The interconnectedness of systems and the need to change at pace has highlighted the importance of a more holistic view of the Salesforce implementation and a more rigorous development cycle. Any change–no matter how small–can have a material impact on systems downtime, company reputation, and regulatory compliance. Therefore there is a tendency to resist making changes or make them slowly and carefully.

But this is at odds with the need to increase the frequency of changes. Agility is a business differentiator. If the apps that support the business are not built to change, then they cannot support the business. Organizations that can master agility and are able to execute flawlessly will dominate. And GPT has made speed an imperative.

To be able to make changes at the pace, the development cycle needs to be supported by intelligence on the risk and impact of the changes. GPT can accelerate parts of the development lifecycle. But it requires an aggregated view of all the related documentation on what has been configured and why, and then the proposed changes and dependencies, risks, and impact.

The app to support these change decisions is called a Change Intelligence Platform. It pulls together the business analysis documentation, automatically generated configuration knowledge, and team collaboration that provides a connected view of historical changes and the risk of future changes. That provides the intelligence to make changes faster and with confidence which enables a transition in implementation maturity from heroics to excellence. It can speed up change and allow organizations to stay hyper-focused on driving business outcomes.

It enables organizations to know where they are today and realize where they want to be tomorrow. It helps expose their current reality–including their Salesforce configuration and integrated systems–so that they can uncover opportunities for future growth, and confidently make changes to exploit system advances. It can accelerate and scale organizational innovation.

Use Cases

AI + Data + CRM
AI working with harmonized customer data that is fed from a CRM and other systems holds enormous potential. But only if there is confidence in the quality and source of the data, and if the underlying systems can be changed quickly with confidence in the outcomes.

Digital transformation

The implementation of new digital business models requires rethinking existing processes and supporting systems. These are strategic implementations that need to be delivered at pace with high confidence of success in terms of user adoption across the entire business.

Implementing a new cloud

It could be expanding the scope of Salesforce to new business areas through the implementation of a new cloud e.g CPQ or Service Cloud or a major Managed Package from an ISV. This is a significant change program that has risk, especially when layered on top of an established, legacy Salesforce implementation.

Org merge/consolidation

Org consolidation projects are being driven from several different perspectives. The first is M&A when both the acquiring and acquired companies have one or more Salesforce orgs. The second is where Salesforce has been implemented at a departmental level and as Salesforce ownership moves to IT they take a more strategic view. There is a driver to have a single org with a single customer record. The final situation is where a new org has been implemented tactically rather than extending the existing org, but the plan was always to merge at a later date. And that time has come.

Lightning migration

There are huge benefits in migrating to Lightning. All the Salesforce R&D investment is in new productivity-enhancing Lightning features. But we know that the levels of tech debt and the risk of making changes to an org that is not well understood are preventing companies from pulling the trigger on the migration.

Org documentation

Rising tech debt and changes that break the org have highlighted the need for better org documentation and optimization. That starts with baselining the configuration with an org discovery project and then providing a central platform for all business change documentation.

Flow migration

Flow is the automation platform going forward. But it is not a simple one-for-one migration from Workflow Rules and Process Builder Workflows to Flow. It is an opportunity to revisit and streamline the process, consolidate the automations and reduce technical debt by great design and good documentation.

Benefits of a Change Intelligence Platform

Accelerate time to value

This is enabling teams to work collaboratively to define what the business needs and then deliver the updates rapidly, with confidence, by having change intelligence. Rework can be reduced by up to 80% by better analysis and change decisions.

Understand the risk of change

What takes weeks can now be done in hours. Dramatically reduce the time to understand your Salesforce configuration, the risk areas, and the implications of making changes. This is the basis to confidently scale improvements across the enterprise. Consultants report that org discovery can be reduced by 85%.

A more complete picture through automated documentation

The cost of downtime for the business users because the org is broken can be significant. Up-to-date and complete documentation ensures teams can make better decisions. The nightly sync with automated org documentation and analysis means your team can focus on developing, running, and achieving more from Salesforce.

Turn individual knowledge into institutional knowledge

When staff or consultants leave you will lose critical insights about your systems' configuration that takes months to build back up. Make it easy to capture knowledge into one single source of truth. It keeps knowledge current and accessible in a centralized source of truth through automatic and continuous documentation.

Supporting a Center of Excellence

91% of the top-performing Salesforce programs have a COE in place (10K Advisors report). The heart of a COE is a Change Intelligence Platform that supports all aspects of the program; strategy, tools, best practices, and training to boost your business performance, agility, and resilience.

Risks of a Partial View

If you make decisions with incomplete information and without the knowledge that it is incomplete then the risks are higher than having no insights and blindly making changes. The issue is that you do not take action to mitigate the risk because you have no way to assess the risks or even worse you assume you are safe.

Switching on AI capabilities without a complete picture of where the data comes from introduces huge risk to the organization. Even worse is the risk that changes can be made to upstream data without any understanding of the downstream consequences.

There are some apps on the AppExchange that tell you if a Salesforce field has no data. The assumption is that the field is not used and therefore can be deleted. There is pressure because organizations have reached the maximum number of fields on an object and are desperate to delete some. But deleting a field that is empty but critical to automation or integration could break the org and stall the business operation.

To make these decisions you need the supporting information such as where the field is used, not just inside the core Salesforce platform but other clouds including Data Cloud and 3rd party systems. You need to know who owns the field and why it was created to be able to understand if it can be removed.

The same is true for the impact assessment apps on the AppExchange. There are several hundred metadata types, so there are thousands of potential dependency types. No apps assess all these dependencies. Most, including the Salesforce Where Used button for custom fields, only scratches the surface. So any app that claims to provide "the complete view" is misguided or stretching the truth.

The power of a Change Intelligence Platform is to aggregate all the available information about your IT landscape so that you can make change decisions and assess the risks of those changes. Much of this can be done automatically, but the Change Intelligence Platform is also the place where manually created documentation can be stored, in context.

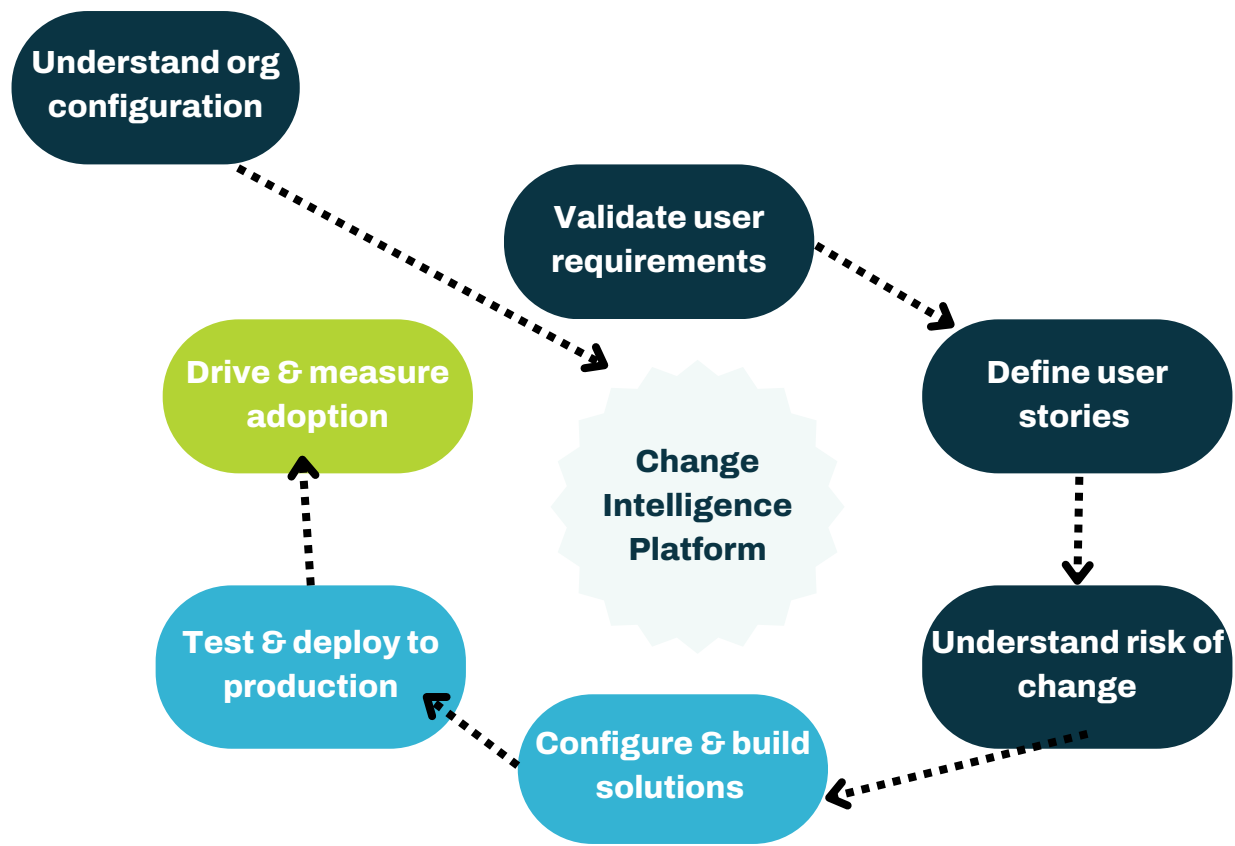## Change Intelligence Platform in 2 words

Understanding and Management. You cannot manage what you don't understand.

Org Understanding: The assessment of the Salesforce org configuration, complexity, and tech debt is consolidated in a comprehensive metadata dictionary for the impacted systems. It has automated documentation, dependencies, and impact assessments. It is the baseline for all change.

Org Management: It supports the development and collaboration of connected business analysis documentation, tied to the metadata dictionaries, which support the complete change lifecycle. That enables more effective Org Management which leads to Org Excellence .

Below are the activities that are typically part of the development or change lifecycle. Each stage relies on knowledge and insights from earlier stages. And as it is a continuous cycle, and change is now constant in organizations, those insights become more and more valuable, and more knowledge is captured.

Understand org configuration

Validate user requirements

Drive & measure adoption

Change Intelligence Platform

Define user stories

Test & deploy to production

Configure & build solutions

Understand risk of change

Assessing the Market

The market is maturing quickly. Initially, it was a set of home-grown apps, enthusiast developed utilities, and a few vendors with apps that were still MVP. The business needs and value was not well understood, at the same time the Salesforce implementations were smaller and less risky.

AI / GPT is making the Salesforce Customer360 vision a reality in organizations. Currently, Salesforce platform is strategic and mission-critical to the organization. That has forced business and IT teams to look at more rigorous development practices. This can be evidenced by the dramatic increase in the interest in DevOps. There are Salesforce DevOps ISVs that are growing strongly, one of which is over $1B in valuation, and Salesforce themselves are launching a low-end offering. The Change Intelligence Platform market is following the same trajectory as DevOps, albeit a couple of years behind.

As with any emerging market, vendors are approaching it from different perspectives and providing only a subset of the complete solution. There will be overlaps and gaps, so customers will need to make their own buying decisions, and based on their current tooling vendors such as DevOps and Backup they will need to build integrations and fill the functionality gaps.

Over time, the leading vendors will emerge who have developed a product that covers the entire business need. This will be either organically, through integrations, or by acquisition.

Evaluation Criteria

The Change Intelligence market supports the need to understand the risk of making changes at each stage of the development lifecycle. It centers on business analysis and supports development and operations.

There are 4 related markets that are not considered as part of Change Intelligence;

- DevOps: This is the development, test, deployment, and release of changes through the development pipeline to production. It is sometimes called DevSecOps as it also includes security testing.
- Backup and restore: This is both the backup of customer data, but also metadata.The metadata backup is often covered by DevOps vendors and their integration with source control systems.
- Data Quality: This not just cleaning up the data, but also establishing and supporting data governance best practices.
- Digital Adoption: this is the enablement and ongoing training of end-users.

We considered the Change Intelligence Platform vendor offerings by looking at:

- Architecture. We looked at the architecture of the product and its ability to support the Salesforce core platform, Salesforce's other clouds, and applications outside the Salesforce ecosystem.
- Functionality. We considered the functional capabilities of the product and evaluated them against the core requirements of the full change lifecycle.
- Execution. We assessed each vendor's ability to support customers in multiple geographies and at scale, for the long term.

Our research has identified 28 vendors that fall within the scope of Change Intelligence. Many of these are niche utilities offering a small subset of functionality or are too immature to be considered in the wider change intelligence market. Most of them cover exporting metadata to spreadsheets, building a metadata dictionary or providing limited impact assessment.

We have therefore identified 4 vendors that are worthy of consideration for any Salesforce customer. Note, that these all are paid applications with free trials, or limited functionality freemium offerings which are used to generate leads. All are US headquartered Salesforce ISVs. In alphabetical order:

- Elements.cloud
- Snapshot
- Panaya Foresight
- Sonar Software
- Strongpoint

Both Metazoa and Salto.io have some of the Change Intelligence Platform capabilities, but are focused on supporting the DevOps market.

Vendor Functionality Matrix

The following areas of Change Intelligence functionality support the lifecycle and are required to deliver the complete solution.

Requirements: capturing business requirements with links to supporting documentation

Process mapping/flowcharts: mapping business processes in UPN format to validate the requirements with links back to metadata and supporting documentation

Architecture Diagrams & ERD:

Documenting the solution architecture using Salesforce Diagrams standard and Entity Relationship Diagrams with links to metadata and supporting documentation.

Work Items / User Stories:

Defining the changes that need to be made as Work Items or User Stories with links to metadata and supporting documentation .

Release risk assessment:

Grouping user stories into releases and assessing the technical, business and regulatory risk of the release so the right level of development and testing resource can be scheduled.

Metadata dictionaries:

Building metadata dictionaries for core enterprise apps so that changes and documentation can be linked.

Metadata impact and dependencies:

Identifying the relationships and dependencies between metadata items across and within dictionaries, analyzing the metadata items against other factors to assess impact of change.

Org / change documentation:

Documenting changes against metadata items, process, and architecture.

DevOps integration:

Hand-off user stories to the development team through integration with DevOps apps.

Feedback and training:

Providing end users with documentation on changes and mechanism for feedback

Adoption:

Tracking usage of metadata items to provide insights.

	REQUIREMENTS	PROCESS ARCH	USER STORIES	RELEASES	METADATA	DEPENDENCIES	DOCUMENTATION	DEVOPS	FEEDBACK	ADOPTION
Elements. cloud	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hubbl					✓	✓				
Panaya				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sonar					✓	✓	✓			
Strongpoint				✓	✓	✓	✓			

Vendor Assessment

Invisory rating methodology:

Invisory has built a proprietary algorithm to analyze data pertaining to market perception, customer reviews, robustness of features, product innovation, ease of integration, among many other factors. Values have been weighted to provide an accurate app assessment.

Elements.cloud: FRONT RUNNER
Website: elements.cloud

SUMMARY

Elements.cloud is a US Salesforce ISV that is considered to have the most complete offering in the Change Intelligence Platform space. They are leading the thinking on Change Intelligence and their GPT-led product strategy is visionary and compelling.

STRENGTHS

- The product supports the full implementation lifecycle for any application, not just Salesforce.
- Their strategic integrations with Salesforce DevOps vendors are critical to support customers' tooling strategy and the Chrome Extension enables Elements analysis to be seen inside Salesforce and Jira.
- Consulting licenses are priced so that every consultant can justify purchasing for client discovery.

CONCERNS

- Their impact and dependency assessment covers all the use cases found in orgs. However, as with the other vendors, they do not cover every metadata type and possible dependency.
- As the Change Intelligence market matures there are questions over their ability to execute at the scale as the demand accelerates rapidly.
- The broad scope of the product means that future development effort is prioritized.

Hubbl: CONTENDER
Website: www.hubbl.com/

SUMMARY

Hubbl started out at Traction on Demand. When ToD was acquired by Salesforce the product side of the business spun off. Hubbl Diagnostics analysis org metadata and produces elegant analysis charts.

STRENGTHS

- Strong visual analytics which appeals to CxO level.
- Analyzes org metadata off-platform so the process does not hit your API limits
- Has both a consultant and customer licensing model

CONCERNS

- Lacks the depth of analysis required for architects and admins
- No GPT capabilities.
- Only focused on org analysis and not geared to supporting the entire change cycle.

Panaya Foresight: CONTENDER
Website: panaya.com

SUMMARY

Panaya is a subsidiary of Infosys which is a global SI. They built up experience of impact assessment in the Oracle and SAP ecosystems and have applied it to support the Salesforce ecosystem with a Salesforce specific app. They coined the phrase Change Intelligence Platform but are addressing it from a DevOps perspective so you can plan risk-driven deployments and testing.

STRENGTHS

- Ability to support customers who have implemented both SAP and Salesforce.
- Chrome extension that allows devs and admins to access dependency insights straight from page layouts and JIRA tickets
- Very complete product around planning (technical) risk-based development with GPT capabilities around code documentation.

CONCERNS

- Functionality overlap with established DevOps apps that have a stronger proposition may create potential conflicts and limit technology partnering opportunities.
- Slightly complex and confusing UI.
- Focus on developers and testers and not geared to supporting the entire change cycle.

Sonar: CONTENDER
Website: sonarsoftware.com

SUMMARY

Sonar addresses Change Intelligence from a RevOps perspective. Their impact assessment includes a history of changes, and their free offering provides field population visibility.

STRENGTHS

- Thought leadership around sales ops (revops) has worked well to build market presence.
- Modern UI providing metadata impact analysis.
- Easily understood documentation of changes with comparisons.

CONCERNS

- A new entrant focused on impact analysis on the Salesforce core platform rather than a broader Change Intelligence use case.
- Pricing can become expensive to access enterprise features.
- Free field population app has been designed for lead generation, but it may prove difficult to upsell from free to a paid solution.

Strongpoint: INNOVATOR
Website: strongpoint.io

SUMMARY

Strongpoint brings its experience of impact analysis from the NetSuite ecosystem to Salesforce and have built a Salesforce specific app. Their focus is on risk assessment and auditing of metadata changes from a compliance perspective.

STRENGTHS

- It has a strong Netsuite business and brings that expertise to the Salesforce ecosystem.
- An early entrant into the impact analysis Salesforce space in the US.
- A focus on compliance means that there is a more compelling business case for purchase.

CONCERNS

- Main focus Netsuite, with a loss of most of the Salesforce team which could be a concern for product development.
- Narrow focus on risk and audit rather than full Change Intelligence use case.
- Difficult to implement and perform analysis of large complex Salesforce orgs.