What Would **You** Like to Develop Today?

The Programs, Tools, and Solutions Developers Need to Innovate for the Future

by Anne Hardy and David Brutman, SAP

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It's a great time to be a software developer. Software affects nearly every aspect of our lives, putting developers in a highly influential position. Forrester Research notes that organizations are seeking more engineering "rock stars" and are investing in the hiring and on-boarding of engineers.[1] Enterprises are increasing their software development costs, acknowledging the need for innovation through new application development. Forrester also points out that mobile development has grown exponentially, with more than three-quarters of enterprises indicating they have or plan to have in-house mobile developers by 2012.

In addition, independent developers are more empowered than in years past. With the rise of mobile app stores, developers can now advance their own creative ideas, architect and develop applications, and perform their own marketing, sales, and support as well. This transformation from performing programming to practically becoming mini business owners is occurring across the development community. SAP sees harnessing the momentum of this entrepreneurial movement as a great opportunity to empower developers even more. That's why SAP is launching initiatives that will help developers achieve their technological and business objectives.

Technology at a Tipping Point

SAP is at a unique point in its technology roadmap, giving developers a wealth of new options for their enterprise application environments with innovative technology in areas such as:

- **In-memory.** SAP HANA provides a platform to analyze massive quantities of real-time data and produce immediate results from analyses and transactions.

- **Mobility.** Sybase Unwired Platform offers an enterprise mobile platform for SAP and non-SAP systems, supporting hybrid device landscapes and a wide range of mobile scenarios. In addition, SAP NetWeaver Gateway extends Sybase Unwired Platform's capabilities for SAP Business Suite integration.

- **Cloud.** SAP Business ByDesign and SAP NetWeaver provide a cloud platform for core business applications and extensions.

These technologies not only position SAP at the forefront of the enterprise platform space, but also give developers an unprecedented opportunity to develop innovative applications based on cutting-edge technologies. Engineers with experience developing business applications using existing SAP technologies, such as the ABAP technology platform, are in a great position to develop next-generation applications. To accelerate this innovation, SAP has initiated new programs to inspire developers, enable new technology adoption, and facilitate an easy, targeted, and open development experience. The first of these programs is the SAP Developer Center.[2]

Explore New Technologies with the SAP Developer Center

SAP conducted a series of interviews with developers and found their most important

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[1] Forrester Research, "The State of Application Development in Enterprises and SMBs for Application Development and Delivery Professionals" by Jeffrey S. Hammond (April 2011).

[2] This resource will be available in its beta form in early 2012.

requirements included easy access to SAP tools, developer-focused documentation, and the ability to test, build, and run the technology. SAP provides a breadth of information through the SAP Community Network, which has evolved to become a vibrant and knowledgeable community for SAP developers.

Within the SAP Community Network, the SAP Developer Center introduces a central place for developers to try out some of SAP's newest technologies. For instance, it is designed to give direct, hands-on access to SAP's in-memory, mobile, and cloud technologies (on a trial basis). The SAP Developer Center focuses on delivering targeted information and assets for application development and is designed to be:

- **Hands-on.** It enables access to virtual sandbox development environments.

- **Simple.** It was created with a clean design and a clear navigation path to resources (see **Figure 1**).

- **Guided.** It provides users with step-by-step exercises, tutorials, and educational materials.

- **Collaborative.** It is designed to engage users through forums and discussion groups, giving them the chance to showcase their own applications.

- **Engaging.** It empowers users with more information and access to expert discussions to foster a community dedicated to developers.

The concept for the SAP Developer Center was created in close collaboration with the developer community who embraced the idea at the get-go. The site has already yielded a lot of positive feedback from the developers who have been given a sneak peek. For example, SAP mentor and tech blogger DJ Adams says the site will be a "go-to resource center for building your skills in the new era of SAP's technology platform."

Learn by Playing in the Sandbox
Through the SAP Developer Center, developers are granted access to a sandbox landscape. After completing a registration form, a development instance is created and each developer receives a link to an individual virtual development environment, hosted by a cloud provider, which can remotely connect to SAP systems. Through this sandbox, developers get access to tools, resources, and software that they can test, without having
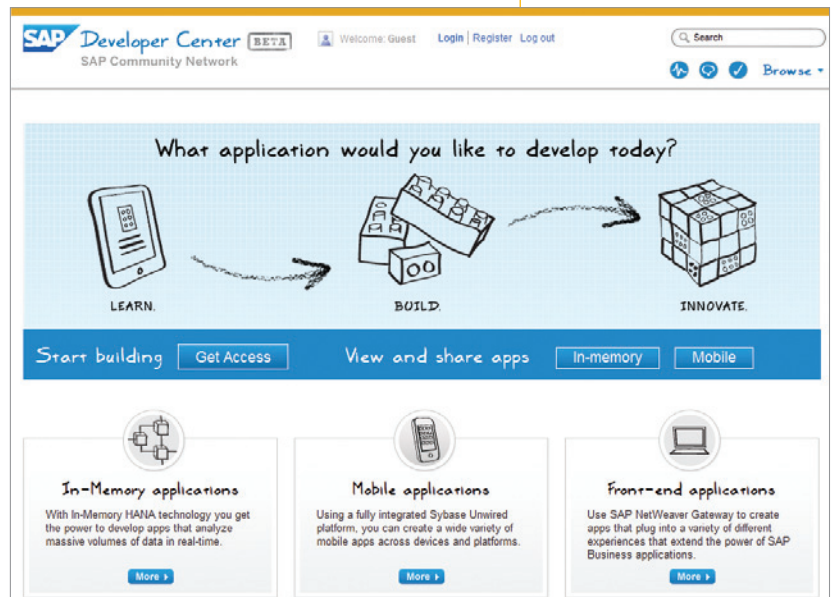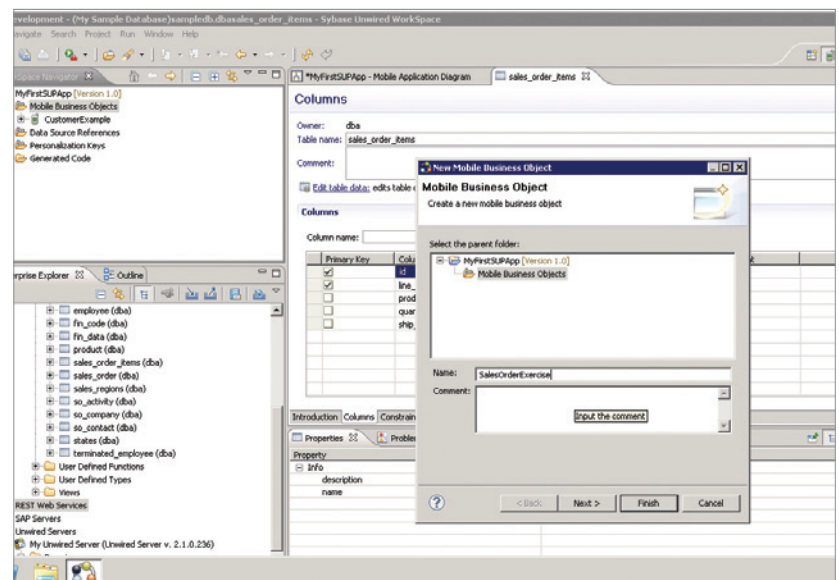

FIGURE 1 ▲ An SAP Developer Center landing page shows the clarity of the user interface

FIGURE 2 ▲ The individual virtual development environment remotely connects to an SAP HANA sandbox system

to install any tools or environments on their machines. This includes a complete environment of systems that is closely aligned to the customer's real-life landscape. For example, a developer who would like to test SAP's mobile platform will be provided with pre-installed Sybase Unwired Platform server access, the Sybase Unwired Platform Software Developer Kit, and an SAP ERP system with SAP NetWeaver Gateway connectivity as part of the virtual landscape.

So far, the response to this sandbox tool has been great. Following SAP TechEd Bangalore in October 2011, we opened an SAP HANA sandbox landscape (see **Figure 2**) to a group of about 500

Spotlight on SAP InnoJam

SAP InnoJam is a competition for developers and other enthusiasts who are interested in collaboratively creating cutting-edge applications using SAP's newest technologies. The goal is to collaboratively explore these new technologies while creating prototypes that address real-life business scenarios. Over the course of 30 hours, participants are challenged to create, develop, and demo their most creative ideas. SAP product experts provide basic initial training and on-site support.

The first InnoJam event (called Innovation Weekend at the time) was at SAP TechEd Berlin 2010. Based on the event's success, a series of additional events were initiated to scale for a larger audience across multiple locations and to include a wider breadth of technologies and business topics.

"Pooling talents and harmonizing skills are some of the more exciting elements of the InnoJam," says Marilyn Pratt, Director of Community Advocacy and an SAP mentor. "Instead of technologies in search of a business case, we often have real (useful and socially responsible) business cases in search of technologies. Folks learn these new technologies in a matter of a few hours and implement solutions just as rapidly."

Phil Loewen from it360°, one of the winning InnoJam teams, says: "I was able to work in a diverse and multilingual environment, getting a grasp of SAP's newest technological innovations. This gave our team the possibility to try new things and also have the fantastic support of SAP employees."

In 2011, SAP ran 14 InnoJam events, both for internal and external audiences, in eight countries. Participants had a chance to discover and explore the newest technologies from SAP, including SAP HANA, Sybase Unwired Platform, SAP NetWeaver Gateway, and SAP Business ByDesign. In some of the events, SAP also makes third-party platforms available. For example, during the InnoJam event at SAP TechEd Las Vegas, participants could explore gamification platforms from Bunchball and Badgeville.

But learning does not stop at the event. InnoJam participants are encouraged to share their code snippets and applications with the entire SAP community through SAP's Code Exchange, for instance. Some participating teams have gone beyond this; the winners of the InnoJam event at SAP TechEd Madrid created a microsite where they presented valuable information related to their carbon emission analysis. For more details, visit **www.carbontnt.com**.

More exciting InnoJam events are planned for 2012. For more information, visit **www.sapinnojam.com**.

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developers. They were able to instantly play in the sandbox with SAP HANA and reach a dedicated data center capable of housing terabytes of data. Pilot users of the sandbox have already expressed great excitement over the reward of the experience. John Appleby of Bluefin Solutions said, "It is the brainchild of Vishal Sikka and my first reaction is: totally awesome."

The SAP Developer Center will be available at **www.sapdevelopercenter.com**.

SAP's Developer Outreach Continues

SAP wants to make its technology more relevant for developers across the spectrum. As people get closer to computing technologies and software, having strong relationships with both internal and external developers will keep SAP current. That's one reason that SAP is also spearheading developer enrichment initiatives, such as SAP InnoJam (see sidebar above) and Code Exchange (**www.sdn.sap.com/irj/sdn/code-exchange**), SAP's code-sharing platform. SAP is also offering

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a variety of cooperation activities with technology partners and academic institutions.

With an array of tools and enablement programs, this is an opportunity for developers to acquire new knowledge and innovate with SAP technologies and platforms to drive tangible business results. The only question now is, "What application should I develop today?" ◼