

Bringing open source to SOAs

Iona, others are muscling past vendor-driven offerings with new open-source products

By Darryl K. Taft

ALTHOUGH LARGE commercial vendors made early strides into the market for SOA software, open-source components are rapidly finding their way into the picture.

Vendors such as Iona Technologies, Red Hat, MuleSource, WSO2, Sun Microsystems and even IBM are pushing open-source components as key pieces of service-oriented architecture implementations.

To solidify its move into the open-source SOA world, Iona acquired LogicBlaze in April. Now the company will show off the fruits of that acquisition July 9 with several new initiatives designed to give customers the products, services and support programs—as well as opportunities for community participation—required to successfully incorporate open-source technology into SOA deployments, said Eric Newcomer, chief technology officer at Iona.

The company—based in Dublin, Ireland, but with U.S. headquarters in Waltham, Mass.—is integrating its open-source Celtix products with Logic-

Blaze's Fuse line of open-source SOA technologies. Iona also is dropping the Celtix name in favor of Fuse. Those products are based on projects hosted by the Apache Software Foundation.

Iona also is introducing a new community-driven

“Our products were complementary and what we did was tightly align our product offerings with key Apache projects,” said Debbie Moynihan, director of open-source programs at Iona. “Part of the reason for the new packaging was so you can pick and choose

In addition, Iona is heading the Eclipse Foundation's SOA Tools Platform Project, which is building frameworks and tools that enable the design, configuration, assembly, deployment, monitoring and management of software

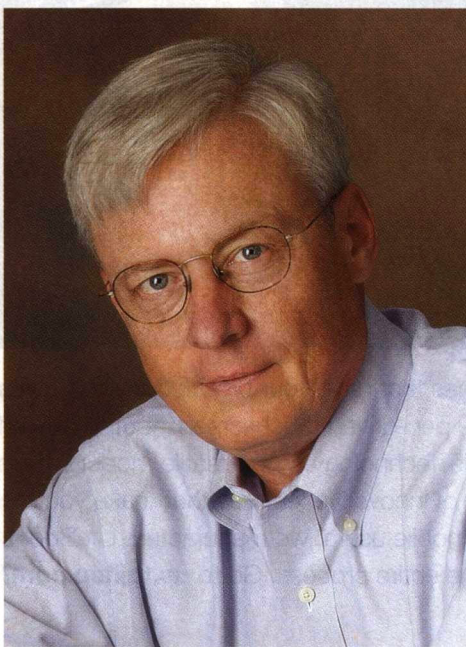
designed around a service-oriented architecture.

“We have recently released a preliminary version of the SOA Tools Platform project inside Eclipse Europa, and as the year goes forward we are going to be seeing an improved marriage of the Eclipse-based SOA tools with the open-source runtimes from Apache,” Newcomer said.

Kit Plummer, a senior software engineer working on missile

systems at Raytheon, in Tucson, Ariz., is applying SOA principles in creating software for launch, guidance, auto-pilot and other functions for missiles. Plummer said he has been using the LogicBlaze ServiceMix and ActiveMQ technology as part of his efforts.

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—ERIC NEWCOMER

Web site, open.ionat.com, to provide Fuse users with resources to help them build effective SOA deployments.

Moreover, components can be deployed together or independently, regardless of existing systems or IT infrastructure, the company said. This differentiated approach gives customers flexibility to conform their SOA deployments to their specific needs.

what you want to use. You can use specific technologies for specific needs.”

“We’ve been working in various open-source projects for almost two years now, and we’ve learned a lot ... including the fact that it isn’t easy for a commercial-license-based company to understand the open-source community, and how to do things ‘the open-source way,’” Newcomer said.

'Part of the reason for the new packaging was so you can pick and choose what you want.'

—DEBBIE MOYNIHAN



cesses" for the missile systems, Plummer said. "We're using SOA as the implementation architecture. Also paralleling the SOA technology is the use of open source" to gain such benefits as customization and lower cost.

Sanjiva Weerawarana, CEO of WSO2, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, said open-source software for SOA allows the customer to avoid vendor lock-in. "SOA technology is evolving, and no one vendor is likely to solve all of a customer's needs," he said.

In addition, SOA is such a localized phenomenon that each SOA is built specifically for the needs of a particular enterprise, Weerawarana said. Open-source software provides the flexibility for customers to choose the solutions

best suited for them and to make changes as their SOAs evolve.

"By contrast, choosing a proprietary solution leaves the customer more dependent on the vendor's product direction and priorities," he said.

"There's also a compelling financial incentive when you're implementing SOA on a very large scale," he said. "For example, there are instances where a large organization would want an ESB [Enterprise Service Bus] with an extremely small footprint deployed on tens of thousands of desktops. At this high volume, the use of proprietary ESBs is very expensive, whereas open-source ESBs cost much less to implement."

MuleSource CEO Dave Rosenberg, in San Francisco, agreed. "One of the key goals of SOA is to free up your IT environment from burdensome proprietary standards and vendor stacks that lock you in," he said. "In order to truly control your environment, open source is the

only answer." MuleSource maintains the open-source Mule ESB.

Scripps Networks, which runs such networks as HGTV, the Food Channel and Fine Living TV, investigated proprietary offerings when it decided to use SOA for its business processes.

However, "after exploring commercial alternatives, we realized our options were expensive and required a fairly substantial commitment to a vendor," said David Elam, an architect at Scripps, in Knoxville, Tenn. "On top of that, we are an open-source Java/Spring/Hibernate shop. Commercial offerings didn't necessarily fit our existing technology stack."

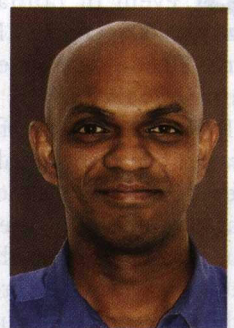
Meanwhile, Red Hat's JBoss division also is delivering open-source infrastructure for SOAs. "Red Hat has an ESB and many of the components of an ESB, and we want to bring our experience in having deployed these into other SOA implementations," said Mark Little, SOA technical develop-

ment manager and director of standards at JBoss, in Atlanta.

Shaun Connolly, vice president of JBoss, said that the company's "application platform, Web apps, Web services, portal and the overall SOA platform

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—SANJIVA WEERAWARANA



provides more service bus integration for a more open and integrated platform."

"The worlds of SOA, open source and virtualization are related ... in that they set the tone for the architecture you're deploying," said Hal Stern, a distinguished engineer at Sun, in Santa Clara, Calif. At the JavaOne conference in May, Sun announced a preview release of Open ESB 2.0, a standards-based integration platform and open-source ESB implementation.

While IBM has a leading share of the SOA infrastructure software market with WebSphere and other SOA-related offerings, the company also supports SOA with its open-source Gluecode technology. ■

Open-sourcing SOA

lona's new products, resulting from its acquisition of LogicBlaze, are based on Apache Software Foundation projects, including:

- ▶ **Fuse Enterprise Service Bus** Based on the Apache ServiceMix project
- ▶ **Fuse Message Broker** Based on the Apache ActiveMQ project
- ▶ **Fuse Services Framework** Based on the Apache CXF project
- ▶ **Fuse Mediation Router** Based on the Apache Camel project

Source: eWEEK reporting