



## Oracle previews on-demand 'social' CRM module

**Will ship this quarter**

By Chris Kanaracus, Boston | Wednesday, June 11 2008

Oracle is giving the industry another peek at the first in a planned wave of social networking-infused CRM (customer relationship management) applications this week at the Enterprise 2.0 conference in Boston, but did not supply a release date.

Oracle Sales Prospector, which Oracle first previewed back at its OpenWorld show in November 2007, will ship sometime this quarter, according to Mark Woollen, vice president of CRM development at Oracle, which means anywhere from now to August under Oracle's financial calendar.

The software is supposed to help salespeople find the best leads by analyzing the buying history of companies, based on private and public information. Users contribute data from their sales transactions, which over time improves the database and leads to better recommendations, according to Oracle.

Such a concept banks on the contrary-seeming notion that salespeople -- often competitive souls by nature -- will buy into the idea of sharing potentially valuable information with their peers.

Woollen suggested it will be possible for users to create a "mutual back-scratching society," while acknowledging that they probably won't give away their "book of business" wholesale.

The software features a flashier user interface than typically seen in many CRM systems. On the back end, it is based on the company's Fusion Middleware platform and employs Oracle's data mining technology for analysis, according to Woollen.

But it should "not necessarily" be viewed as the first offering in the long-anticipated wave of Fusion Applications, the vendor's [next-generation](#) product line that will gradually replace its current family of software, Woollen said.

That's because Prospector is focused on social networking, as opposed to being a mainline CRM product, he said.

The second version of Sales Prospector will add integrations with transactional CRM systems, including Oracle's Siebel offerings and Salesforce.com, which will enable users who pinpoint a good lead in Prospector to "promote the prospect to an opportunity," Woollen said.

While Oracle is positioning the product as able to complement "virtually any" CRM system, Oracle plans to focus on selling to its own user base, but is also anticipating referrals from one user to another, Woollen said.

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