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Vendors vie to reign in services

MARKET OVERVIEW by Keith Rodgers

FOR AN immature market in which there are less than 80 customers worldwide in production with sizeable projects, the SOA management space certainly generates a lot of heat. Thanks in part to the growing involvement of systems management giants such as CA, HP and IBM, combined with infrastructure suppliers such as BEA and Microsoft, the sector is generating far more interest than its size merits – and for good reason. As organizations unleash more and more web services internally, so they run into a need for systems to measure, manage, secure and maintain them.

The big issue facing users today is working out which of the different approaches to SOA management will best meet their needs – in both the short-term and long-term. One of the ironies of the SOA management sector is that while service-oriented architectures are designed to provide nimble, agile development and operational environments, laying the foundations for the fundamental management framework involves taking decisions that will stick with organizations for years to come. In some cases, that's part of the marketing message – for example, HP may only be putting its first wave of management products on general availability in 2005, but if you buy into its Adaptive Enterprise vision today, you've probably got a roadmap there that will see you through retirement. So getting the choice right – or wrong – could have big repercussions.

Vendors are still fleshing out their product sets, and 2005 will be a year where many promises are kept or broken.

From the summer of 2003, the sector began to divide broadly into two camps: 'best-of-breed' specialists who focus exclusively on the web services or SOA environment, such as Actional and Amberpoint; and the systems management giants like HP, CA and IBM, who see SOA management as a component of a broader IT and business management picture.

❝**Implementing an SOA is not hard … [it's] facing up to the realization that once you have a service out there, people are going to start using it**❞
— Sam Higgins, Queensland Transport, *page 4*

❝**[The] wrong way of achieving these capabilities is [to] hand-code all of this into each individual service, and you negate everything you're trying to achieve**❞
— Kevin Poulter, British American Tobacco, *page 5*

❝**When you hit critical mass [in services], your organization is really going to change**❞
— Mike Reagin, Providence Health System, *page 8*