Thank you!

Dick Neuman's piece on the "Czar's Consultant" was marvelous. And I couldn't help but contrast that situation with another more ancient one—the oracles of Greece.

The oracle at Delphi is of course best known to us. But there were others—the oracle of Zeus at Dadona and a marvelous one at Claros which lasted from early Greek through Roman times. Oracles in our thinking are linked with superstition and ignorance, with phony divination of the future and even outright bribery and trickery. Because they were human institutions, all those things no doubt played a part. But to dismiss them so easily is to overlook the obvious and miss the message they have for us.

The priests and priestesses of the oracles did in fact--more often than not--give good advice. They could in fact predict outcomes--foretell the future if you will--with more than random accuracy. And the reason was simple. These principals
of the oracles just had more and better information than anyone else. Because people of all types and classes—from kings to peasants, from consultants to poets—people of every city, tribe and land came to the oracle. And in the process of seeking advice left behind information of great variety and perspective.

I should emphasize perspective, because it is perspective that makes information come alive. It is perspective that highlights subtleties and minor themes that will become dominant factors. Perspective is precious—the oracles had it and the Czar did not.

This is the third executive symposium sponsored by VIM and Control Data. Our perspectives are several. At least in numbers.....Bob Wesslund told me that at the last session the group represented 600 processors. On the other hand we may suffer from all being "old hands" of the industry. We do represent good cross-industry perspective, and not the least is we represent vendor and user.

I know for sure that the discussions in past seminars on software quality - releases, stability and so on, the discussion of mini's and maxi's - even if the dinosaur is an irritating analogy - the discussions of migration have helped to focus
Control Data's thinking and plans. The system works—it does help us see the future and shape our actions accordingly.

In short, while I'm sure that no one is about to start referring to the "oracle at Bloomington" we are at least gaining great insight to our own world—we are gaining perspective that will help us see the future of computing technology and better apply it for the benefit of all of us.

But oracles, czars, or NFL football teams depend for success on more than a system. They depend on individual excellence. And when it comes to the subject at hand, no one has ever had greater clarity of vision than Bill Norris.

/pwal0