

TECH CHOICES



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Sun Leads In Provisioning, Offering Both High Functionality And Ease Of Use

The Forrester Wave™ Vendor Summary, Q1 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By a large margin, Sun Java System Identity Manager came in as the most function-rich solution in Forrester's evaluations. The product led all of its competitors in several categories: connector functionality, policy management, auditing, and architecture. Identity Manager is also the market share leader with no signs yet of a slowdown. Moreover, the vendor has an excellent sales channel by virtue of its strong ties to the leading systems integrators.

SUN IS BEST SUITED FOR ORGANIZATIONS NEEDING FEATURE-RICH SOLUTIONS QUICKLY

In the span of two years, Sun has taken a startup provisioning vendor and turned it into an identity management powerhouse. When Sun acquired Waveset in late 2003, the product had 50 customers; Sun is today the undisputed provisioning market leader with more than 500 customers.

Sun Java System Identity Manager does everything a user would want a provisioning product to do. It has a broad range of functional connectors, a flexible policy engine, easy-to-use workflow, and compliance-oriented auditing. In addition, identity management has the fullest attention and support of Sun executives. The company has elevated identity management to its own business unit, altered its sales structure, and continually fostered partnerships with leading systems integrators.

Forrester evaluated Sun's current offering and strategy for user account provisioning against approximately 125 criteria (see Figure 1). Overall, the product has strong functionality and auditing features but lacks a wide range of third-party technology partners. Sun also has not demonstrated a broad vision for the product beyond identity management. The product is an especially good fit for buyers that:

- **Seek the best all-around functionality and low deployment overhead.** Sun has managed to develop a highly functional and flexible solution that is also relatively easy to implement. Other vendors, on the other hand, have struggled with balancing these factors.
- **Want choice when it comes to who can help them implement their solution.** Sun partners with all the leading systems integrators, which have deep expertise with Sun Java System Identity Manager.

To see how Sun stacks up against eight other competitors, see the Forrester Wave™ evaluation of the user account provisioning market.¹

Figure 1 Sun Java System Identity Manager Evaluation Overview

CURRENT OFFERING

Connectors and managed system support	Sun Java System Identity Manager supports a broad range of source and target systems. The extensible connector architecture can be adapted to capture events from any system as an authoritative source. The interface is configurable to be event- or polling-driven. All of the out-of-the-box Identity Manager adapters support the capability to reconcile against their source systems. This allows all of the connectors to be leveraged as a feed from authoritative source. As change notifications come in from multiple source system feeds, they can be processed through a workflow, which can spawn approvals, data transformations, provisioning actions, rollbacks, or deferred tasks. Identity Manager provides a wide range of function beyond basic account changes, including group management. Sun developed an architecture that focuses on agentless connectors. Some systems still require the use of a remote agent (e.g., AD and Lotus Notes). Where agents are required, Sun provides full remote management capabilities.
Data tools	Identity Manager supports autodiscovery through its reconciliation capability, whereby accounts can be processed through a specific workflow before being linked to the virtual identity. Business logic rules can be used in forms to populate drop-down lists, create default values, and perform reusable data validation. All data, entered manually or coming from data feeds, can be passed through smart forms for validation and transformation. Transformation rules can be defined using graphical tools. The reconciliation process can detect orphan accounts and automatically trigger a workflow.
Self-service and delegated administration	Identity Manager provides configurable workflow and screens for user self-enrollment, self-service requests and checking of request status, deregistration, and profile changes. The Identity Manager user interface is driven by highly customizable smart forms, with a graphical interface for configuring the product. The product supports infinite levels of delegated administration, fine-grained delegation, controlled delegation, and temporary delegation.
Password management	Identity Manager supports Web-based self-service password reset; interactive voice response (IVR) is available via easy custom integration. Does it support a flexible challenge/response mechanism? Identity Manager provides configurable challenge/response logic. It integrates with the leading help desk vendors, like Remedy and Peregrine. Password polices can be defined at many levels of granularity (role, org, user) and include checking length, composition, reuse, dictionary, etc. Password synchronization can be driven by rules that administrators or end users create; it supports bidirectional sync with Windows and LDAP. Identity Manager can proactively expire passwords with tasks that can be triggered based on expiration times.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 1 Sun Java System Identity Manager Evaluation Overview (Cont.)

CURRENT OFFERING

Policy management	<p>Identity Manager views groups and roles as distinct constructs, each supporting dynamic and nested assignment. It supports fine-grained entitlements and exclusionary roles that provides separation-of-duty support out of the box. Any attribute changes associated with rights violations detected on native systems can trigger a provisioning action, which may include notification and the rollback of privileges. Identity Manager provides the ability to clone privileges (“make this user look like that user”). There is built-in support for both sunrise and sunset dates in workflow, and a renewal workflow process with optional approval can be configured.</p>
Workflow	<p>The BPE workflow designer has a graphical interface, but it is not Web-based. Any form, workflow, or rule definition is stored in Identity Manager in XML format for reuse. Dynamic workflow is supported because workflow actions, which define how an activity is accomplished, use rules to enable dynamic processing of reusable business logic. Identity Manager workflow can make dynamic routing decisions. It supports serial and parallel approvals and time-based escalation and allows for approval forms to separate acknowledgement from completion (i.e., multistage approval) and workflow approvals incorporating digital signatures. It allows for dynamically or permanently delegating a specific approval task to another user. It also allows tasks to be scheduled for one-time execution and recurring execution. Workflow resilience is delivered through exception handling. Identity Manager includes support for Remedy workflow integration; others are supported through customization. The product also supports the ability to integrate with message queue environments (e.g., TIBCO, MQSeries) through JMS and use these messages to drive workflow. Sun provides a library of default workflow process templates built from best practices.</p>
Auditing and reporting	<p>The audit log captures and records all policy changes, user administration events, workflow design changes, and workflow interactions. It can report orphaned or inactive accounts. Reports are available on a scheduled basis and on demand, over the Web or by email. Identity Manager supports digital time stamps and digital signatures for audit logs.</p>

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 1 Sun Java System Identity Manager Evaluation Overview (Cont.)

CURRENT OFFERING

Architecture	Identity Manager is a J2EE application that Sun certifies against a range of application servers, OS platforms, and databases. Identity Manager allows for high availability and large throughput with different levels of clustering redundancy, workflow-based load balancing, and distribution of functionality across multiple servers. Java and J2EE are the underpinnings of the application architecture, and there is broad support for open standards in the architecture. Identity Manager supports the major XML identity integration standards, including SOAP, SPML, SAML, XACML, and DSML. Identity Manager supports several types of strong authentication methods out of the box as well SSO via native Windows authentication. The largest deployment by number of unique connectors is 35 unique connectors. The largest deployment by number of managed users is 600,000 users and by number of managed accounts is approximately 5 million managed accounts.
Enterprise deployability	If you need to deploy provisioning in a short period of time but still require many advanced features like roles-based automation, integrated reporting, and password management across a range of systems, Sun comes out on top. It is consistently top-ranked in ease of deployment, and it's the standard against which others are measured. The product has a wide range of out-of-the-box system support, and those connectors are highly flexible. The product has good support for development-to-production migrations and inline upgrades. Sun also has plenty of proven, large-scale deployments with satisfied customers.

STRATEGY

Product vision	Sun will continue to improve on Identity Manager's functionality and ease of use. Sun has also been developing a vision for Identity Manager and its identity management line, which establishes ties throughout Sun's portfolio. Sun plans to develop verticalized identity solutions and branch out into RFID and the identity of physical elements. Sun has proven to be a top-tier player in its ability to execute in the provisioning and identity management market, and Forrester expects it to continue holding that position during the next few years.
Corporate contribution and investment	Sun is extremely committed to its provisioning and identity management business, and Sun has recognized the importance of identity management as a key component of its overall corporate strategy. In the past two years, identity management has become the fastest-growing software area within Sun, and Identity Manager is the fastest-growing product within its identity management business. Within that period, Sun has also separated identity management into its own P&L and increased its investment in marketing, headcount, and channel build-out.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 1 Sun Java System Identity Manager Evaluation Overview (Cont.)

STRATEGY

Breadth of identity management solutions	Sun has been building integration of Identity Manager with its products both across and beyond its identity management portfolio. In addition, it has established some integration with products from other vendors, both in identity management and elsewhere.
Pricing	Sun’s pricing and pricing model is on par with those of most competitors.
Sales and partner strategy	Sun has developed a power set of channel partners and SIs around the globe for delivering its provisioning and identity management solutions. More than any other vendor, Sun has cultivated the SI relationship; SIs are key partners for reaching customers, delivering successful implementations, and providing feedback for future product development. It has established technology partnerships with large software vendors and key identity management and security vendors to support its offerings.

MARKET PRESENCE

Installed base	Sun is a leading force in the provisioning market. It has the largest number of deployed customers, most of whom are referenceable, and it has a strong focus on serving large enterprises.
Revenue	Sun is a large company for whom provisioning and identity management generates meaningful, and significantly increasing, revenue.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

The Forrester Wave™
Smart data for smart decisions

Go online to download additional in-depth data and scores for this vendor and other vendors included in this Forrester Wave evaluation.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Online Resource

The underlying spreadsheet for Figure 1 is available online. The spreadsheet includes more detailed data and scores for this vendor.

This detailed data and scores for this vendor are also available online through an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings.

The Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria to be evaluated in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we then narrow our final list. We choose these

vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don't fit the scope of our evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in the Forrester Wave document — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. These default weightings are intended only as a starting point, and readers are encouraged to adapt the weightings to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Forrester evaluated leading user account provisioning vendors across 125 criteria and found that Sun Microsystems is a market leader for a reason — its product delivers superior provisioning functionality with the highest ease of use. BMC Software offers the most attractive vision of provisioning that aligns closely with its overall corporate strategy. IBM and CA, followed by Novell, also appear in the Leaders category. Thor Technologies' Xellerate Identity Manager is one to watch: It is highly functional, and its recent acquisition by Oracle will allow Thor to scale to match its competition. Included in this report is an interactive vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings. See the January 27, 2006, Tech Choices "[The Forrester Wave™: User Account Provisioning, Q1 2006](#)."