

IT Firms Create New Industry Specifications to Help SOA Application Development

November 30, 2005. BEA Systems, IBM Corporation, IONA Technologies, Oracle, SAP AG, Siebel Systems, Sybase, Xcalia and Zend Technologies today announced an effort to develop specifications and resulting collaborative technologies that simplify how organizations create and implement applications in a Service Oriented Architecture. Using the SOA Programming Model specifications, organizations can more easily create new and transform existing IT assets into reusable services that may be rapidly adapted to meet changing business requirements. Further, the specifications greatly reduce complexity associated with developing applications by providing a way to unify services regardless of programming language and deployment platform.

The specifications take advantage of an emerging trend called Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), which structures IT assets as a series of reusable services that perform business functions. By structuring applications as a series of services, IT assets become more agile and organizations are better able to align their investments in dynamic business environments. For example, using the specifications a mortgage lender can significantly reduce the complexity of automating the loan approval process by developing a set of interconnected “services” based on existing applications tying data on new home owners including credit reports to processes for ordering home appraisals and rate locking. As a result, the lender services more customers while providing more value. In addition, by adopting these specifications organizations gain a higher degree of investment protection, because they can deploy services with a variety of middleware technologies.

The SOA Programming Model specifications include the Service Component Architecture (SCA) to simplify the development of creating business services and Service Data Objects (SDO) for accessing data residing in multiple locations and formats.

SCA provides an open, technology neutral model for implementing IT services that are defined in terms of a business function and make middleware functions more accessible to the application developer. SCA also provides a model for the assembly of business solutions from collections of individual services, with control over aspects of the solution such as access methods and security. Vendors working to create SCA include BEA Systems, IBM, IONA, Oracle, SAP, Siebel, Sybase and Zend Technologies.

SDO complements SCA by providing a common way to access many different kinds of data. The specification reduces the skill levels and time required to access and manipulate business data. Today, a multitude of APIs are used to manipulate data. These APIs tend to tightly couple the source and target of the data making their use error-prone and subject to breaking as business requirements evolve. SDO makes it easier to use and realize the value of these APIs without having to code directly to them. Vendors working to create SDO include BEA Systems, IBM, Oracle, SAP, Siebel, Sybase, Xcalia and Zend Technologies.

SCA and SDO will be available royalty free and the authors are soliciting industry feedback. Together they offer:

- A Language Neutral Assembly Model specification to simplify the development and usage of Business Services called: "Service Component Architecture"
- A Java Language specification for implementing SCA service components
- A C++ Language specification for implementing SCA service components
- A Java Language Service Data Objects specification describing a common rendering methodology for data exchange between clients and services
- A C++ Language Service Data Objects specification describing a common rendering methodology for data exchange between clients and services

“Service Infrastructure is a new category of software required for widespread adoption of SOA, It needs a rich ecosystem of technologies, standards, processes and partnerships to make it a reality. These new specifications – the first of their kind – represent significant progress in helping the industry achieve that goal,” said Edward Cobb, vice president, architecture and standards, BEA Systems. ” As an SOA leader, BEA will continue to drive standards in this area to ensure that the solid infrastructure we are providing supports composite applications from services developed on multiple platforms, using whatever technologies our customer choose. Specifications such as SCA and SDO help developers spend less time on deployment and maintenance and more on solving business problems.

“Standards have become a critical component of today’s technology infrastructure,” said Karla Norsworthy, vice president, software standards, IBM Software. “The rapid explosion of data and services has created challenges for developers to use all the new types of information. The collection of companies joining forces to create SCA and SDO will help ease developer pain and increase business results.”

“Because the SCA specification addresses significant marketplace and user requirements for SOA development and deployment infrastructure, it has the potential to unify service runtime and tooling initiatives such as ESBs and Eclipse,” said Eric Newcomer, CTO, IONA. “Our involvement as a co-author of the SCA specification is as a natural fit with IONA’s ongoing participation in standards-based and open source distributed computing initiatives. Organizations adopting SOA need appropriate, efficient and cost-effective solutions. Supporting industry standards such as SCA is one of the ways we are helping our customers accomplish this.”

“Open standards and specifications such as Java Enterprise Edition, Web services and WS-BPEL play a crucial role in the development of Service-Oriented Architectures,” said Steven G. Harris, vice president, Java Platform Group, Oracle. “Through our work in standards organizations and now in unifying those efforts in the SCA and SDO specifications, Oracle is making it easier for organizations to realize the concrete benefits a standards based Service-Oriented Architecture can deliver today and in the future.”

“We are dedicated to working with other leading companies to establish standards that allow customers to compose applications from service and data components,” said Michael Bechauf, Vice President of SAP NetWeaver Industry Standards at SAP. “Today’s announcement is

another step forward in our commitment to help customers harness the power of Web services by leveraging the Enterprise Services Architecture (ESA), to optimize business processes and drive innovation through composite applications.”

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