

The Next iAS Goal: Oracle's Total Integration Strategy

With Oracle Internet Application Server 8i (iAS) version 1.0 and the Internet Platform, Oracle is addressing part of its integration strategy. When complete, Oracle's integration strategy will be most attractive to Oracle-centric enterprises.

Core Topics

Software Infrastructure: Application Integration Strategies

Electronic Workplace: Workflow — Production

Key Issues

Which vendors will dominate the e-business middleware market during the next five years?

How will the organization of the production work management market change and what will be the basis of a successful vendor strategy?

Strategic Planning Assumption

By YE02, Oracle will be established as a leading supplier of middleware only among enterprises that have bought into the complete Oracle application, development tools and database vision (0.7 probability).

Note 1

Oracle Internet Platform

Oracle Internet Platform is an umbrella term for the combination of the Oracle Application Server (iAS), the Oracle8i database, and the Oracle Internet Developer Suite. It is Oracle's intention that all integration-related technology will be folded under the iAS-focused Internet Platform umbrella.

Note 2

J2EE Support

iAS v.1.0.2 (targeted for availability in October) will be J2EE 1.0 compliant, including optional requirements. Current versions of iAS (1.0.0, 1.0.0) are J2EE 1.0 mandatory-only compatible. Oracle is JDK 1.2 compliant

With the recent Oracle iAS 8i announcements (see *Research Note E-11-5199: "Oracle iAS: A Remote Agent of Oracle8i"*), Oracle is consolidating multiple point products into suites, and simplifying the packaging and licensing requirements. However, Oracle's iAS version 1.0 must evolve quickly in new releases as Oracle brings all of its integration family under the product umbrella. Enterprises investing in the Oracle integration story need to be aware of what is beyond the 1.0 product. Key components have yet to be folded in.

Half of Oracle's Four-Pronged Approach. Oracle considers its requirements for middleware and integration bound by four categories ("integration," in Oracle terms). Data-level integration refers to the services within the Oracle8i database supporting data gateways and replication, offering connectivity to a wide span of Oracle and non-Oracle data sources. Intra-application synchronous support (not integration in our view) is the next level of functionality and a core part of the new Oracle iAS application server. Features include CORBA and J2EE/EJB planned support, with COM+ support offered by a bridge. Further support for component development was added through JDeveloper and the new Internet Developer Suite (IDS). Oracle iAS 1.0 and the Internet Platform (see Note 1) address the first two categories of Oracle's integration requirements, though full J2EE support is missing (see Note 2).

The Other Half. Oracle's full support for the interapplication and interenterprise (B2B) categories is not yet part of Oracle iAS, and is instead found in the older OIS. OIS is a package of related tools, including the Oracle integration broker, which addresses transformation and routing. OIS uses an integration hub-and-spoke messaging model tied to Oracle Advanced Queuing (AQ) messaging. For application connectivity via adapters, Oracle has partnered with Actional (formerly Visual Edge), OnDisplay (now

GartnerGroup

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Note 3

Oracle Exchanges

Oracle Exchanges, targeted for B2B markets, will be delivered as Oracle applications. For those desiring to implement an Exchange, or participate in existing Exchanges, the iAS foundation is crucial. Currently, version 1.0 of iAS (on Solaris) supports Oracle Exchange hubs. Spokes (e.g., participant node) can participate in Exchanges with an integration kit.

Note 4

Integration Server

Oracle Integration Server (OIS) is a collection of related technologies that comprise Oracle's B2B and integration broker offerings. Many of OIS's parts have or will become part of Oracle iAS or IDS, as listed below: [P] present in iAS v.1.0, [C] coming in subsequent iAS or IDS releases, or [U] having an unresolved status.

Oracle Message Broker [C] — Hub-and-spoke message broker.

Oracle Workflow (Business Process Management) [C] — Currently being provided as a standard offering in Oracle applications and Oracle 8I v.3, Oracle plans to offer version 2.6 of the Workflow product as a PL/SQL application in iAS.

Oracle Advanced Queuing [P] — Persistent and nonpersistent queuing are currently in iAS.

Data Transformation Services [C] — iStudio (Oracle Application Interconnect) will be included in a future release of the IDS.

Adapters [C/U] — specific adapters will be options available to iAS.

Directory [P] — LDAP directory support is now standard in iAS v.1.0.

In addition, Integration Server uses the following products:

Oracle 8I database [P] — part of the Internet Platform with restrictions on full use

Oracle Designer [C] — UML modeling tool for developing business flows; planned to be part of the IDS

Business Intelligence tools [P] — Available as standard features in the iAS Enterprise Edition

Enterprise Manager [P] — Available as a standard feature of iAS

Acronym Key

B2B	Business-to-business
COM+	Component Object Model
CORBA	Common Object Request Broker Architecture
DBMS	Database management system
EJB	Enterprise JavaBeans
JDK	Java Development Kit
OIS	Oracle Integration Server
PL/SQL	Programming Language/SQL
UML	Unified Modeling Language
XML	Extensible Markup Language

part of Vignette), STC, and Tibco (overlap among the Oracle products and the broader offerings of its adapter partners must not be overlooked). The Oracle iStudio (Oracle Application Interconnect) transformation tool is used to define and implement data transformation between the applications. Business process management is provided by Oracle Workflow (now a standard part of Oracle8i) and a soon-to-be-released UML modeling tool (see Note 3). For interenterprise requirements, an Oracle Exchange integration kit supports HTTP/XML connection to Oracle Exchanges.

Not All Together Yet. While many of the technologies OIS requires are now standard features of iAS (e.g., Enterprise Manager), some required products (e.g., Workflow v.2.6) are forthcoming. Product dependencies and release schedules require Oracle to stage delivery of its integration product set; therefore Oracle iAS will be seeing rapid updates beyond its initial release (see Note 4). As an example of dependency, consider Oracle iAS certification of existing and new products: the new PL/SQL engine had to be certified on Oracle iAS before Workflow 2.6 could be certified on iAS's PL/SQL. By early 2001, Oracle will have certified, simplified and interwoven its entire integration product/marketing strategy into the Oracle Internet Platform centered on iAS.

Are Oracle's Products for Everyone? There are three markets for Oracle's middleware family: one is a lovefest (clients who have bought the entire Oracle application, tool and database stack); one is a pipedream (the non-Oracle market); and one is a battleground (the Oracle database-only clients, that have many other tool choices). By YE02, Oracle will be established as a leading supplier of middleware only among enterprises that have bought into the complete Oracle application, development tools and database vision (0.7 probability). Oracle's strength in the Oracle DBMS-only shops (the battleground) remains to be proved. In non-Oracle shops (the pipedream), the Oracle middleware strategy is a poor fit because of the strong requirement for Oracle infrastructure. It is unlikely that Oracle will offer a streamlined "stand-alone" version of its integration broker (having no iAS or Oracle DBMS requirements) — a weakness compared to many other vendors (e.g., IBM, BEA).

Bottom Line: The functionality that Oracle has not yet released in iAS is critical for B2B integration and for competition in the integration broker market. Enterprises should expect Oracle to shift Integration Server and Oracle Exchange technology customers to iAS support, but must manage delivery timing/product availability in the interim.

