

**TEN
TECH
COMPANIES
TO
WATCH**



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The challenges that banks face are legion. Meeting them takes intelligence, creativity, innovation. Banks that look for intelligent and creative tools—smart solutions across a variety of disciplines—from the most forward-thinking technology companies are reaping the rewards. Ranging from security to core processing to mobile banking, the best innovation is often from lesser known, privately held technology shops. In its annual ranking, BTN profiles 10 firms—**Zoot**, Open Solutions, Panini, Online Resources, Wipro, mFoundry, Omniture, EXL, Guardium and Mall Networks—whose innovation is getting them noticed.

By **JOHN ADAMS, GLEN FEST, MICHAEL DUMIAK
AND KAREN KREBSBACH**

THE TEN TECH COMPANIES TO WATCH

- 1) Zoot**
- 2) Open Solutions**
- 3) Panini**
- 4) Online Resources**
- 5) Wipro**
- 6) mFoundry**
- 7) Omniture**
- 8) EXL**
- 9) Guardium**
- 10) Mall Networks**



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ZOOT

CEO: CHRIS NELSON

WHERE: BOZEMAN, MT

FOUNDED: 1990

BUSINESS: CREDIT RISK

PRODUCT: SPOC DECISION ENGINE

REVENUE: N/A

STATUS: PRIVATE

RECENT CLIENT WINS: WACHOVIA

WHEN WACHOVIA MADE THE JUMP LAST YEAR

back into direct issuance of credit cards, it set aggressive goals but played it conservative on the back end for its automated decisioning. The nation's fourth-largest bank created its card services division around the Zoot Enterprises Web-based decisioning engine used by its previous issuing agent, MBNA. Zoot already had the formats in place for Wachovia's card processor, TSYS, and was "willing to work with us on our launch timetable, which was very short and aggressive," says Ann Watkins, chief risk officer for Wachovia Card Services. No kidding: In less than a year, Wachovia had issued one million cards exclusively through its existing customers. Zoot, a little known company from a little-known place (Bozeman, MT), is losing its back-office anonymity as more big banks—including Wells Fargo and Washington Mutual—tap the 17-year-old firm's customizable SPOC Decision Engine for credit cards, home lending, autos, and business loans. Zoot uses 44 distinct data feeds of

consumer data and analytics, according to CEO Chris Nelson, to build from the standard bureau assessments that weigh check writing habits, rental and utilities payment history, and home and personal property valuation. "There's a lot of different sources out there that can slice and dice census data in different ways," Nelson says, with the enthusiasm only a 20-year veteran systems analyst and programmer could show. There are also a slew of new fields that Zoot can tackle. Domestic microlending? That's a rare foray, but it's one being tapped by Zoot client i4 with its BillMeLater instant credit service for online retailers. Another new arena into which Zoot is gaining entry is in channel integration of the various marketing and decisioning engines across a bank, says Financial Insights research analyst Christine Pratt. "They have the underlying core technology to tie together the channels and, at the same time, to automate some decisions and what's the best offer to make to that person," she says. ▲ GLEN FEST



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About Zoot

Zoot provides credit decisioning and loan origination solutions to large and innovative U. S. financial services institutions. Its reliable, secure, and scalable environment reduces risk and improves performance for seven of the top-ten U.S. banks, accounting for hundreds of millions of credit transactions a year. Zoot fulfills clients' complex needs for multiple lines of business and enterprise-wide platforms through a flexible and customizable architecture that enables clients to adapt to the market in realtime. Zoot's clear focus on clients' needs has led to long-term relationships with the nation's most innovative financial institutions. Visit <http://www.zootweb.com> or call 406.586.5050 for more information.