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**by Dan Woods
and Jeff Word**



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Dan Woods has a background in technology and journalism and now runs the Evolved Media Network, a firm focused on technology communications. He was CTO of TheStreet.com, and CapitalThinking, led development at Time Inc. Pathfinder, and created applications for NandO.net, one of the first newspaper Web sites. Dan has an M.S. from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and a B.A. in Computer Science from the University of Michigan. He covered banking for three years at The Record of Hackensack, was database editor for three years at the Raleigh News & Observer, and has written six books on technology topics, in addition to numerous white papers and magazine articles. He thanks his wife, Daniele Gerard, and his children, Fiona and Eamon, for their indulgence and support during this project.

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Dedications

Dan Woods would like to dedicate this book to his children, Fiona and Eamon, whose mighty minds and love of learning are a constant inspiration.

Jeff Word would like to dedicate this book to Chelsi and Benton for putting up with his crazy schedule and odd behavior during the writing of this book.

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Introduction

We, the authors, would like to think that you're reading this book right now because you've got an insatiable thirst for knowledge about the new SAP integration and application platform, SAP® NetWeaver™. However, we're being realistic. It's more likely that you're sitting there scratching your head about what the heck SAP NetWeaver is and what it can do for you. You probably picked this book up because you want a little help just getting your hands around this puppy.

We explain SAP NetWeaver from the big-picture perspective in this book and break down all the different pieces of SAP NetWeaver into bite-sized chunks. Then we give you a few real-life examples of how SAP NetWeaver works so you can make the all-important leap from theory to reality.

About This Book

SAP NetWeaver is kind of a tough nut to crack. It's both an application platform and an integration platform. Basically, this means that SAP NetWeaver fits on top of and around your existing business applications. You can use SAP NetWeaver technologies to integrate people, information, and processes — inside and outside of your company.

As you go through this book, we take you on a journey through the business software environment in which SAP NetWeaver exists, show you the building blocks of SAP NetWeaver, and give you a glimpse of SAP NetWeaver in action.

Foolish Assumptions

We've made a few assumptions about you, the reader. We figure that you probably work in a company, either big or small. We also assume that you're either in the IT department of the company or one of the IT workers gave you this book so that you'd quit asking so many questions about this stuff.

We also assume that the company you work for either already has some SAP software or is making a decision to buy some right now. Whether you've got a huge SAP installation already or you're evaluating whether to buy a bunch of business applications, you'll need to have an understanding of SAP NetWeaver and exactly what impact it can have on your business.

We don't assume that you have any previous experience with SAP NetWeaver or its components. We also don't assume that you're a techie. On the contrary, we explain things so that a general business person can easily grasp the concepts without all the technical mumbo jumbo that usually accompanies enterprise software explanations.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is designed to help you understand the big picture of SAP NetWeaver, the IT environment in which it operates, general details about the SAP NetWeaver components, and what it looks like in action.

The book is organized to walk you through logical parts and make it easy for you to skip around to topics that interest you without getting irretrievably lost.

Part I: Enterprise Software Basics

Part I explains the environment that SAP NetWeaver operates in. Because SAP NetWeaver sits on top of enterprise applications, we include an overview of the general IT and enterprise software landscape and explain some of the more common arenas that SAP NetWeaver plays in.

Chapter 3 gives you a great high-level overview of the entire SAP NetWeaver platform and is probably the most important chapter of the book. So don't skip it!

Part I also goes into a bit of history about some of the building blocks of SAP NetWeaver and some of the future architecture implications of SAP NetWeaver.

Part II: The Cast of Components

Part II is like a game of blocks, with each chapter covering one SAP NetWeaver building block. We describe each component as a whole and then break them into their individual features. Then we put each component in context with its role in the bigger SAP NetWeaver platform.

We wrote these chapters to be read independently, so feel free to jump around to the ones that interest you most. You can always go back to the other chapters later.

Part III: A Nifty Development Toolkit

Geek alert! Unless you're a super techie or just really feel like you need a migraine headache, don't spend too much time with this part. It's *really* techie and focuses on all the development tools that are part of SAP NetWeaver. We talk about JAVA, ABAP, .NET, and a whole slew of other techie topics that only the propeller heads — programmers, developers, and IT managers — are really interested in.

Part IV: SAP NetWeaver in Action

Telling you what SAP NetWeaver can do and how it does it is the focus of Parts I through III. Part IV is where we begin to make the connection between features and benefits. Here you find a collection of real-life scenarios where SAP NetWeaver adds lots of value to a company. We take you through the explanation of a business scenario and the challenges involved, and then explain how SAP NetWeaver provides solutions. The titles of the chapters are pretty self-explanatory, so jump around to the ones that sound useful to see how SAP NetWeaver works out there in the real world.

Part V: Rolling Out SAP NetWeaver

Part V is where the rubber meets the road. Assuming that you're ready to jump into SAP NetWeaver with both feet, you really need to read this section before you start. It explains the people, information, and tools that you need to get started and gives you a few choice pieces of advice about how to approach your SAP NetWeaver project.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

We think that David Letterman is really cool, so we offer a top-ten list about SAP NetWeaver that you can refer to. (Actually, this is a feature of the *For Dummies* books that we know you've come to love, so we didn't want to disappoint you.) We provide tips for success. For you checklist lovers, this should be enough to start you out on the right path.

Appendix: About the CD

This book is accompanied by a handy CD-ROM filled with additional detailed information about SAP NetWeaver and some demos and customer success stories. It's really easy to use. Pop it in to get a very pretty picture of SAP NetWeaver and all that it does. This appendix walks you through all of this.

What You're Not to Read

First, don't even try to read this whole book in one sitting. We wrote it to be a ready reference that you can browse through and navigate easily to find topics of interest.

That said, we structured the book to cover some basic concepts that you need to understand about the business software and IT world where SAP NetWeaver lives. Then