

# SAP's RFID Focus for 2007: Object Event Repository Software

The company plans to bring the database software to market this month and help its partners develop related applications.

By Rhea Wessel

May 15, 2007—A top executive in [SAP's](#) RFID business says the software company has received a number of orders for its Object Event Repository (OER) database software, designed to aggregate RFID, sensor and other identification data. SAP expects to bring the OER to market at the end of the month, and to help its partners develop applications leveraging the software.

SAP, an enterprise software maker, announced the OER product in March (see [SAP Introduces Software for Product Tracking](#)), along with a related business application called Product Tracking and Authentication (PTA). Designed to allow companies to track and authenticate the serialized products they manufacture and distribute, such as RFID-tagged drugs, the PTA application uses data housed in the OER.

One of the first customers for PTA will be [Novartis](#). The pharmaceutical company will use the software to track drugs from production to the pharmacy, as well as to keep records of each drug's handling and custody as it moves throughout the supply chain. According to Michael Lipton, SAP's director of RFID solution management, Novartis is implementing the project to comply with a California mandate to track such information electronically by January 2009.

Tobias Goetz, the manager in charge of business development for SAP's RFID products in Europe, says: "We have quite a filled pipeline from other industries as well [besides the pharmaceutical industry]." SAP has orders from companies in the automotive and high-end consumer goods sectors. However, he declines to reveal any customer names at this time. Goetz's comments were made during SAP's Sapphire conference, held this week in Vienna.

SAP's strategic RFID focus for the year will be to roll out the OER software and increase the number of users. As this number increases, feedback from customers will be incorporated to improve the software, in what SAP calls the "ramp-up" phase of the product launch. At the same time, says Krish Mantripragada, SAP's head of RFID and auto-ID solutions, SAP will support partners in the development of further business applications that can be run on the OER software using data collected via RFID.

## **Roadmap**

SAP's basic RFID product, the Auto-ID Infrastructure (AII), allows users to integrate all automated communication and sensing devices, such as RFID interrogators and label printer-encoders or bar-code readers. AII has been on the market for several years, and in 2005, customers numbered about 135 in 15 countries. That number, according to Mantripragada, has since risen to 250 in 16 countries.

The spread across industries is changing for SAP's customer base, Mantripragada says, showing that RFID is

being adopted more readily outside of the "traditional" RFID early-adopter sectors. In 2004, some 90 percent of SAP's RFID customers were in the consumer-goods industry. That number, he notes, is now down to 28 percent.

Since no single industry dominates SAP's customer base, the company has designed its product roadmap to be adaptable to many different customer scenarios. According to Mantripragada, the company's emphasis is on the capabilities and the platform, and SAP will continue to develop both the OER and the auto-ID infrastructure.

"We'll continue to invest in...the OER and AII," Mantripragada says, "to support the development of more localized applications, as well as enterprise applications. We can't build all the industry applications. Therefore, we are focusing on the OER."

SAP partners are currently developing applications able to run on the OER. Those partners include Infosys, which has a promotion execution and new product introduction solution called Pique, which has developed a warehouse management application; True Demand, a supply chain company; and Cognizant, a technology solutions provider.

RELATED\_ARTICLES Meanwhile, SAP is continuing its own development efforts. "On the platform front, we will continue to service-enable applications, making it a lot easier for our partners to take our capabilities, combine them with their own and create interesting applications," Mantripragada states, adding that on the solutions side, SAP will develop more supply chain applications for analyzing data collected via RFID.

"The general theme," Mantripragada says, "is that we have a lot of SAP applications that stand to benefit from serialized and RFID data. We will enable this as we see the market dynamics pick up."

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