An Architects's Guide to Enterprise Mashups
Q&A
2.11.09

Audience Question:
Q: Quick question: Unfortunately I missed yesterday's webinar, do you have a link for it?
A: We have a recording of Day 1, along with the presentation and Q&A, at http://www.jackbe.com/resources/casts.php#webcasts.

Audience Question:
Q: What about the backend repository/infrastructure requirements for a Mashup solution?
A: We'll be getting to the internal architecture of mashups in just a few slides.

Audience Question:
Q: almost all the slides you can literally replace mashup with portal. You need to do a better job explaining the real difference between mashup and portal, I'm sure I'm not the only one, pls, provide more meat on the differences.
A: Good point. Yesterday, John described it this way: 'mashups can be syndicated to MANY destinations (portal, mobile devices, spreadsheets, and back into development tools lik Java, Flash/Silverlight, JavaScript, etc.). Portals, in contrast, have content management features that mashups do not address.' Mashups also emphasize service-enablement and SOA utilization that aren't things that portals typically address.

Q: I beg to differ, as a long time portal architect, you can replace what you just described with mashup with portal and it would still apply. Portal usually works with content management provider, as well as other services and data providers. They fully support web 2.0 (i.e., LifeRay, WebLogic portal or AqualLogic UI). I beg you provide more infor on this.
A: The difference is that Mashup platforms focus on mashing up data from many sources and provide mechanisms for users to share and customize the mashup. Mashups separate the data from the presentation. So, any mashup can be published as a JSR 168 Portlet. The design tenet of Mashups is to dramatically reduce the time to "mash" data from multiple sources. We (JackBe's Presto) have a declarative XML markup language that lets us define the mashup without having to write any Java integration. This is along the same lines as BPM and Web Orchestration engines that use a BPEL language.

Audience Question:
Q: I see a overlap between ESB and Mashup. Is ESB and Mashup are same? If not what are the differences between ESB and Mashups?
A: ESBs are A-to-A solutions (application to application). They are also very robust when it comes to long term transactions. Mashups focus on application-to-USER solutions (which is why mashups often have a visual creation component oriented to end-users and also why mashup platforms publish to so many user-focused output destinations) and typically are architected to execute in 'internet time', i.e. real-time.

Audience Question:
Q: Is there some sort of international standard for enterprise mashups in the same way that WSDLis for web services ?
A: Mashups piggyback on lots of existing standards. A good mashup platform consumes/publishes in RSS, WSDL, and/or XML formats, and makes use of many of the existing security and repository standards as well. Specifically, our EMML language is built on XPath and XQuery.

Audience Question:
Q: Which are the competitors of Presto? Is there any paper (for example gartner or any other) about how Presto is evaluated against its competitors?
A: Gartner and Dion Hinchcliffe have published lists of consumer- and enterprise-mashup providers. Of course, only JackBe was InfoWorld's 2008 'Best Enterprise Mashup Platform'!

Audience Question:
Q: can you comment on the differences between mashups as the means to aggregate data using standard to present in different consumption channels vs. using mashups to invoke services to perform functions/business processes that execute a backend application task (if that's even relevant for mashups)?
A: Mashups can call any service that exposes itself using standards. Mashups don't discriminate between an atom service or a BPEL process that exposes itself as a WSDL.

Audience Question:
Q: How the Mashups are being handled for different devices display capacity (PC, iPhone, Blackberries, etc)?
A: JackBe's mashup platform has publishers that fit each of these output types. So we produce a JSR-168 widget for portals, an iPhone widget and SMS-format messages for mobile devices, XLS for Excel spreadsheets, and programmer APIs for Java, Javascript, .NET, C#, and Flash/Flex, to name a few.

Audience Question:
Q: Does your security model supports RBAC and ABAC authorization?
A: RB, yes. See http://www.jackbe.com/enterprise-mashup/blog/getting-started-user-roles-presto for a few exmaples. ABAC,

I am not sure. Send me a note after the event and I'll getcha an answer: chris@jackbe.com.

Audience Question:
Q: Can you explain the difference between this mashup platform and the Microsoft BizTalk product?
A: BizTalk is more aligned with business process engines, such as those that use BPEL. Mashups can orchestrate between multiple services in real-time but these aren't long-lived processes. That's what BPM does best.

Audience Question:
Q: Are you using WebDAV or servlets to publish EMML?
A: Neither. EMML is an XML format. All EMML is dynamically executed at invocation time.

Q: Hmmm. My question is the protocol to send the EMML to the server, and how the server knows it is published. WebDAV provides the versioning capabilities.
A: Presto uses REST to publish EMML to the server. We also provide JavaScript/JSON, Java, JRuby, C# and VBA APIS for developers to publish programmatically.

Audience Question:
Q: how do mashups distinguish themselves with BPEL, or other integration technology?
A: BPEL is process-oriented. Mashups are data-oriented. They are related but do not address the same domain, we think. Also, the lifespan of a Mashup is "immediate", where as the lifespan of a BPEL process can be a minute, day, week, month, year or more.

Audience Question:
Q: can you please review what are the outcome of the mashup? RSS / GRID / CHART anything else? .. HTML?
A: We bundle with a good number of visual widgets. You can also use custom widgets in JavaScript, Flash/Flex, Silverlight, or pure HTML.

Audience Question:
Q: Can I mashup more than data, i.e., business behavior made available as a service?
A: Yes. The EMML language they are discussing right now has a lot of logic capabilities. EMML is a very sophisticated XML-based language. I think some of the demos at http://www.jackbe.com/enterprise-mashup/mashup-demos/ might demonstrate this. If not, send me a note after the event and I'll connect you to John and Matt for a 1-on-1 conversation: chris@jackbe.com.

Audience Question:
Q: How does it deal with session expiration?
A: We participate in an HTTP Session. So, whatever the timeout is set to, we accommodate.

Audience Question:
Q: What is the deliverable to the client? A mashup? Mashlet? I'm trying to understand how the application dev process changes in a mashup architecture.
A: It depends on the 'client'. We can output an RSS feed, a WSDL, a web widget, an Excel spreadsheet, or a callable routine (Java, Javascript, .Net, C#, etc.) from one of our APIs.

Audience Question:
Q: the mashlet UI support OOTB is simply but has limited features, right? e.g., it's not possible if the users want to define some drag and drop features with JavaScript?
A: We bundle with EXT libraries (www.extjs.com) to create an OOTB experience. And since our APIs are open, you can build the UI in many other toolsets too; examples include BackBase, Flash/Flex, Silverlight, Java, JavaScript/Ajax, and Ruby.

Audience Question:
Q: Do version Service and methods as well in your services?
A: We version Services, not methods. However, in our experience, we promote extending the service as a new service, vs versioning. This is a best practice in mashups where you can have thousands of mashups depending on your services.

Audience Question:
Q: If the data source is offline, does the mashup server serve the last known value? How does the user know how stale the data is?
A: We have caching capabilities. Or, alternately, the mashup can be made to ignore the missing mashup source elegantly. We have sophisticated timeout and compensating error and transaction handling capabilities in EMML to handle this.

Audience Question:
Q: will mashup fit into a traditional application server?
A: Absolutely. It runs in Tomcat, which means it can run in virtually any Application Server or Portal.

Audience Question:

Q: Is the Presto server WMI or WBEM enabled for health monitoring purposes?
A: Not out of the box. However, we use JMX for monitoring and can write a custom adapter to publish WBEM and WMI.

Audience Question:
Q: Do you compare the platform with Yahoo Pipes, Microsoft Silverlight, Adobe/Flex/Flash and Google GWT tools?
A: One editor called Presto 'Yahoo Pipes on Enterprise steroids'. So we have some similarity to Pipes, but have spent a lot of time making the product enterprise-ready. As for UI tools like Silverlight, Flash/Flex, and GWT, our APIs let developers in those toolsets make use of the mashups that are created in Presto. Sure, we have a few out-of-the-box widgets, but many of our customers use these UI tools to create the 'killer mashup interface'.

Audience Question:
Q: Can you show database integration?
A: A database integration would be very much the same as the web services you are seeing demonstrated. In short, a database table/view/procedure would be registered, which would make it 'mashable', thus it which would appear as a data source, which could then be mashed with any other data source.

Audience Question:
Q: How do I create a mashup which contains application content? Can I use Wires to do this?
A: If by "application content" you mean "application data", you could/would make the data available as a mashable service using Presto.

Audience Question:
Q: how does mashup differ from data integration services/products? They also can take different data sources (including DB, WS, RSS, ATOM) and can present new services?
A: See above. I think we've covered this topic. Also, you might to review yesterday's Q&A as well (http://www.jackbe.com/downloads/Executives_guide_day1_qa.pdf).

Audience Question:
Q: Can a badly-written mashlet hang other mashlets on the portal page?
A: Of course it depends how badly written. But in most cases, it will not affect other Mashlets.

Audience Question:
Q: Sounds like MashUp is yet another well-tooled layer. Layers get born (or just get named) when the popular layer de-jour fails to be the golden solution and is becoming silo-ed. Mashups, as I see it, are subject to the same trends and, possibly, the same fate of being over-ed by yet another layer. An environment with a reasonable SOA implementation may claim MashUP to be just another massive SOA service. Please address these points. Thank you.
A: Many analysts (like Forrester, Gartner, IDC) position mashups and SOA as very close cousins. That said, few of the major SOA providers provide useful mashup capabilities. Logically, I guess you could merge the mashup layer right into the SOA layer. But then you'd be missing the point that mashups DO NOT require a SOA. Remmeber, in most organizations the SOA initiative is far from complete, and a mashup initiative would NOT need to wait on the SOA effort to yield returns to the business.

Audience Question:
Q: most organizations are currently in the 'wild' SOA stage; is it required to implement governance and SOA policies before adopting Mashups successfully?
A: No. While we'd recommend you get your SOA governance going as soon as possible, Presto can function independent of a 'completed' SOA. Presto includes it's own repository for service meta storage, including access privileges and usage information.

Audience Question:
Q: Can I run Jack BE Wires / Presto in my own infrastructure? or I need to run them from YOUR own server infrastructure? Thnx.
A: JackBe Presto is a server platform. So you install it inside your organization. You can get a the Free Developer Edition of Presto at http://www.jackbe.com/dev/.

Audience Question:
Q: is there a version of your software that can be used by a single individual to create mashups for their personal use?
A: Yes! You can get the free Developer Edition of Presto at http://www.jackbe.com/dev/.

Audience Question:
Q: (how) do you use iPhone platform?
A: We publish Mashlets as a native iPhone app.

Audience Question:
Q: this looks more like a reporting (etl) app is that correct?
A: Mashups originated as a way to get just-in-time answers from disparate sources. So there is a reporting element to them

but they are very web-focused, dynamic, and based on the concept of user-driven decision support.

Audience Question:
Q: When will this presentation posted online?
A: It should be available at http://www.jackbe.com/resources/casts.php#webcasts in a few hours.