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Silwood Safyr

The company

Silwood Technology is a privately owned British software company. Founded in 1992, it was originally the first reseller for Logic Works' ERwin data modelling tool in Europe. Silwood Technology then sought to establish a unique position in the enterprise modelling space by exploiting its experience of working with SAP metadata for ERwin. The company decided to focus on delivering a new way to solve the problem of gaining meaningful insight into the underlying data structures in ERP and CRM packages from SAP and Oracle and providing that information to other tools.

Having this information is critical to the timely delivery of data warehouse, data integration and master data projects. In recent times solving this challenge has become even more important due to the success of data governance, data catalogue, and data privacy initiatives.

“If an organization is considering sharing data between SAP instances internally or externally and doesn't use this tool to understand both ends of the interface, they are just burning money with a flamethrower.”
AMD

Silwood released the 1st version of Safyr for SAP in 2002. Support for SAP BW, JD Edwards, Oracle eBusiness Suite, PeopleSoft, and Siebel followed. Subsequently, the product has been extended to support Microsoft and Salesforce applications.

Silwood uses both direct and indirect routes to market. Notable blue-chip reseller and OEM partnerships include Collibra, Idera Inc, IBM (Optim), Infogix, erwin Inc, ASG Technologies, and Adaptive Inc. amongst others. The company is a certified partner of SAP and has technology partnerships and integrations with Informatica, Salesforce, Microsoft, Alation and Solidatus.

What is it?

Safyr is a software product which supports customers who need to exploit metadata in their ERP and CRM systems. It is a metadata discovery, visualisation and curation solution for ERP and CRM applications from SAP, Oracle, Microsoft and Salesforce, as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Performing these tasks manually or trying to use multiple tools to achieve the desired outcomes can be extremely time consuming and expensive. One of Silwood's clients, Hydro Tasmania, explained the typical situation well: *“Having been told by our ERP implementation partner that they couldn't deliver a data model for SAP and even by some folks at SAP that no such thing existed we were on the lookout for anything that would help with our understanding of SAP's data structures. Once we found Silwood, making a case for purchase was pretty straightforward. At Safyr's price point the payback in our case is only a few months when offset against the Google & trial and error approach we were having to employ to get information out of SAP to answer the questions our business colleagues were asking.”*

However, while working with ERP metadata has been a long-term problem for many projects, the growing adoption of data catalogues, to support data discovery, data governance and metadata management has meant that this issue is now becoming acute.

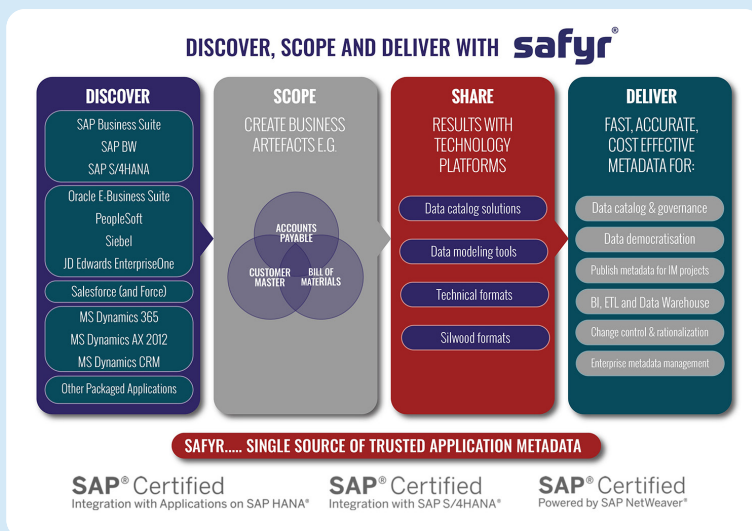


Figure 1 – Safyr Schematic

Reflecting on being able to use Safyr to provision their Collibra data catalog product with metadata from SAP:

“We took what would have been months of work (and possibly a barrier to progress) and completed the activity within hours and nominal resource investment. We’re pleased to have been able to achieve a high degree of efficiency with this collaborative effort.”

ATB

What does it do?

To enlarge upon the problem already stated. The question is how you transform the raw metadata in **Figure 2** into **Figure 3**, where the former shows a (very) small part of an ERP environment and the target in this example is Collibra DGC?

To achieve this, or use the metadata in other projects, you need to overcome three problems. The first is to access the meaningful metadata (usable table and attribute names and descriptions, relationships, and other objects) in the source applications. Often this is in the application data dictionary tables, or it could be in the system catalog. Regardless of the location, Safyr uses an appropriation connection to the source and extracts all the useful metadata, including customizations, which is then stored in a repository.

The second is to pinpoint the metadata you need from the thousands of application tables you have retrieved. Safyr helps you do that, and then create subsets containing just the tables required for your project. For example, in complex applications there are lots of control tables, empty tables and so on, which are not relevant of no interest from a business perspective. Safyr can help you to identify and exclude these or others of no interest from consideration.

Finally, Safyr enables you to make these subsets available for use in other products without the need for rekeying or additional work. These include business glossaries, data catalogues, modelling tools and so on.

Safyr provides both direct integrations with products such as Collibra DGC, Informatica EDC, erwin and SAP PowerDesigner and the ability to export content in a range of industry standard formats such as JSON and XML.

Why should you care?

The biggest trend in IT today is, arguably, about being able to exploit enterprise data. And data catalogues are at the heart of that. They enable you to identify what data you have available to you in the first instance. And then, in conjunction with data governance and similar tools, they allow you to curate and manage your data so that it can be trusted to be accurate and complete. But, and it is a big but, understanding complex ERP/CRM as a part of this process is non-trivial. On the other hand, it absolutely needs to be included in this process. Fortunately, Silwood’s aim has always been to hide the complexity of the underlying environment so that you don’t need detailed technical knowledge of your ERP/CRM deployment in order to reach this understanding.

Safyr is, as far as we know, unique. It has no direct competitors. ERP/CRM application vendors do not provide the sophisticated tools necessary to allow you to explore and subset their metadata. Your alternatives are to use (very expensive) consultants, who in any case may not be able to help (see the Hydro Tasmania quote) or to waste months of your own time fooling around with spreadsheets.

The Bottom Line

We don’t often make statements like the following but if you need to understand your ERP/CRM environment you should license Safyr. No ifs, no buts: it’s the only sensible choice.

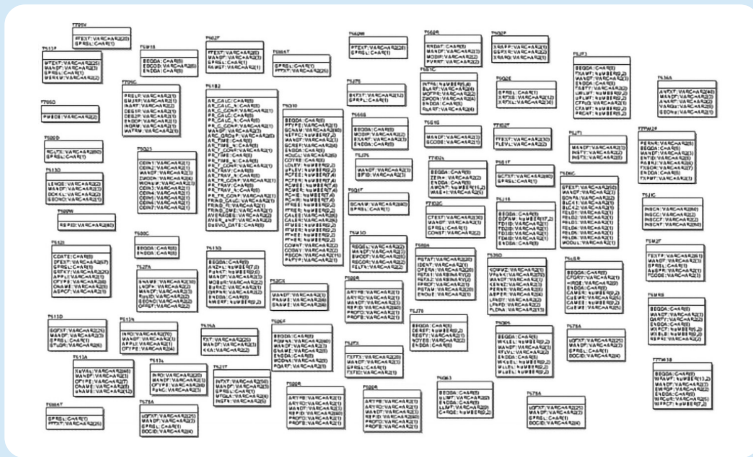


Figure 2 – Typical (very small) subset of ERP tables

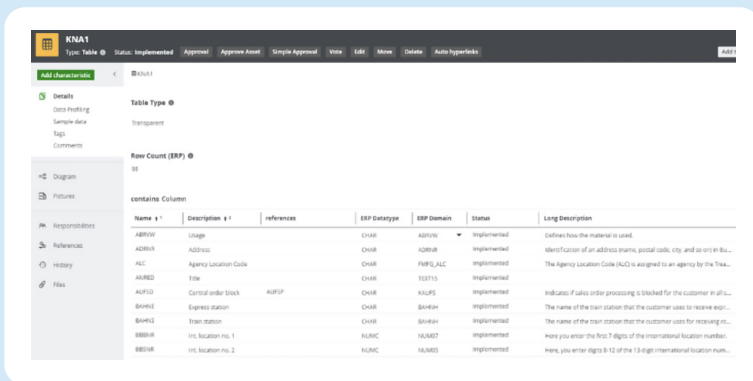


Figure 3 – Safyr parsed metadata for the Collibra Data Governance Catalog

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESEARCH [CLICK HERE](#)