

## NetWeaver CE Enhances SAP's Composite Applications Vision

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NetWeaver Composition Environment could speed up developing and deploying composite applications in a service-oriented architecture. It reinforces SAP's strategy in this area, though it still has to prove itself in use.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 9 May 2007, SAP released NetWeaver Composition Environment (CE), a set of standards-based and integrated tools to develop and deploy composite software applications. SAP will initially control availability before NetWeaver CE ramps up into general release.

### Analysis

SAP NetWeaver CE is the first in a series of product releases during the next 12 to 18 months. The new products (collectively referred to as NetWeaver 7.1 and previously called NetWeaver "New York") are meant to provide a foundation for the next generation of SAP applications and for SAP Enterprise Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

SAP is putting forward NetWeaver CE as a tool to implement applications consuming SAP Enterprise SOA services. It integrates several point products (Composite Application Framework, Visual Composer, Web Dynpro and others) into a unified, Eclipse-based composition tool. It also includes life cycle management tools and adapters to SAP applications (ERP 6.0 and R/3). The core runtime foundation is provided by a Java Platform, Enterprise Edition (EE) 5-certified application server that will be later integrated with SAP's proprietary Advanced Business Application Programming (ABAP) platform.

NetWeaver CE is positioned as a way to develop and deploy composite applications. It is primarily aimed at SAP users and partners, but it can integrate non-SAP applications and services. This, and its independence from ABAP, could give SAP opportunities beyond existing users of SAP applications.

The announcement expands SAP's SOA-enabling platform and confirms the company's vision for composite applications, which was previously apparent mainly in its xApps packaged composite applications. Moreover, NetWeaver CE catches up with (and overtakes most of) its competitors in standards support by releasing a Java EE 5 platform ahead of the likes of IBM, JBoss and Oracle.

SAP's value proposition links NetWeaver CE to SAP ERP 6.0 Enterprise SOA and older SAP applications, but it will have to be further articulated in terms of application scenarios and vertical industries. Although some independent software vendors and systems integrators are already working on NetWeaver CE, it must also win broad support from partners, and demonstrate value through a significant number of production references, especially in hybrid SAP/non-SAP scenarios.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- **SAP users:** Evaluate NetWeaver CE as a tool to speed up implementation of custom composite applications that integrate SAP and non-SAP applications. You should also consider it if you are simply interested in a Java EE 5 platform from SAP. But be aware that the product's readiness is still unproven.
- **Non-SAP users:** Evaluate this product, despite its immaturity. It does not depend on legacy SAP technology, and there are relatively few products in its class (rivals include software from Agentis Software, Digital Harbor, IBM, Skyway Software and Software AG).

- **Software vendors and systems integrators:** Regard SAP as a potentially strong player in composite applications. Evaluate whether NetWeaver CE represents a partnership opportunity or a threat.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- "Q&A: Shedding Light on SAP NetWeaver XI's Road Map and Strategic Role" — Although SAP hasn't unveiled a road map for this product, its role will become more strategic for the company, clients and partners as SAP NetWeaver XI evolves into a key enabler for SAP's enterprise SOA. **By Massimo Pezzini**
- "Executive Changes at SAP Reflect Ongoing Changes in Strategy" — Shai Agassi, who appeared to be next in line to become CEO of SAP, has left the company, reflecting an ongoing change to a parallel, multiproduct strategy. **By Daniel Sholler, Yvonne Genovese and Tim Payne**

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