Features of OSS

OSS offers you a wide range of system functionality such as problem mes-sage processing, access to the SAP Error Notes database, the latest HotNews regarding your R/3 System, and HelpDesk assistance in answering general questions about your R/3 System (Figure 2-1).
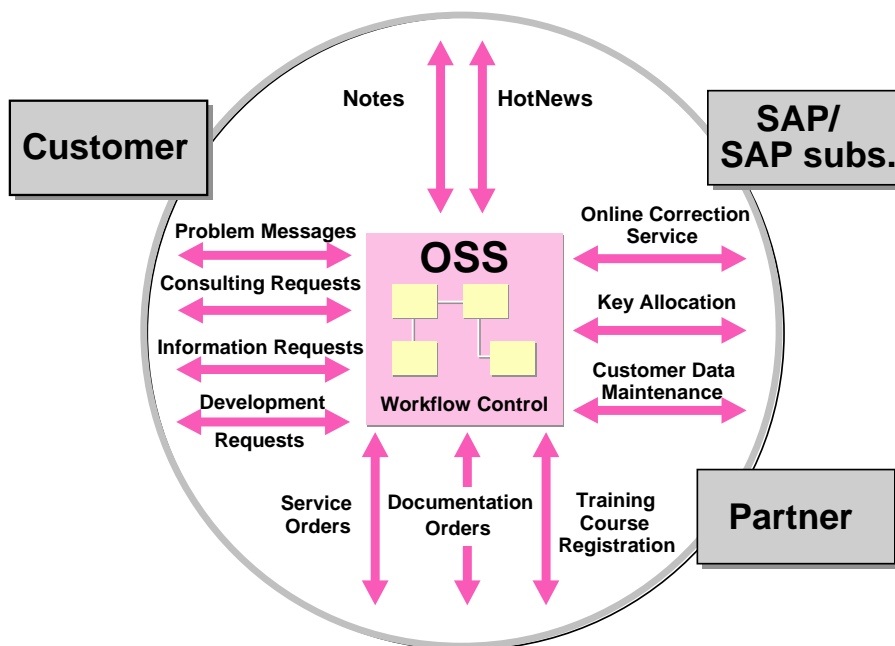

Figure 2-1: Current and Planned OSS Functionality

Within the next year and a half, you will also be able to use OSS to

❑   verify that your customer data at SAP is correct.

❑   register for SAP training courses.

❑   order SAP documentation and guidelines.

❑   influence R/3 product design.

Problem Message Processing

Problems reported via OSS are processed as follows (Figure 2-2):

1. You create a problem message in SAP's OSS.

2. After you save your problem message, OSS automatically indexes your problem message and assigns specific category types to each key word in the problem message.

3. The system automatically searches for potential solutions in the Error Notes database and displays a list of all found notes.

4. If the system's solutions do not help you solve your problem, you can send a message directly to SAP's First Level Customer Service.
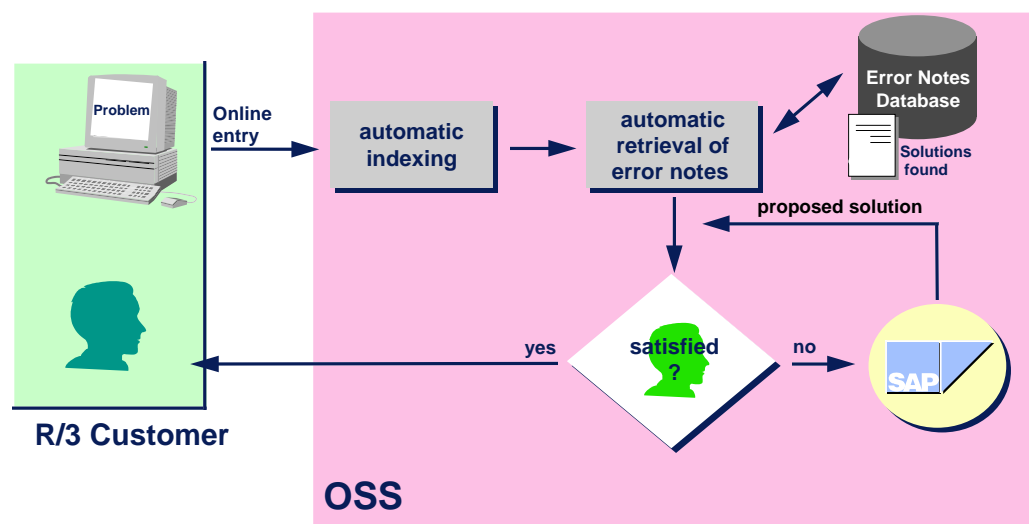

Figure 2-2: The Problem Message Process

Creating a Problem Message
Your user ID, the name of the reporting employee, and customer installation information (for example, type of hardware and database, R/3 release, and system status) is automatically set by the User ID entered when you log on to OSS. You should regularly check this information and make necessary updates.

In each problem message you need to enter (Figure 2-3):

❑ R/3 application (App.)

❑ Problem priority (Prio)

❑ Problem description

❑ Short text (STxt)

After saving your problem message, a pop-up window will appear allowing you to classify your problem message under one of the following four message types (Figure 2-3):

❑   Error message

❑   Application consulting

❑   Technical consulting

❑   HelpDesk query

At the end of 1995, an additional message type will be available for your selection. This message type will allow you to send your problem message directly to your contact person at SAP, thus enabling you to communicate quickly and easily with:

❑   your R/3 consultant or one of SAP's partners

❑   every SAP employee worldwide (using the "reply" function)

Figure 2-3: Creating a Problem Message

Indexing Once you have entered your problem message into OSS, the system uses an internal indexing process to color code the message's key words according to category type. You can later use these category types as search criteria for displaying problem messages and possible solutions.

The following category types are useful for searching (Figure 2-4):

❑ **Object names** (for example, SAP transaction codes, programs, and table names)

❑ **System message codes** (for example, ORA1547, SO999, ERROR 1155)

❑ **System specific terminology** (for example, tablespace, GUI, administrator, menu)
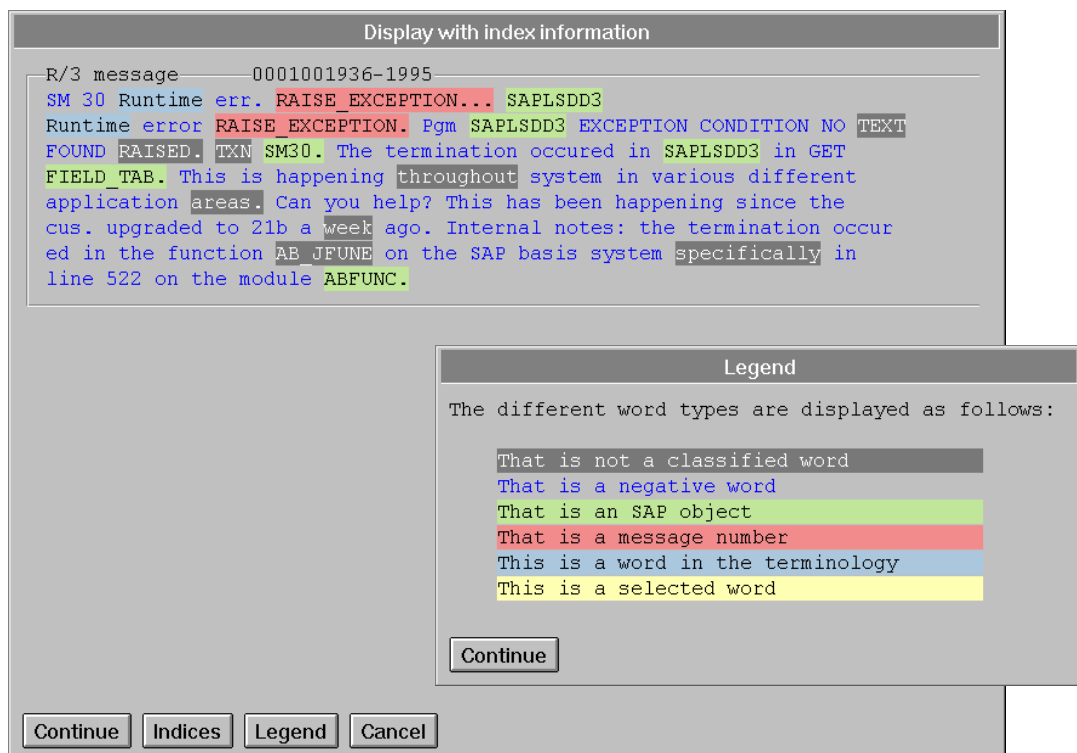

Figure 2-4: Indexing of a Problem Message

To improve the search capability ensure that your error message contains a number of these color-coded terms. The background search for Error Notes can only be carried out effectively when the error message contains indexed key words.

The OSS indexing process automatically begins when you save your problem message, allowing you to check whether your message contains enough indexed terms for an effective search. This enables you to formulate a thorough and precise problem message easily and interactively.

OSS uses the generated index to search for solutions to your problem in the Error Notes database.

Error Notes Search

To view solutions found in the Error Notes database, select your problem message again. The system then displays a list of error notes containing possible solutions to your problem, based on the key words you entered in your problem message. By using the filter options provided by OSS, you can narrow down large lists of notes in order to quickly find the best solution to your problem.

If you are unable to find the information that you need, you can use OSS to directly contact SAP's First Level Customer Service. If your problem can not be solved by First Level, it is directed to SAP's developers, who continue to work with you to find a solution.

Additional Processing at SAP

You receive a list of current problem messages and their status each time you log onto OSS.

Depending on the status, messages are either displayed, as **At your company**, or **At SAP** (Figure 2-5).

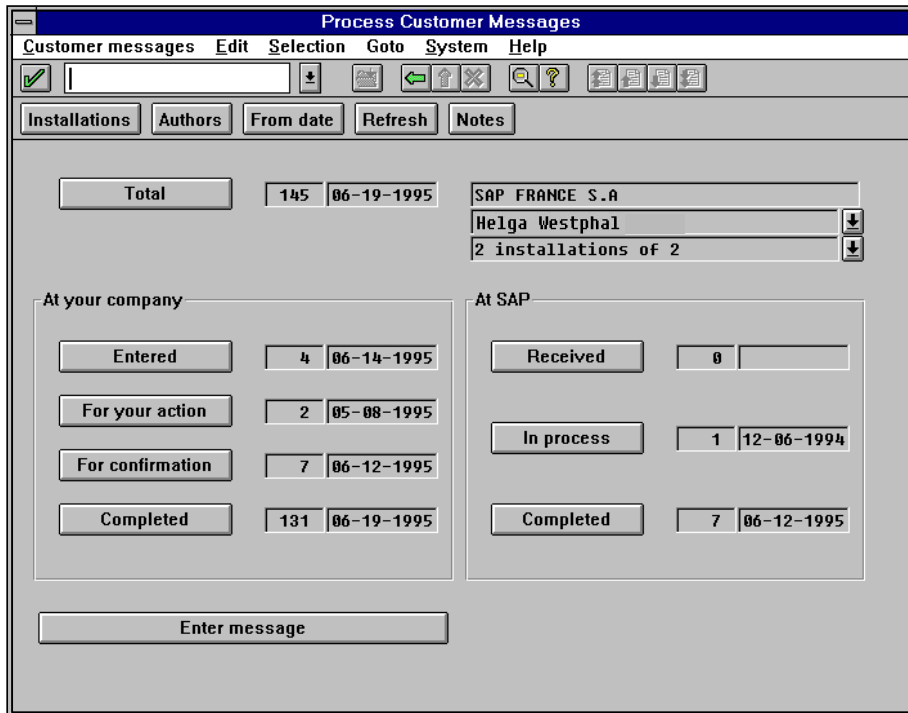**Problem Message Status**

Figure 2-5: Message Status Display

On the **At your company** side of the screen, you can assign one of the following statuses to your problem message:

❏ **Entered:** Your message has not yet been processed.

❏ **For your action:** Your message cannot be processed further until SAP has received additional information from you, or until the action requested by SAP is completed.

❏ **For confirmation:** By confirming your problem message, your problem is assigned the status of "completed." After you have reviewed the solutions suggested by the error notes, you can either use the suggested system solutions and solve the problem yourself, or send the message back to SAP's First Level Customer Service for further processing.

❏ **Completed:** Your problem has been solved.

On the **At SAP** side of the screen, one of the following statuses can be assigned to your problem message:

❏ **Received:** SAP's First Level Customer Service has received your message, but has not yet processed it.

❏ **In process:** SAP is currently processing your message.

❏ **Completed:** SAP has processed your message. You can now confirm that one of SAP's suggested solutions has solved the problem, or you can send your problem message back to SAP for further processing.

Your problem messages are stored in OSS's information database, allowing you to display them at any time during the problem message process.

Error Notes Database

The Error Notes database, available to you via OSS, is the central tool used by SAP's First Level Customer Service for solving R/3 System problems.

Each error note in the database provides a detailed description of the solution to a specific problem.

When SAP receives customer problem messages, SAP personnel create error notes that contain detailed solutions to the problems. OSS enables you to:

Error Note Features

❑ access error notes in both English and German.

❑ search for error notes according to a specific system platform (for example, hardware, operating system, database, R/3 release).

❑ index problem messages, thus optimizing the search procedure.

With OSS you can download error notes to your computer, making it possible for you to print longer error note texts and to direct error notes electronically without having to re-enter note text.

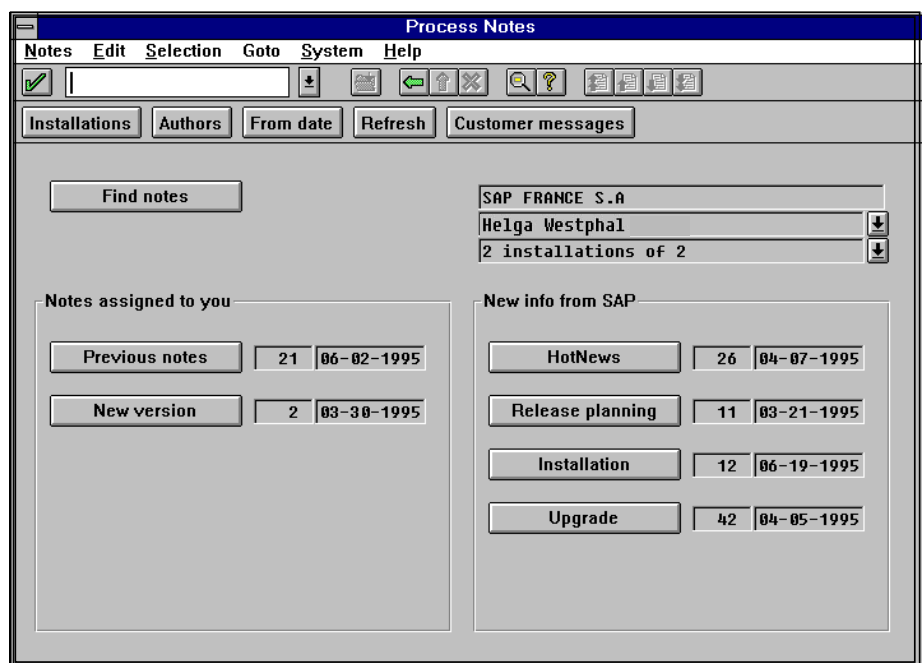Error notes are displayed as either **Notes assigned to you** or **New info from SAP** (Figure 2-6).

Figure 2-6: Overview of Assigned Notes

Notes assigned to you contains the number of notes that the system has assigned to your reported problem messages. These notes are assigned to one of the following two categories:

❑ **Previous notes**: All notes that have been assigned to your problem messages.

❑ **New version**: Updated notes assigned to you. By periodically checking this section, you can find out whether any updates have been made that are relevant to your R/3 System and take any action necessary to implement those updates.

New info from SAP provides you with notes that contain R/3 System information. These notes are assigned one of the following categories:

❑ **HotNews**: The latest high priority R/3 System information, including error alarm messages. Error alarm messages enable you to prevent problems before they occur.

❑ **Release planning**: Release information for certain operating systems and database environments, and information about future release dates.

❑ **Installation and Upgrade**: Information about the installation or upgrading of your R/3 System. It is important to read these notes before actually upgrading your R/3 system.

Error Note Information   Error notes include the following information:

❑ problem symptoms

❑ a short description of the problem cause

❑ detailed problem-solving information

❑ advanced corrections (a list of system bug corrections in patch updates), if applicable

❑ system platform information, including:

  ❍ R/3 release

  ❍ applications

  ❍ operating system
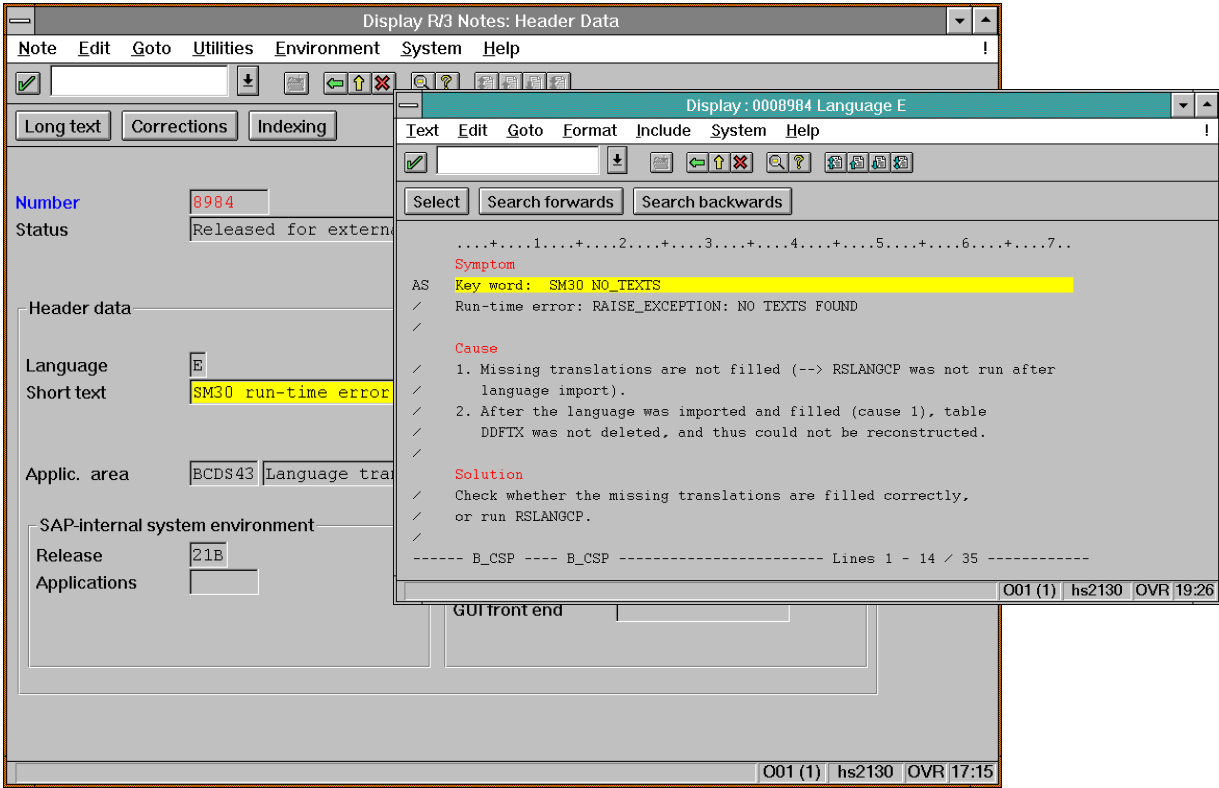
  ❍ database

  ❍ GUI frontends used

Figure 2-7: Error Note Information

When you save a problem message, OSS automatically sends you solutions that it finds in the Error Notes database.

Search for Specific Error Notes

You can search for error notes according to (Figure 2-8):

- ❑ language

- ❑ SAP release

- ❑ topic

- ❑ application

- ❑ error note number

- ❑ last change date

- ❑ error note text strings

Figure 2-8: Search criteria for finding Error Notes

By using the commands *AND* and *OR*, you can search for error notes using more than one search criteria. By clicking on the arrows to the right of your screen, you can enter additional terms signaling OSS to conduct the search using the operator OR. To use the *AND* operator, you must enter additional terms on separate lines.

In the Figure 2-8, we are searching for the term *movement AND* for the term *OMBQ*.

Regular Searches for Error Notes   In OSS you will also be able to define periodic note searches using the same search criteria as for the specific error note search. Searches will be automatically carried out on a daily, monthly, or weekly basis, over a specified period of time.

HotNews

HotNews provides you with the latest, high priority R/3 System information. You hear about important enhancements to your system immediately, thus ensuring optimal system performance.

You receive HotNews directly over OSS instead of retrieving it from the information database.

The main HotNews category is **Alarm alerts**, which provide error descriptions and their corresponding solutions. These changes must be implemented to avoid serious problems with your R/3 System.

Future categories include:

❑ **Special interest topics**, listing important information that is found in the information database. These topics are of special interest for R/3 System maintenance (for example, changes in release strategy and scheduling).

❑ **News and recommendations**, for using and improving your R/3 System (for example, a recommendation for an EarlyWatch session before production start and system upgrade).

OSS will automatically send out HotNews for events such as training courses or your approaching production start date. OSS will also automatically select addressees and distribute news based on the addressee information that you provide (for example, system installation type or customer).

Once you have read the OSS HotNews, a confirmation message is automatically generated and sent to SAP. If the HotNews requires that you take certain actions, these actions will be recorded in the form of checklists. SAP will use these checklists to confirm that you have received information about the actions you need to take.

HelpDesk

If you have general R/3 System questions or are unsure who to contact with your questions, you can receive 24-hour worldwide assistance from the R/3 HelpDesk by entering your inquiries directly into OSS, or by phoning or faxing the SAP HelpDesk nearest you.

Submitting your inquiries directly into OSS allows you to take advantage of SAP Services, regardless of the availability and workload of the responsible HelpDesk personnel.

When you call or fax a SAP HelpDesk, personnel enter your inquiries into OSS. If the local HelpDesk is not immediately available, your inquiry is forwarded to the appropriate contact person in one of SAP's worldwide service centers. You can use OSS to view your requests at any time to determine their current processing status.

By submitting a HelpDesk inquiry you also can give SAP feedback regarding R/3 products or SAP R/3 Services. This feedback is directed to the responsible service departments, where your suggestions and comments can be processed and the appropriate action taken.
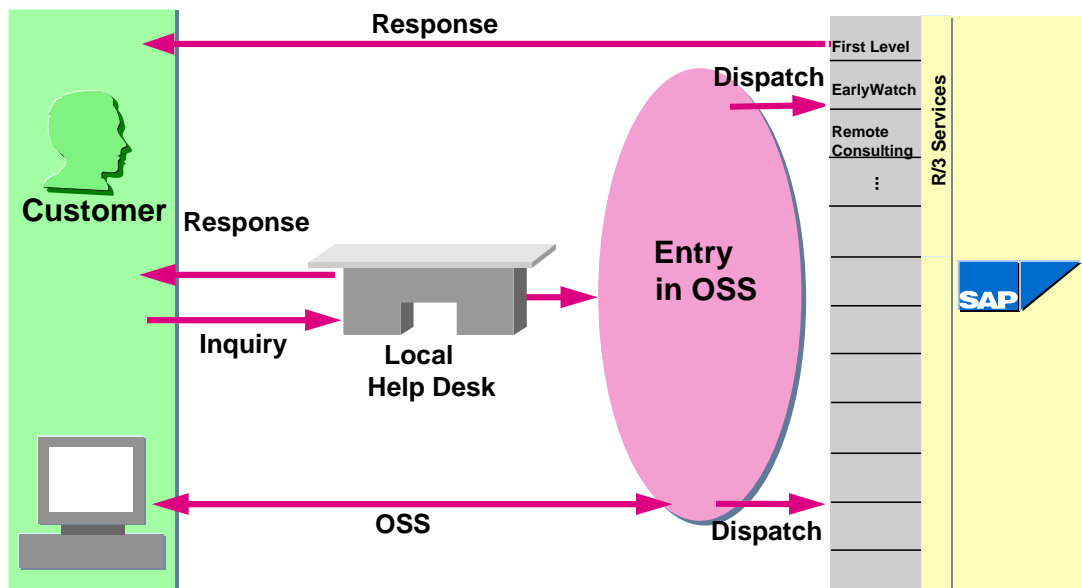

Figure 2-9: Processing Inquiries at the HelpDesk

R/3 Information Database

In future releases, OSS will ensure continuous transfer of information from SAP to its R/3 customers. This will allow you to receive essential information about your R/3 System. The R/3 information database will provide you with access to the latest R/3 product information:

❑   R/3 strategy and product planning

❑   system development/delivery (for example, dispatch dates, maintenance duration of individual release statuses)

❑   information about R/3 Services (for example, important dates, certified partners)

❑   training events (for example, course enrollment, calendar)

❑   documentation (for example, available documents and publications)

❑   technical information (for example, remote connection, supported network products)

To help you find the information you need, OSS will allow you to search for information by entering:

❑   key attributes, allowing a pre-selection of information (for example, release status, application module)

❑   a particular date for new information

❑   keywords/controlled index

Whenever this information changes, a function key labeled *News on OSS* appears on the initial OSS screen. After you review existing messages about the changes, the push button will not appear again until new, unread, changed messages exist.

You can save these messages by downloading them to your personal computer.

Development Requests

You will be able to actively participate in the continual improvement of the R/3 product by directly submitting development requests via OSS. Development requests provide SAP with useful feedback for improving or enhancing R/3 System functionality.

A development request should not be confused with problem messages: you send a problem message when an existing function within an application does not work properly, while you send a development request if you would like an existing function improved or additional functionality developed.

OSS will control the automatic processing of your development requests. After you have submitted your request in OSS, the request will be directed to the product planning committee for further discussion. If approved, your request will be included in the development planning for the next R/3 System release. SAP automatically informs you if, when, and how your development request will be implemented. Using OSS, you will be able to check the status of your development request at any time during this process.

Verification of Your SAP Customer Data

With the OSS Alteration Service you will be able to:

❑   review and correct the data that SAP has stored about your company without filling out and mailing or faxing forms.

❑   make changes or additions to your list of contact people (who are in charge of your R/3 System).

❑   inform SAP when you are going live with the R/3 System, allowing you to take advantage of a number of additional services such as intensive support before and after going live.

Course/Service Registration

OSS will also facilitate the planning, selection, and registration of your next SAP training course. OSS offers you:

❑ an overview of scheduled courses

❑ assistance in selecting the appropriate courses

❑ detailed information about prices and dates

❑ enrollment information

❑ general information about SAP training courses

Once you have selected a course, you will be able to register for the course online, as well as retrieve an area hotel list and directions to the SAP Training Center.

OSS will also allow you to select information about courses registered for employees in your organization, according to employee or time period.

Using OSS, you will also be able to register for the following SAP services:

❑ EarlyWatch sessions

❑ Consulting sessions

❑ Customer Verification Service and First Customer Shipment (releases are delivered to selected customers before the official release date)

Ordering Service

Using OSS, you will also be able to order :

❑ **Service guidelines**: Descriptions of the R/3 Services

❑ **Product guidelines**: Marketing information and brochures

❑ **Documentation**: R/3 handbooks, upgrade and installation instructions, and release information

❑ **Presentations–**SAPVisual CD programs

Customer Competence Centers

Customer Competence Centers provide SAP knowledge at customer sites. Special SAP training enables customers to solve problems and answer questions about the R/3 System on-site. With their additional company-specific knowledge, Customer Competence Centers can reduce the time needed for many processes and projects.

As of 1996, companies with a Customer Competence Center can install their own OSS and receive the latest R/3 System information through continual updates from SAP's OSS.

What are the major OSS features?

Currently available:

❑ OSS enables you to check the **status of your problem messages** at all stages of message processing.
❑ Using OSS, you can contact SAP's **HelpDesk**, which assists you if you have general questions about your R/3 System or are unsure who to contact about an R/3 System problem.
❑ **HotNews** informs you immediately about important enhancements to your system, ensuring optimal system performance.
❑ The **Error Notes database**, available to you at any time via OSS, is the central tool used by SAP's First and Second Level Customer Service for solving R/3 System application problems.
❑ Once you have created your problem message, OSS automatically indexes the words used in the message and searches for potential solutions in the **Error Notes database**.

Upcoming:

❑ OSS will provide you with a quick and easy communication link to SAP, SAP partners, and other R/3 users.
❑ The **Information database** will provide you with access to the latest R/3 product information.
❑ By submitting **development requests** via OSS, you will be able to provide SAP with useful feedback for improving or enhancing R/3 System functionality.
❑ OSS will provide the means to verify your customer data at SAP, register for SAP training courses, and order SAP documentation and guidelines.
❑ Customer Competence Centers will also have the option of having their own OSS on site.