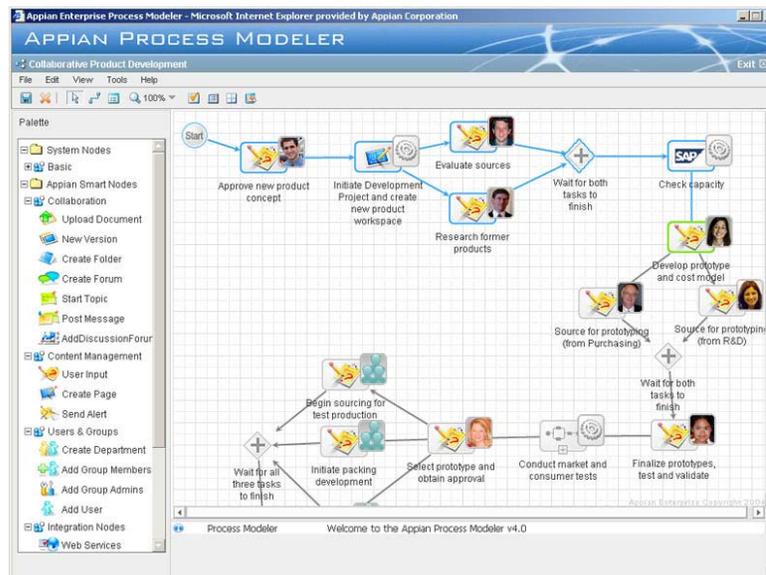


Figure 3 - The Appian Process Modeler is also used as a real-time monitor

The engine supports the ability to run multiple instances of all nodes. This is controlled in the process model and, depending on the need, can be configured in a variety of ways. It could be based on an exact number, an expression, on some variable (e.g., one instance for each member of an array).

In conjunction with Smart Nodes, the *Expression Editor* allows designers to customize the behavior and logic of a given process or data. It is designed to assemble complex expressions using simple point and click methods, accessing all the relevant functionalities provided by the object model of Appian Enterprise. (For more on the Expression Editor, see Business Rules on page 7.) The Expression Editor can also be used for complex work assignment rules (e.g., to find the manager of the employee at the last step).

Process models can be saved at any time, in any state, so that users can reopen a process draft and continue work. A user may choose to validate a process that will then list all errors or process exceptions at the bottom of the Modeler interface. Users can also run simulations on saved processes, using real, historical data, and Appian Analytics to identify potential bottlenecks and improve processes before deployment and execution. Once a draft is complete, vetted, and tested, users may publish processes directly in the designer interface, making them available to users through the web-based process execution interface. The resulting process model is stored in XML.



3.1 Subprocesses

Appian Enterprise supports reusable, object-oriented subprocesses. Dragging and dropping the Subprocess Node onto the Process Modeler canvas, users then select and incorporate these subordinate processes into larger scale models, assign data mappings to pass values between parent and subprocesses, and assign escalation criteria.

The product supports arrays, or multi-valued variables, that help modelers aggregate and manipulate data from multiple subprocess instances. Further functionality is provided to allow the modeler to control how long the parent process is going to wait for a response from the child. The system could be set to move on as soon as one of the children has finished; when all children have completed; or when even more complex n out of m scenarios (based on an expression) occur. Moreover, the modeler has control over whether these subprocesses (or nodes) are run in parallel or in sequence (takes the output from one to the input of the next).

Appian Enterprise also supports reusable *Linked* processes, which are independent, asynchronous processes launched by a parent process. Unlike subprocesses, linked processes typically do not return data to the parent process and do not interrupt the flow of a parent process.

Using the multiple instance functionality of the engine, designers can design process architectures where multiple subprocesses are triggered, assigning one to each member of an array (any collection of objects). Combining this functionality with the Linked process concept, the system could spawn a new process for each customer in a database.

3.2 Shared Data Space

Within Appian Enterprise, the SDS is the Process Workspace. It stores the contextual information of the process instance. Its structuring includes all the process variables and attachments. Appian allows the developer to import any existing forms (HTML, JSP, PDF, and InfoPath) and map them to the developer's process variables.

Along with the expected variable types (text, number, string, etc.), there is the whole range of Appian object types, all of which are natively supported within the Process Workspace (documents, folder, form group, collaboration community, knowledge center, etc.) Any of these can then be set to an array, allowing the modeler to do all kinds of manipulations and operations – aggregate them, investigate them, select into them, launch processes based upon them, etc. For example, it would then be possible to find all the members who have taken part in a discussion, or to find the editors of a document.

Appian Collaboration, a scalable, secure, intuitive document management tool, is a key component of the Appian Enterprise suite. Documents central to active processes, added as attachments, or uploaded for use as process forms, are all stored in the Appian Document Manager. Designers may configure Smart Nodes to manipulate documents as a process progresses, even using processes to vet and modify mission-critical documents, to create new document folders and assign associated security, or to initiate threaded discussions linked to stored documents. The Appian Document Manager supports document versioning, check-in / check-out functionality, complete auditing of all document activity, including document read history, and distributed document administration. Like Appian Process, the Document Manager is governed by Appian's advanced, scalable group-based security model, enabling rule- and role-based protection of sensitive content.

3.3 Forms

Process nodes that gather user input provide process designers with default data forms and enable them to customize the interface if necessary. Designers manipulate forms directly through the Process Modeler by adding/removing questions, response input fields, and process variable mappings.



Users may also choose to upload forms directly into the process or link to existing forms stored in the Appian Document Manager (HTML, JSP, PDF and InfoPath).

3.4 Time

Process designers may manage time at the node or process level. Designers can dictate time-based escalation criteria at each node within a process, executing escalation instructions based on the amount of time that particular tasks take to complete or based on process-wide time metrics (supported by process variables).

Designers can use the escalation framework to send alerts or notifications to process actors, notifying them that a particular task is about to be escalated and reassigned, or that the overall process is about to fall behind schedule. Designers may also manage the schedule of individual nodes by entering a specific execution date/time or establishing a recurring execution schedule at specified time intervals.

3.5 Process Optimization and Simulation

The core engine provides a discrete event simulation capability that uses the actual process model itself, reflecting subprocesses, integrated arrays, and historical data where relevant. The simulation exports automatically to Excel.

This feature is usually deployed by process designers who simulate their prototype models before publishing them to reduce potential bottlenecks and to gather other information to underpin process optimization.

4 Business Rules

Appian Enterprise incorporates its own Rules Engine. This engine facilitates user group creation, document management permissions and message board access throughout the product suite. It also helps designers manage flow through a process, control or distribute administrative access to process models, or govern escalation procedures.

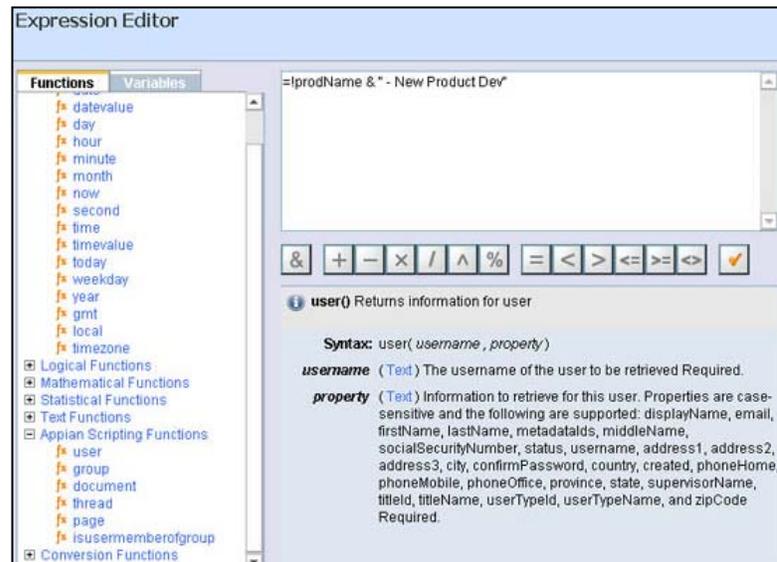


Figure 4 - The Expression Editor provides the main interface to the business rules engine, facilitating both script development and access to advanced functionality related to Appian objects

The Expression Editor is the main interface to the Rules Engine. It provides an extensible interface for rule creation based on process variables, form fields, and a range of Excel-like functions. The



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Expression Editor can be used to define completion criteria for a set of work items (e.g., that 3 of 5 managers must approve), the rules by which a process diverges down multiple paths, or it can be used simply to transform user input into formats needed later in the process. To handle even more sophisticated rule collisions and rule tracing, Appian Enterprise 4.0 integrates with third party Business Rules Engines (BRE's).

5 Integration

Appian Enterprise 4.0 implements a component-based, service-oriented approach to process integration through Appian Business Connect. Appian Business Connect allows organizations to incorporate enterprise sources of data, documents, web content, reports, and identities within the framework of its services-oriented architecture.

Appian Business Connect ships with a pre-integrated library of application adapters for retrieving and transforming data from third-party enterprise applications. These adapters use public APIs, standards like Java Connector Architecture (JCA) and Web Services to expose third-party application logic to the Process Modeler and the Process Engine. Once retrieved, enterprise data can be used within the Expression Editor to define rules that govern flow, transformation, and assignment, or can be exposed to end users using Appian Forms.

For example, the Oracle Node allows the designer to get at all the content in an SQL database. It generates the SQL based on a lookup to column names. Of course, this sort of functionality is designed for IT developers (rather than end-users). Developers can also inspect the WSDL of a Web Service and map that back to the variables in the SDS using a step-by-step wizard in the Process Modeler.

The product provides the ability to create and register new Smart Nodes as reusable components that define an action like retrieving enterprise data through a published API or initiating a Web Service. Once a Smart Node is created, it is represented as a unique icon on one of the palettes of the Process Modeler.

In addition to supporting Web Services integration, Appian Enterprise also ships with an Application Programming Interface (API) and a full library of Appian Services. Appian Enterprise contains pre-built adapters to major third-party software integration companies to facilitate consolidation of enterprise resources into one user interface and increase deployment speed.

6 Organizational Structure

Every user in Appian Enterprise belongs to one or more *Groups*. Groups usually equate to roles. Permissions to access different areas of the application are granted to either an individual user or to a group to which a user belongs. Users are explicitly added to groups, or can be assigned membership to a group based on rules. These group-oriented rules can filter the user community based on their attributes, allowing access only to those members matching certain criteria.

There are three different types of security settings for groups in Appian: personal, restricted, and public. Public groups can only be created by system administrators, and therefore generally beyond the scope of process designers. Personal and team groups used most widely within a process. Members of a group with personal security settings cannot see the other group members on their list; in a restricted group, they can.

The approach taken provides a dynamic ability to control users' capabilities based on their role (membership of a group), which may be only a temporary thing. User permissions are assigned not only by task and role, but also by business rules. This allows the system to build dynamically a temporary group and then apply rule-based permissions to that group. For instance, it would be possible to create a temporary group of all users logged in on a Monday morning, and then ensure that they can only see a subset of the available task in their Inbox.



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Out-of-the-box, the system comes with a number of generic roles that can be used in assignment settings of tasks (process initiator, designer, coordinator, etc.). These generic roles are extensible, for example, to include auditor or process owner.

The product integrates seamlessly with Identity Management Systems like LDAP and Active Directory or with common single sign-on technologies like Netegrity Siteminder.

7 Process Adaptability

It is in the area of adaptability that Appian really seems to excel. Not only does the product support the ability to re-assign tasks, but it also supports fine grained control for changing the underlying process for a single case of work without pausing or canceling the existing case.

Using all the functionality of the Process Modeler, task recipients may reassign or escalate assignments directly through their task inboxes. Suitably authorized end users can make changes through to the way a generic process model or a specific process instance will execute.

In the process execution environment, suitably authorized users access a toolbar featuring options for managing, monitoring, and making changes to the current process instance. Through this interface, users might stop or pause the case, to be resumed later. The *Edit Process* option opens the current case in the process modeler environment, displaying the progress of the current process instance and allowing the user to make changes.

For example, a manager viewing Appian's real-time analytics interface may identify a bottleneck at a particular step or associated with a particular business rule or user. The ability to make in-flight changes allows him or her to instantly address the problem, reassigning the task, or reroute the paths of future processes to ensure that tasks are completed successfully. In a collaborative project environment, this functionality could support knowledge workers as they add new process fragments to the parent to facilitate changes that may occur after the project begins.

8 Process Lifecycle

By default, modifications published over the top of previously published processes are saved as a new process version. Users may also save a new version of the process at any time by selecting *New Version* from the File Menu. Every executed process instance is mapped to the specific process model version that was used, enabling an already running process to execute to completion based on its initial setting.

If a generic process model that is currently running is edited and saved, then any existing cases will continue executing using the old process model version; any new cases initiated after the modifications to the process model will use the new nodes and settings in the model.

Using the product itself, users could design a process that supports the lifecycle of the process, enabling the firm to link associated documents, and discussion/collaboration threads, that occurred during development, lifecycle approvals, releases, changes, etc. Although this functionality is not delivered out-of-the-box today, it is scheduled for an upcoming release.

9 Monitoring, Measurement, and Management Information

The Process Engine stores all process data and process states in order to support detailed analytics for managing personnel productivity, process performance, bottleneck identification, and resource management. The Process Engine maintains a history of every event (e.g., reassignment, escalation, notification) that occurs in a process, and the audit data can be viewed for any running or completed process.



In addition to availability through the administrative interfaces, the audit trail is accessible to users from within Task Details and the Process Details page in the Process Portal. This allows users who are responsible for completing the next step in a process to have additional information on the task in question, its deadline, and where it fits within the overall process lifecycle. (See Figure 3 on page 5.)

The Process Analyzer provides graphical and grid-based reports based on the underlying process data. The Process Analyzer supports web-based Dashboards that are available to participants responsible for tracking the performance of a set of processes. Alternatively, they can be made available to all process participants.

The Process Analyzer provides real-time status information based on a discrete set of performance metrics. Some metrics available include the lag time (how long the task sat in a queue), task time (the amount of time a human has been working on the task), and completion time (the total time the task took to complete), and how these values compare to historical values for process instances of the same process model version.



Figure 5 – Appian also includes a personalized process dashboard

These *Dashboard* style reports incorporate Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that can be monitored by process owners or system administrators to identify process and performance bottlenecks in real-time.

The Process Analyzer also supports the ability to do more thorough analysis on process data, using OLAP reporting tools like Crystal Reports, MicroStrategy, and MS Excel. The Process Analyzer exports process data, including all process variables, into a relational schema that these tools connect to using ODBC.

In addition to providing standard reports to help organizations identify bottlenecks, distribute tasks, and improve processes, Appian Enterprise allows users to create and save customized dashboards, enabling personalized visibility into their different business areas.

10 Templates and Frameworks

Appian Enterprise ships with a set of industry-specific process *modules*. These modules contain pre-built models demonstrating common processes in Government/Defense, Financial Services, Health Care, Insurance, Retail, etc. These process drafts help users master Process Modeler functionality quickly by serving as process examples. Additionally, they are used to reduce development time by providing starting points for more complex client-specific process models.



11 Vendor

Appian was founded in 1999 and is entirely self-funded (no VC backing), being profitable since its first day. Since its foundation, Appian has maintained consistent growth on all fronts – employee base, customer base, and revenues. Appian currently has 165 employees and has experienced revenue growth of over 700% between 2000 and 2003. Appian's 2003 revenues were \$23 million. The company has more than 100 customers, and there are currently more than 6.5 million seats of Appian Enterprise software deployed. Software comprises about 35-40% of Appian's revenues; services represent 55-60%. Appian distributes Appian Enterprise mainly in the US, and all sales offices are currently in North America.

12 Cost

Appian Enterprise is priced and licensed on a *named user* basis. Pricing per named user starts at \$1,000 per user and decreases incrementally as the number of users increases. Quick start pricing is available at \$50,000 and includes some professional services/customization, if needed. Typical projects start at \$100,000.



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Overview	Web-based, process-enabled workspace supporting collaborative projects amongst knowledge workers; rich security framework, designed to support managed change rather than rigidly enforce control; Process combined with support for Rules, IM, Discussion, Content & Personalization. Considerable strength in Asian market at moment.
BPM Engine	Replicable engines at the back-end that communicate with the Java interface layer; Rules, Personalization, Content Management, Collaboration Engines
Platforms	Solaris, Linux & Windows; Oracle, DB2, MySQL & SQL Server; JBoss, Websphere, Weblogic, & Oracle Application Servers
User Interface	JSR-168 based portal environment; integrated security model
Scalability	Largest customer 1.5 million users and over 500,000 logins per day; load-balanced and fail-over support in back end; replicated engines
Processing Modeling	Web-based BPMN modeler; Smart Nodes; Expression Editor; Multiple instances of all nodes; Looping
Subprocesses	Independent subprocess objects; Chaining; synchronous and asynchronous calls
Shared Data Space	Sophisticated process workspace; arrays on all object types; including other Appian objects such as Groups, discussions, chat sessions, etc.
Forms	Integrated portlets; HTML, JSP, PDF and InfoPath
Time	Node & process level; multi-level escalation
Simulation	Integrated Discrete Event Simulation environment
Business Rules	Embedded BRE; sophisticated Expression Editor
Integration	Smart Nodes; JCA Connectors/Adapters; Web Services;
Organizational Structure	LDAP/AD; sophisticated security model supports entire product
Process Adaptability	Re-assign tasks, edit model underpinning current process instance
Process Lifecycle	Version control; utilizing the product itself, one could develop a fully functioning lifecycle management tool that captured all related discussion, attached documents, release authorizations, etc.
Monitoring & Measurement	Integrated Process Analyzer; personalized Dashboards
Templates & Frameworks	Sample models in Government/Defense, Financial Services, Health Care, Insurance & Retail
Vendor	Appian Corporate; (703) 442 8844; www.appiancorp.com
Cost	Named user pricing starts at \$1K per user, entry level around \$50K; typical cost \$100K

