

QUICK TAKE



December 20, 2004

Latest Release Of Oracle Application Server Provides Robust Integration Capability

by Ken Vollmer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aggressive action by Oracle during the past two years has moved the integration capability of its application server platform from an afterthought to one of its most significant features. This will serve the vendor well in its upcoming battles against BEA Systems, IBM, Microsoft, and SAP.

RESEARCH CATALYST

Vendor analyst briefings at the recent Oracle OpenWorld conference in San Francisco.

AFTER A SLOW START, ORACLE IS NOW TAKING INTEGRATION SERIOUSLY

Oracle's application server platform customers have traditionally been forced to look to other vendors to gain access to leading-edge integration capability. However, there has been a steady progression of integration enhancements from Oracle9i Application Server (9iAS) to Application Server 10g Release 1 (AS 10g R1) and now to the newly released Application Server 10g Release 2 (AS 10g R2), thus demonstrating the vendor's commitment to sustained progress in this area. The major integration-related enhancements in the current product include:

- **An enterprise service bus (ESB).** The product provides lightweight enterprise application integration (EAI) capability in an integrated ESB platform that includes support for application and technology adapters, an enhanced messaging infrastructure, and extensive data transformation functionality.
- **A BPEL-based process management tool.** The Oracle BPEL Process Manager, which is based on technology acquired from Collaxa earlier this year, provides the ability to integrate systems and applications into business processes. This tool supports BPEL natively, thereby eliminating the need for translation, and this should result in improved performance and interoperability.
- **Data hubs.** AS 10g R2 provides operational data stores that are preconfigured to manage information from five key areas, including customer, product, citizen, financial, and banking.
- **Enhanced B2B capability.** The new release provides horizontal process templates that cover collaboration, packaging, trading partner management, digital signing, document validation,

and nonrepudiation. In addition, it provides vertical industry templates for government, high-tech manufacturing, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, financial services, and retail/consumer packaged goods (CPG).

- **Business activity monitoring (BAM).** AS 10g R2 offers integrated BAM functionality that enables customers to collect, filter, process, distribute, and visualize information in real time. This will help customers to achieve better visibility across applications, business processes, networks, and systems.
- **Enhanced business intelligence.** AS 10g R2 is the first product to offer enhanced business intelligence capability that enables the analysis of combined historical and real-time records.

The integration enhancements are particularly important in the wake of Oracle's recently finalized acquisition of PeopleSoft. Oracle will now have a broader application portfolio that can be used to provide its expanded base of customers with robust composite application development capability that, going forward, will dominate the development environment in an increasing number of organizations. A complete technology platform that includes the business applications, an application platform (containing robust integration capability), and integrated database technology will be one of the most efficient alternatives for organizations that want to acquire the ability to create composite applications.

This enhanced platform capability will give Oracle a much better chance of competing successfully against SAP, the current leader in the area of comprehensive business applications, as well as against BEA Systems, IBM, and Microsoft in the application platform arena. However, for Oracle to fully exploit this opportunity, it must shift some of its attention away from a traditional IT-oriented focus to one that takes a much more aggressive stance on providing business value. This will require a significant culture change. The need for this change was highlighted by the makeup of the attendees at the recent Oracle OpenWorld conference, where technical IT personnel were everywhere, but business users were an endangered species.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PUT ORACLE AS 10g ON YOUR INTEGRATION VENDOR SHORTLIST

Oracle has made significant improvements in the integration capability of its most current release of AS 10g. The functionality that this product can now provide will cover a wide range of organizational integration requirements, not the least of which will be the ability to create composite applications.