



Open Specifications for Service Availability

SA Forum FAQ

What is the Service Availability Forum mission?

The Service Availability Forum (SA Forum) mission is to foster an ecosystem to enable the use of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) building blocks in the creation of highly available network infrastructure products, systems and services. The SA Forum is accomplishing this by developing and publishing high availability and management software interface specifications as well as promoting and facilitating their adoption by the industry.

Which areas are addressed by the Service Availability Forum specifications?

There are two major areas addressed by the SA Forum specifications: the Hardware Platform Interface (HPI) and the Application Interface Specification (AIS). The HPI specification separates the hardware from management middleware and makes each independent of the other. The AIS standardizes the interface between SA Forum-compliant high availability middleware and service applications.

What impact do Service Availability Forum specifications have on the industry?

The SA Forum specifications enable a viable ecosystem of best of breed software components to be used in carrier-grade systems, thus reducing the need to develop proprietary software solutions to meet the HA requirements of this highly demanding environment.

Who is implementing products based on specifications released by the Service Availability Forum? What products are commercially available currently that conform to the Service Availability Forum specifications?

There are a wide variety of vendors that are implementing SA Forum specifications. These range from hardware platform vendors that implement and provide HPI services, to providers of operating systems, high availability middleware, systems management software, databases, protocol stack providers, etc. Augmentix, Fujitsu Siemens Computers, GoAhead Software, HP, IBM, Intel, MontaVista Software, Motorola, Nortel, Oracle, Open Clovis, Solid Information Technology, Sun Microsystems and UXComm are just a few of the companies implementing the specifications in their products.

Companies can list products utilizing Service Availability Forum™ specifications on the “SA Forum Products” page at www.saforum.org/about/products/. This page describes the benefits that these standards-based products bring to the industry.

“Service Availability Forum Registered” products are listed on the SA Forum Web site at http://www.saforum.org/specification/product_registry_home. The Product Registry is a program that enables Members to post their implementation methodology to the Service Availability™ Forum Product Registry for evaluation and testing. Compliance with all registration requirements enables Members to label their products as “Service Availability™ Forum Registered.”

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The SA Forum Web site also lists member announcements regarding plans to support SA Forum specifications. Company announcements are posted online at http://www.saforum.org/press/member_releases. For specific SA Forum-compliant products and product road maps, please contact the individual member companies.

When will we see significant commercial roll out of products based on Service Availability Forum specifications?

Standard-compliant platform products and components are now on the market. A number of TEMs have already indicated their support for the SA Forum specifications. There are currently a number of HPI implementations on the market today. The SA Forum expects widespread adoption of AIS specifications to be commercially available in 2007.

Who benefits from the specification implementations?

The SA Forum interface specifications are fundamental enablers for implementing carrier-grade base platforms and solutions. Consequently all companies along the entire supply chain of carrier grade products benefit from the implementation and availability of these specifications including technology providers, platform providers, network equipment providers as well as service providers.

What do service providers say about the Service Availability Forum and its specifications?

Service providers require building blocks that enable them to deliver services faster, accelerate innovation, reduce lifecycle costs and provide equipment provider choice. They also require a new level of “future proofness” that protects their investments in NGN. Building blocks integrated from standards-based COTS hardware and software components are critical in satisfying these challenging requirements. The SA Forum specifications are a primary factor in making COTS availability middleware a reality and service providers are now beginning to specify this level of standards.

How does the Service Availability Forum relate to other consortia and standards bodies, e.g., MVA, PICMG, The Linux Foundation, OIF, SCOPE Alliance, CP-TA, OCAF, etc.?

The Service Availability Forum has joined with other standards organizations in the Mountain View Alliance. A key element of the Mountain View Alliance’s efforts is to coordinate marketing activities among its members. The SA Forum also has liaison agreements with some of these industry organizations.

Service Availability Forum members include companies that compete with each other in the market place. Why are they cooperating in the forum?

SA Forum member companies understand the importance of open interface specifications to ensure the overall success of their business. The entire industry is under tremendous pressure to reduce OPEX and CAPEX in the creation and delivery of new NGN networks and services. Creating standard interface specifications does not reduce competition, but rather increases it by increasing customer choice and focusing the competition on unique value-add.



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How will these products interact?

The SA Forum specifications enable a number of interaction capabilities between products. Using the SA Forum AIS interfaces, highly available applications become portable across AIS compliant platforms. Middleware products become portable across HPI compliant hardware platforms. Finally, using the systems management interfaces, systems can be integrated with standard management products.

How is the Service Availability Forum addressing issues such as compliance, product registration, etc.?

The SA Forum intends to work with other industry organizations to address interoperability compliance. The SA Forum Product Registry is a program that enables members to post their implementation methodology online for evaluation and testing. Compliance with all registration requirements enables members to label their products as "Service Availability Forum Registered."

Is a roadmap of Service Availability Forum specifications available?

SA Forum does not have a formal roadmap. Announced February 2007, the SA Forum released an enhanced set of AIS and HPI specifications. The newly released specifications are backwards compatible with existing specifications, and offer various new services and capabilities. In the future, SA Forum plans to address Java extensions, software management and security.

To date, the SA Forum has had an admirable record of producing quality specifications in record time and we expect to maintain this track record as we complete future specifications.

Are the leading Telco and equipment suppliers members of the SA Forum?

The SA Forum counts among its members the leading Telco Equipment Manufacturers (TEMs) that champion a commercial off-the-shelf Carrier Grade Base Platform environment including Ericsson, Fujitsu, Alcatel-Lucent, NEC, Nokia Siemens Networks, Nortel, and NTT. These SA Forum members represent more than 90% of the global NGN TELCO equipment market. A full list of SA Forum members is available at <http://www.saforum.org/about/companies/>.

How can I become a Service Availability Forum member?

Please visit <http://www.saforum.org/join>, or contact SA Forum administration at admin@saforum.org.