

## Oracle OpenWorld's Middleware Message Is 'Watch This Space'

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Busy with executing on its ambitious road map for integrating the BEA Systems technology portfolio into the Fusion Middleware stack, Oracle offered little substantive news about middleware at Oracle OpenWorld 2008.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 22-25 September 2008, at the annual Oracle OpenWorld conference, the company highlighted its themed middleware suites that will combine Oracle middleware products with the technologies it acquired from BEA Systems.

### Analysis

Since July 2008, Oracle's middleware news has been dominated by its plans to integrate BEA technologies. The announcements at Oracle OpenWorld in the middleware space are mostly incremental. A common thread uniting all of the middleware discussions at this event was Oracle's desire to simplify its now-enlarged product portfolio, to mask some of the redundancy temporarily created by the BEA acquisition and to ease customers' product selection process. It seeks to do this by releasing revised or new themed suites of technologies for service-oriented architecture (SOA Suite), event-driven architecture (EDA Suite), business process management (BPM Suite), portals (WebCenter Suite) and XTP (WebLogic Suite and WebLogic Application Grid). Gartner notes that the suites are "assemblies of convenience," and that not all of products in the new suites are strategic to Oracle. (For example, the new WebCenter Suite now includes Oracle WebLogic Portal, which Oracle has said is supported, but no longer a strategic product.)

The first integrated release will be Oracle Fusion Middleware (OFM) 11g. That release (which Gartner expects in the next six to 12 months) will begin to implement the announced road map, and platform modernizations, such as support of OSGi Alliance technology and Service Component Architecture, expanded hot-pluggability, and the extensive use of Oracle Coherence XTP-distributed cache.

Also at the event, Oracle announced that it would partner with Amazon to make some of its middleware products available preinstalled over the Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) service. This offering is a new way of deploying Oracle middleware technology, but it does not affect the middleware itself in any way.

The incremental nature of the announcements made at this event is a manifestation of Oracle's transition from an aggressive challenger in the middleware space to a more-cautious market leader. The large installed base of mainstream and high-end business deployments presses Oracle for a slow evolution that will protect its customers' investments. In the longer term, Oracle must find a way to preserve its culture of innovation while adopting the new culture of the reliable, conservative mainstream platform vendor. In the short term, the Oracle middleware organization is unlikely to offer any surprising innovations.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Continue to refer to Gartner analysis of Oracle's road map to determine the future outlook of the combined Oracle portfolio products.
- Defer judgment of the integrated portfolio until OFM 11g. The new and updated Oracle suites offered now are a convenient way to buy and sell Oracle middleware while it is in post-acquisition transition, but they are not integrated long-term technology offerings.

*Additional research contribution and review: Fabrizio Biscotti, Kimihiko Iijima*

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- "Oracle's Post-BEA Middleware Road Map: Product Recommendations for Users" — Oracle's middleware road map poses challenges to Oracle and BEA middleware users and prospects. **By Massimo Pezzini and others**
- "The World After BEA Systems" — In the aftermath of the acquisition of BEA by Oracle, the balance of power in the application infrastructure and middleware markets has shifted, offering opportunities and challenges for industry leaders, innovators and users. **By Yefim Natis and Massimo Pezzini**

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