

IBM, Red Hat and Cobuilder Spearhead Development of OpenBuilt to Accelerate Digital Transformation across the Construction Industry with a Hybrid Cloud Approach

New cross industry collaboration joins forces to create OpenBuilt, based on Red Hat OpenShift and IBM Cloud to help build faster and more cost-effectively, while helping to control risk

ARMONK, N.Y. and LONDON, April 14, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM [NYSE: [IBM](#)], Red Hat and Cobuilder today announced a global collaboration to co-develop OpenBuilt, a new platform designed to help securely connect fragmented construction industry supply chains. Built on Red Hat OpenShift and running on IBM Cloud, OpenBuilt will offer new digital solutions to help innovate and drive more efficient, sustainable and safer construction projects.

A cross-industry ecosystem of five partners will play a vital role in the development process together with IBM, Red Hat and [Cobuilder](#), including Cemex, [EDIN Network](#), [Backe](#), Sol Services and Element.

The construction industry has long been challenged with project delays, cost overages as well as wasted materials often caused by disconnected processes and poorly coordinated activities and resources. Companies across the built environment including architects, building material suppliers, manufacturers, construction and engineering firms are now looking to innovate and speed up the expansion of their digital strategy. By moving away from largely manual processes, the industry will be able to explore more effective ways of working.

OpenBuilt is designed to allow companies across the global built environment and construction industry to securely connect their current technology platforms and digital solutions to partners, suppliers or subcontractors in their supply chain via a single integration hub. With a foundation on Red Hat OpenShift running on IBM Cloud, the industry's most secure and open cloud for business, OpenBuilt aims to help improve communication and securely exchange data across the supply chain. Companies will then have access to the latest applications and services from technology providers to expand their digital platforms without complex, bespoke software development.

Mark Farmer, CEO of Cast Consultancy and Independent Champion for Modern Methods of Construction in Homebuilding for UK Government, commented:

"In pursuing the broad goal of construction industry transformation, there is a critical need to break down the deep silos and fragmentation that exists in how we organise and operate design, manufacture, construction and operation processes. This is equally true in the emerging digitalisation challenge.

To create more strategic and scalable intelligent workflows we need data and software to be part of a fully connected ecosystem. The concept of digital platforms is nothing new but if construction is ever going to realise the full potential of some of the technology solutions that are now proliferating and if those solutions are ever going to be given the chance to scale to maturity then there is a need for market leadership in creating a unifying platform that can host these solutions and enables interoperability.

What IBM and partners are offering through Open Built is the opportunity to act as a digital integrator at an

international and industry wide level, gluing together what is becoming an increasingly fragmented digital market place for construction technology solutions. This is an important step forward which has great potential to make our industry more efficient."

"The global construction landscape is evolving and requires a new approach towards industry-wide technology platforms with new levels of openness, innovation and collaboration. Together with our partners we are creating OpenBuilt to empower the construction industry to break down its silos with intelligent workflows and play an active role in designing and driving its own transformation. Successful companies across the construction supply chain are coming together to embrace a digital future, harnessing the power of an open hybrid cloud approach and adopting new technologies to gain a real competitive advantage. We want to inspire other companies to join us and accelerate the march towards a truly digital construction industry," said Jon O'Donnell, Managing Partner, IBM Global Business Services EMEA.

Collaborative development will initially focus on three key areas:

1. Establishing OpenBuilt using Red Hat OpenShift running on IBM Cloud to enable construction companies to adopt a hybrid cloud approach and connect their supply chain. Then gain access to a wide library of pre-integrated applications from trusted companies and solution providers operating in the built environment. This foundation of open-source software, security leadership, and enterprise grade infrastructure is designed to support companies hosting mission-critical workloads such as ERP systems - on the platform. To maintain consistent technical language, OpenBuilt will use Cobuilder's Data Templates to structure all data in a way that allows for machine-readability and interoperability with existing and future systems. Users can build and deploy intelligent workflows via an intuitive drag and drop interface, making application development far more accessible to the industry.
2. Integration of Independent Software Vendors to make an array of software and services accessible. IBM solutions including Watson, Maximo, TRIRIGA, next generation KITT dictionary and IBM Blockchain in addition to Salesforce open APIs will be integrated into the platform during the development to enable users to build functionality into their intelligent workflows. Industry integrations can be developed ranging from Building Information Modeling and Digital Twins solutions with 3D Repo, digital project management solutions with Asite, data-driven building operations and maintenance services with Facilio and finding and researching building products for specification with SpecifiedBy and artificial intelligence-powered health and safety advice from Intuity.
3. Development of new flagship applications including a solution that will enable organisations to search, filter and sort building product technical data. This can allow companies to quickly find materials with the right specification to design, build or maintain buildings that meet industry guidelines such as functional, safety and environmental performance requirements. Cobuilder's data dictionary solution Define will be among the fundamental technologies enabling the use of a common language within the initial OpenBuilt flagship applications.

"Interoperability and standardisation of data exchange lie at the core of Cobuilder's services. We are thrilled to see the industry coming together and truly believe that OpenBuilt will bring the connectivity and common language needed to bring construction to the next level of digital transformation" said Lars Fredenlund, CEO, Cobuilder.

Driven by an Ecosystem

Ecosystems are crucial to driving digital transformation. Alongside IBM Global Business Services (GBS), Red Hat and Cobuilder, the cross industry ecosystem of five partners has come together to actively shape the direction of OpenBuilt with the aim of transforming the construction industry. This includes all forms of buildings (residential, industrial, commercial, hospitals, schools), all economic infrastructure (civil engineering infrastructure, above and below ground) and the urban space and landscape between and around buildings and infrastructure.

Representing areas across the global construction industry, the ecosystem can use its experience and insight to develop a range of ways companies can tap into the power of OpenBuilt:

CEMEX: a global building materials company that provides cutting-edge digital solutions, high-quality products and industry-leading services to satisfy customers' construction needs around the world. CEMEX has a rich history of improving the well-being of those it serves through innovative building solutions, efficiency advancements, and efforts to promote a sustainable future. CEMEX is strategically positioned across the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

"This collaboration is a strategic initiative that will enable greater productivity and open up new opportunities to increase our customers satisfaction", said Fernando A. Gonzalez, CEO of CEMEX. "We continue to lead the digital transformation in the industry with the support of leading partners, leveraging on their expertise, innovation, and advanced IT services to deliver game-changing solutions."

EDIN Network: EDIN is a global network of merchants, manufacturers and service providers that helps its members find new customers, reduce customer acquisition costs and exploit future trends through their events, workshops and technology incubator. Since its inception in 2016, the Edin network has rapidly grown to become one of the largest alliances to discuss trends and stimulate transformation in the construction industry, representing members with a combined turnover of €23bn.

"We are convinced that OpenBuilt will drive interoperability, facilitate data exchange and enable businesses to automate their processes without the need for complex and bespoke software development. This will unleash a wave of innovation in the industry, enabling new business models and transforming productivity. It will enable members using our OpenBuilt-powered incubator to explore new ways to gain control of their data, monetize their data and engage customers in new ways, without having to start from scratch. We are incredibly excited about the forthcoming era of transformation and our central role in shaping it" said Philippe Hardt, Founder, EDIN Network.

Sol Services: formed in 2003, [Sol Services](#) has steadily grown from its origins as a regional mechanical, electrical and fit out specialist. Under the forward-thinking leadership of Directors Nigel Burdett and Andrew Gordge, the company has expanded across London and the UK with overseas capability in Europe, providing a full range of construction, refurbishment and maintenance solutions. Through its extensive portfolio of projects across the public and private sector, it has built a reputation for delivering safe, reliable and high-quality projects.

"We saw the opportunity, and recognised the need for a technology platform to pull the construction world

together. And with the organisations involved in the development of this product, I have total confidence it will be the direction of construction for the future" said Nigel Burdett, Director, Sol Services Ltd.

Backe: Backe is a family-owned construction and property development company with operations throughout Norway. Backe is committed to reducing emissions in the Norwegian construction and building industry and invests in technology to ensure sustainable operations throughout its value chain. With more than 70 years' experience in the Norwegian market, Backe delivers projects to the public and private sector. The company employs about 800 people and reported revenues at NOK 4.5 billion for 2020.

"We are proud to partner with IBM and other leading brands to explore a global digital platform for the construction industry that will allow us to analyse, use and share data in new ways. The OpenBuilt platform will facilitate collaboration among suppliers and partners, improve productivity and help us meet coming regulations for documentation of the carbon footprint along the entire value chain. Backlogs in the industry are affected by market uncertainty due to covid-19 effects. Going forward, digitalisation and smarter ways of working will be keys to ensuring cost efficiency, sustainability as well as attractiveness among prospective employees", says Eirik Gjelsvik, CEO of Backe.

Element Materials Technology: one of the world's leading global providers of testing, inspection and certification services for a diverse range of materials, products and technologies in advanced industrial supply chains. [Element](#) delivers an extensive range of solutions to customers in the construction industry and recently launched Element Digital Engineering, a new business focused on engineering simulation, modelling, data science and artificial intelligence to solve complex industrial challenges.

Jo Wetz, CEO Element Materials Technology, commented "Element is delighted to be a founding partner of OpenBuilt, a digital market place for the construction industry with quality at its core. OpenBuilt will enable greater transparency for all stakeholders involved in a building's life cycle; increase confidence in the procurement of services for the built environment; and help ensure that the testing and certification of materials and products is central to the digital transformation of the sector."

Notes to editors:

About OpenBuilt:

OpenBuilt is an independent company owned and led by a consortium of industry partners. To date, the EDIN Network, CEMEX, AS Backe, Sol Services and Element Materials Technology have signed up as founding partners to own and steer the development of the platform. IBM, Red Hat and Cobuilder are providing technology and services to OpenBuilt and leading the creation of the platform.

For more information on OpenBuilt and how you can be part of the initiative, log onto www.openbuilt.io and check out the Get Involved page.

About IBM:

For further information about IBM Global Business Services visit: <https://www.ibm.com/services>

About Cobuilder:

Cobuilder offers an IT platform that employs all relevant international standards for data management to help

construction industry actors exploit the potential of product data. Fit-for-purpose and accurate product data improves quality of service, time to market and reduces time, cost and environmental footprint.

Cobuilder is a privately-owned international business with more than 120 employees distributed at HQ in Oslo and wholly owned subsidiaries in England, France and Bulgaria. The company is a major driver for the digitization in Construction and is a strategic contributor to ISO, buildingSMART, CEN and CENELEC.

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