

Innovating at the Edge: Demo Jam at SAP TechEd '07 Las Vegas

by [Perry Manross](#)



In his keynote in run-up to SAP TechEd '07, Web 2.0 alpha geek Tim O'Reilly explained what it is his publishing company O'Reilly Media does: "We find interesting technologies and people innovating from the edge and amplify their effectiveness by spreading the information needed for others to follow them." In true O'Reilly fashion, this year's Demo Jam, held on October 2 in Las Vegas, showcased SAP customers, partners, and employees who are tinkering on the edge with SAP technology.

Demo Jam keeps presenters on their toes. With just six minutes to work with, and a strict PowerPoint prohibition, they are **forced to get to the point**. In addition to the stringent time pressure, demo jammers who made the mistake of waxing verbose about the business benefits of their little innovation can reckon with Corona-induced taunts from the **thousand plus developers on hand**. The winners were chosen based on the decibel level from the crowd's claps and cheers.

Ironically, the Demo Jam trophy went to a tool for PowerPoint presentations. **Brian Yarnell** of Interactive Edge, with the support of SAP employee **Thomas Ellenberg**, showed how presentations can be linked directly to SAP data, allowing sales teams, for example, to quickly draft presentations customized for their audience - without having to enter the data manually. The solution from Interactive Edge is called XP3, a tool embedded in Microsoft PowerPoint that connects directly to SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence (SAP NetWeaver BI) to quickly create graphs and analytics based on back-end data. Moderator **Jeff Word** joked, "So that will drastically reduce the number of calls we get from the field team, right?"

The two runners-up both demoed tools Web 2.0 tools. SAP employee **Regina Sheynblat** showed the attendees how they can **create enterprise widgets in minutes**. These widgets extract data from back-end applications while maintaining security and compliance rules - using Eclipse IDE and SAP's Widget Development Toolkit plug-in. **David Lavenda** and **Yuval Tarsi** of Worklight demoed a tool that brings enterprise data to the information worker by using RSS and bookmarks.

BP employee **Dan Smith** showcased a composite application that combines SAP NetWeaver Portal and SAP NetWeaver Exchange Infrastructure (SAP NetWeaver XI) to translate data from BP's more than 50 non-SAP systems, using SAP's Unified Key Mapping Service. SAP employees **Gunther Stuehec** and **Mark Crawford** presented a heavier demo of a CCTS modeler known as Warp 10, which significantly reduces the amount of development and integration time required to map data models.

Harry Bruce of SAP customer Procter & Gamble showed how a tool known as LiveCompare from Intellicorp can be used to improve the health of an SAP system. LiveCompare is a tool Procter & Gamble uses in its payroll department to check dependencies between objects before transport, so that nothing is left behind.

Preceding the contending demos, last year's winners **Dan McWeeney** and **Ed Herrmann** of Colgate-Palmolive showed what they've been able to add to their SAPlink open source project, which makes it easier to share ABAP developments between programmers by simplifying the distribution of custom objects. Since last year, **SAPlink has been downloaded nearly 3,000 times** and now supports over 25 plug-ins for different development objects. To top their demo off, McWeeney and Herrman showed off their Majority Desk, a "Wi-like" presentation of enterprise widgets that allows the user to move, stack, expand, flip, and organize multiple widgets in a virtual-reality environment.

"If the users of your applications aren't surprising you by the way they use them, then you're doing something wrong," O'Reilly said the day before. From the looks of the SAP NetWeaver tinkering and other projects the six contestants presented, **SAP is doing things right thing**, encouraging sound innovation through its open platform.

[Feedback for this article](#)