

BT Launches Innovative SOA-Based Managed Integration Service

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BT Integrate innovatively combines appliances and managed service-oriented-architecture services. Success will depend on BT's execution and effective, client-focused systems integration skills.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 25 April 2006, BT entered the European integration service provider market with BT Integrate, a managed service-oriented architecture (SOA) integration service that is initially being sold in the U.K., and will be sold internationally later in 2006. BT Integrate combines appliances, integration technologies, and SOA and integration service provider services. It includes:

- Hardware-based appliances deployed in a customer's network. Each embeds Sonic Software's enterprise service bus integration technology and functionality to support central management.
- A BT data center, including a portal that enables BT and customers to configure BT Integrate installations and operate them.
- Support for initial design and deployment, and eventually for industry-specific solutions.

Customers pay a set-up fee and a monthly fee per appliance.

Analysis

BT Integrate innovatively extends BT's telecom offerings and has the potential to shake up the nascent European integration service provider market. The appliances are discrete "nodes" that collectively operate as an internal or multienterprise SOA infrastructure. They communicate SOA traffic directly between each other, but are centrally managed by BT.

Gartner believes the service has a strong value proposition — BT deploys and manages the infrastructure; customers use it. It is a viable choice as a hosted SOA infrastructure to support other IT projects. The service will be attractive to U.K.-based multinationals and multidivisional companies.

Though BT Integrate can be seen as "an enterprise nervous system (ENS) in a box," it is not a turnkey ENS or SOA infrastructure. BT, or its business partners, will need to offer services to help companies review requirements and design SOA infrastructures, including help with application integration. As a new entrant to this market, BT has limited experience in these areas.

Once the service is proven, BT will have an attractive offer for European-based companies. But multienterprise links will need mature integration skills and possibly a local sales channel.

Recommendations

- **All prospects:** Consider BT Integrate if you already use BT's global managed network services or are prepared to be an early adopter, and want to outsource your SOA infrastructure and its operations. But recognize the service is unproven and view initial projects as proof of concept. Other businesses, especially risk-averse ones, should not immediately consider BT Integrate, but should monitor how BT delivers the service and how it matures.
- **IT services vendors and integration service providers (especially European):** Consider reviewing your offers in the short term, depending on the success of BT Integrate.

Analytical Sources: Paolo Malinverno, Massimo Pezzini and Benoit Lheureux, Gartner Research

Recommended Reading and Related Research

- "The Status of B2B in Europe, 2H05" — European vendors of business-to-business (B2B) gateway software and integration service providers, and their users, are changing as European companies become more open to international trade. **By Paolo Malinverno**
- "Magic Quadrant for Integration Service Providers, 1Q06" — Changing user requirements and innovation have forced vendors to evolve into integration service providers, with a wider range of hosted integration and application features. **By Benoit Lheureux and Paolo Malinverno**

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