



Analyst Perspective
Matt Aslett
Director of Research, Analytics and Data

Actian Enables Data Discovery and Data Intelligence

Data catalogs provide an inventory of data assets that surface metadata from data platforms, analytics tools and applications that can be used to facilitate data discovery and data usage across an enterprise. As I recently explained, however, there are actually [multiple types of data catalogs](#) that offer functionality to address specific use cases and user roles, including data inventory, data discovery and data governance. The data intelligence catalog is an emerging category that combines technical metadata, business metadata and data governance capabilities with knowledge graph functionality to deliver a holistic, business-level view of data production and consumption. Actian's 2024 acquisition of Zeenea was designed to add these capabilities as a complement to its established data platform, data integration and data quality functionality.

[Actian](#) was founded as Relational Technologies Inc. in 1980 and has been through multiple iterations and acquisitions in the decades that have followed. The company is currently owned by HCL Technologies, which initially [acquired](#) Actian via a joint venture with Sumeru Equity Partners in 2018 before taking full ownership in 2021 as Actian became the data and analytics products division of [HCLSoftware](#). Actian has remained focused on data processing and data management throughout its various incarnations. Its [Ingres](#) transactional database can be traced back to the origins of the company, while a variety of acquisitions added analytic, embedded and non-relational database capabilities, as well as data integration and data quality, and application modernization.

The company's Actian Data Platform provides a consolidated platform for data integration, data processing and analytics, delivered as a cloud-based managed service. The breadth of capabilities offered by Actian is reflected by its inclusion in multiple ISG Buyers Guides during 2024, including [Data Platforms](#), [Analytic Data Platforms](#), [Operational Data Platforms](#), [Data Integration](#), [Data Quality](#) and [Data Products](#). The latter was a direct result of the [acquisition](#) of Zeenea in September 2024. Zeenea's combination of metadata management, data discovery, data governance and federated knowledge graph functionality has expanded Actian's focus to address the emerging market for [data intelligence](#). I assert that through 2027, three-quarters of enterprises will be engaged in data intelligence initiatives to understand how, when and where data is used in the organization, and by whom.

Data Intelligence
Market Assertion

Through 2027, three-quarters of enterprises will be engaged in data intelligence initiatives to understand how, when and where data is used in their organization, and by whom.

Matt Aslett
Director of Research, Analytics and Data



ISG Research



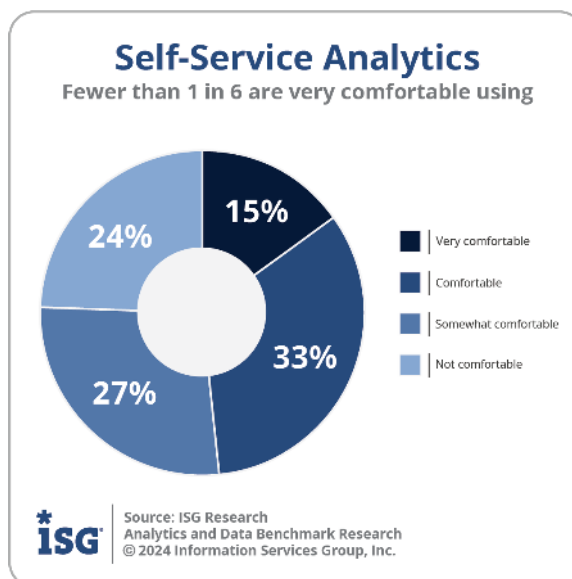
As enterprises seek to increase data-driven decision-making, many are investing in strategic data democratization initiatives to provide business users and data analysts with self-service access to data across the enterprise. Data catalogs provide a central repository of the data used across an enterprise, along with guided data discovery capabilities and natural language search.

I recently explained how making data available [as a product](#) can facilitate self-service data discovery, but it also increases the importance of agreed-upon data definitions to establish and maintain trust in data. In addition to core data catalog functionality, data democratization requires data lineage to track data as it flows through the organization from production to consumption, as well as data quality metrics and contextual understanding of the data, such as its criticality and whether it is subject to regulatory requirements. Data about data — or metadata — is therefore of critical importance to data intelligence efforts and is facilitated by curated semantic data definitions, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven semantic data modeling and knowledge graphs that represent data and metadata usage and reflect the relationships between data elements.

Actian's acquisition of Zeenea is central to the company's ability to address data democratization. The cloud-native [Zeenea Data Intelligence Platform](#) is described as an intelligent data discovery platform and enables enterprises to automatically scan various data sources, including databases, applications and business intelligence (BI) tools, to create a searchable data catalog of enterprise assets. The product's native federated knowledge graph identifies, classifies and maintains a map of relationships between data assets, facilitating search-based data discovery. Actian's Zeenea Data Intelligence Platform also provides functionality for creating and sharing business glossaries, metadata-driven regulatory and policy compliance, data lineage, metadata management, data stewardship, data governance, integration with data quality metrics, and an enterprise data marketplace for sharing and consuming data products. The platform provides two dedicated application interfaces: [Zeenea Studio](#) is aimed at data management teams to enable the management and governance of data assets, while [Zeenea Explorer](#) enables data consumers to discover and explore data using natural language search and personalized recommendations.

Providing self-service access to data has long been a goal of many enterprises, but few have achieved it. Only 15% of participants in ISG's Analytics and Data Benchmark Research say their organization is very comfortable allowing business users to work with data that has not been integrated or prepared for them by IT. Actian's acquisition of Zeenea provides the company with much of the functionality to provide the data intelligence catalog and data product capabilities required to facilitate data democratization. I recommend that any enterprises engaged in data intelligence initiatives and exploring the potential for data products include Actian within their evaluations.

The next step for the company will be to integrate the Zeenea Data Intelligence Platform capabilities with those offered by the Actian Data Platform, including [Actian DataConnect](#) and [Actian Data Quality](#), to provide customers with a holistic view of, and access to, data across the Actian Data Platform estate.





Regards,

Matt Aslett
Director of Research, Analytics and Data

To read more perspectives by Matt, visit <https://mattaslett.isg-one.com/>.



Matt Aslett – Director of Research, Analytics and Data

Matt Aslett leads the software research and advisory for Analytics and Data at ISG Research, covering software that improves the utilization and value of information. His focus areas of expertise and market coverage include analytics, data intelligence, data operations, data platforms, and streaming data and events.