preface

Evaluating big IT projects and trends has consumed a large part of my professional life. After graduating from engineering school in 1979, I spent nearly a decade as a technical journalist, reporting on technologies ranging from robots that painted automobiles, to voice-recognition systems that took orders over the phone, to software that controlled and managed the brewing of beer. I toured hundreds of facilities in the United States and learned firsthand how companies used technology. When the technology was used well, the results were amazing. There was always a risk of failure, however, when companies jumped into a technology too quickly.

I then became a technology analyst and spent over a decade at Gartner Inc., starting when it was shy of $40 million per year in revenues and leaving when revenues had grown above $600 million. During that time, I became a trusted advisor to both sellers and buyers of complex technologies, particularly in the area of back-office and operations software. I worked with many of the Fortune 500 companies around the world as well as some of the largest software providers, including SAP, Oracle, Computer Associates, and IBM. During my tenure at Gartner, I advised more than 1,000 companies.