

Business Rule Engine

Ruleengine Sample

"Rent a Ferrari"

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Overview

This document shows an example of a Business Logic and how it can be implemented using the Business Rules Maintenance Tool.

The tool is a web application which allows the user to construct and orchestrate business logic in an easy fashion.

Once the logic is setup, it can be exported into a single file and used with the Business Rule Engine "JaRE" - the Java Rule Engine - to evaluate if a given set of data from a file or database conforms to the rules or not.

Sample

The sample is an imaginary sample but related to real life so that it is easier to understand and follow.

A young girl – Maria – wants to rent a Ferrari for a fun ride. She is 25 years old, has a valid drivers license. She is willing to pay an extra fee if necessary (details later...).

The following pages show in detail how to construct the business logic using the Business Rule Maintenance Tool.

Prerequisites

If you would like to implement this sample yourself, you need a running instance of the Business Rules Maintenance Tool.

The tool stores its data in a MySQL/MariaDB database, so you need a running instance of MySQL/MariaDB.

A running instance of Apache Tomcat is required which runs the Business Rules Maintenance Tool.

First, install the MySQL/MariaDB database server if you don't already have a running instance. Make sure the database server is running and you can access it. Create a database named "ruleengine_rules". You may also use a different name, but this is the default name.

Next install Apache Tomcat and make sure, that it is running correctly.

Next download the Business Rules Maintenance Tool and the database schema from GitHub:

<http://github.com/uwegeercken>

Now, import the database schema you downloaded into the MySQL/MariaDB server. This will create the required tables and fields for the Business Rules Maintenance Tool. An example command to do this would be:

```
mysql -u [username] -p [databasename] < [schema filename]
```

If the database user name is "harry", the database name is "ruleengine_rules" and the filename (the database schema you downloaded) is "ruleengine_rules.sql", then the command is as follows:

```
mysql -u harry -p ruleengine_rules < ruleengine_rules.sql
```

Press [enter] after you have entered the command. You will be asked for a password. Provide the relevant password that belongs to user "harry". If no password is configured for the user, then leave away the "-p" parameter.

Go and check if the database schema was correctly imported and that tables and fields have been created.

Finally, copy (drop) the file of the Business Rules Maintenance Tool that you downloaded (the ".war" file) into the Apache Tomcat "webapps" folder.

Now everything is setup and the Business Rules Maintenance Tool is ready to use. Go and open your Web Browser (preferably Firefox) and enter the address, where the Apache Tomcat instance is running. A default installation of Apache Tomcat on your local computer is usually available at:

<http://localhost:8080>

The port (the number at the end) might have a different number – That depends on your installation.

Check if entering the above address will show a default Apache Tomcat start page.

To access the Business Rules Maintenance Tool enter following address in your Web Browser:

http://localhost:8080/rule_maintenance

You should now see a page with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool" at the top. At initial startup of the tool a configuration page is shown. You will need to enter the connection details to the database. Optionally you may provide details of a LDAP server, if you want the authentication of the users to be done via this server.

Save the configuration details. A message will indicate if the connection to the database server was successful.

Now you are ready to use the tool to construct your business logic.

Note: To login to the tool use:

userid = admin

password = admin

This is the default user and password that comes with the Business Rules Maintenance Tool installation.

It is highly recommended to change this password once you logged in the first time.

Inside the tool you will be able to create additional groups (roles) and users.

User Details

Let's assume that the data I want to check with the business logic comes from a database. It stores the details of the user that wants to rent a car. It has already been entered in the database at the reception of the rental car company and looks like this:

<i>Last_Name</i>	<i>First_Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Drivers_License</i>	<i>Extra_Fee</i>
Tall	Maria	25	Yes	Yes

The first row shows the names of the fields as they appear in the database. The second row shows the details of the user.

Business Rules of the car rental company

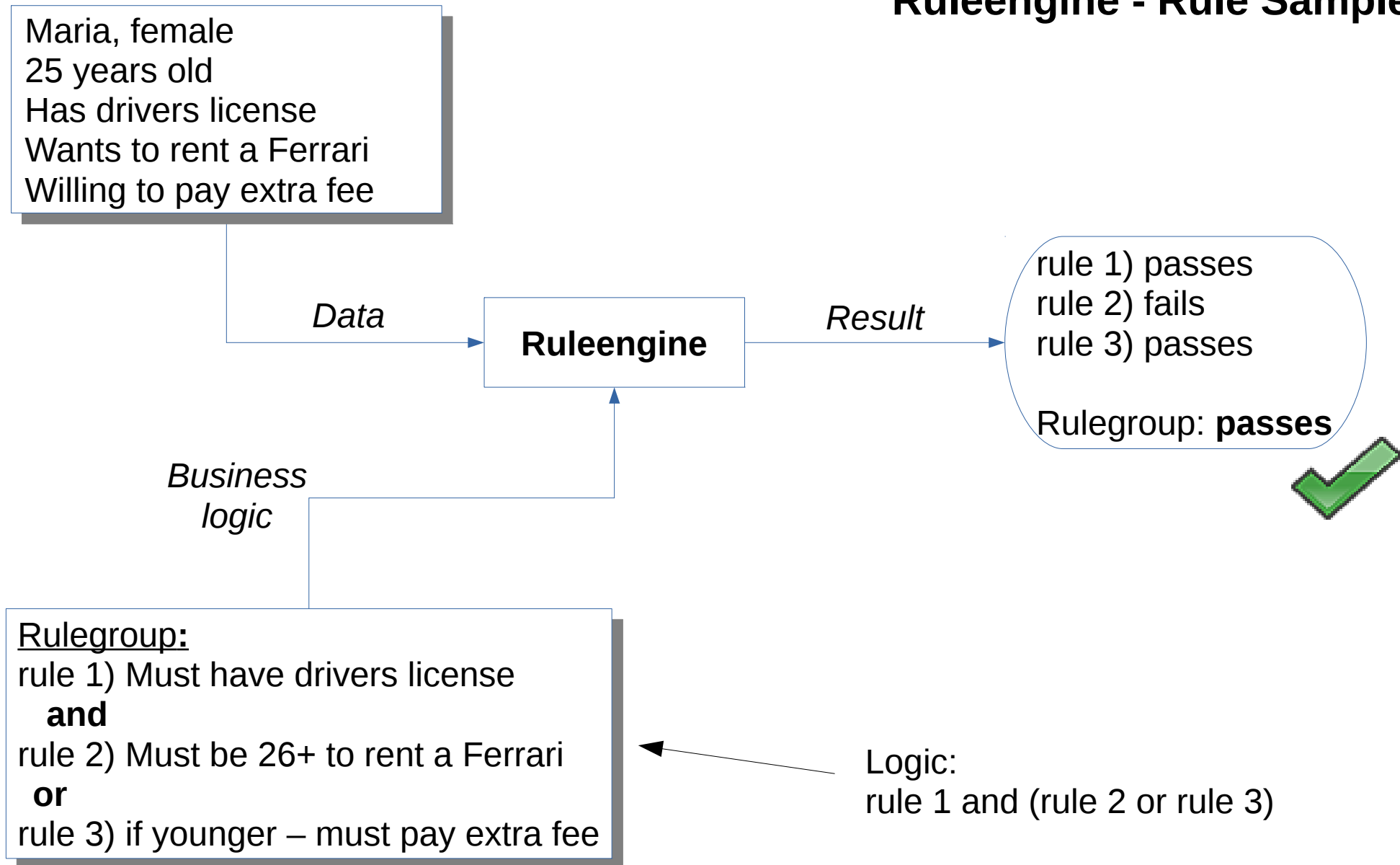
The company that rents cars has following business rules in place for renting a Ferrari:

- Somebody who wants to rent a Ferrari needs to have a valid drivers license
- Somebody who wants to rent a Ferrari needs to be of age 26 or above
- If the user is younger than 26 he/she might rent the Ferrari if an extra fee is paid

Sample - Graphical Overview

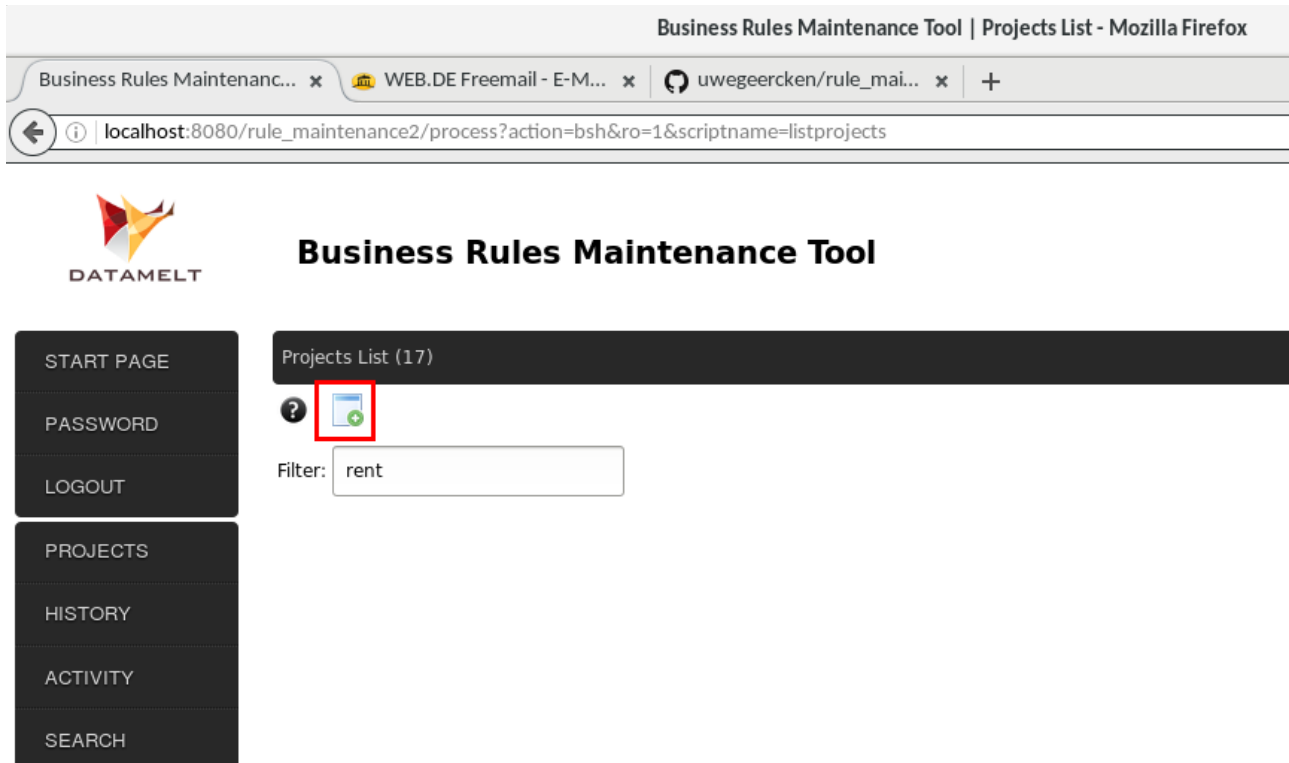
On the next page there is a graphical overview of the sample for which we will construct the business logic.

Ruleengine - Rule Sample



Step 1 - Create a Project

The first step is to create a project. It acts as a container for all the business logic. On the left side in the menu, click on "Project".



Click on the icon to add a new project. Enter a name a description for the project and select to which groups (roles) the project shall belong. Only users that are members of the selected group will be able to modify the project content. If you select the project as "Private project", users that are not in the same group will not see this project.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Project Maintenance - Mozilla Fi". The address bar shows the URL "localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selecteditproject&id=0&mode=add". The page features a sidebar with navigation links: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, SEARCH, EXPORT, and IMPORT. The main content area is titled "Business Rules Maintenance Tool" and contains a form titled "Add Project". The form has fields for Name, Description, Group (a dropdown menu), and Private project (a checkbox). There are "save" and "cancel" buttons at the bottom right of the form. A small icon with a plus sign is visible in the bottom left corner of the form area.

Click on "save" to save the project and then click on "close".


Ruleengine Sample - "Rent a Ferrari"

The project will now be shown on the project page.

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Projects List - Mozilla F

Business Rules Maintenanc... x WEB.DE Freemail - E-M... x uwegeercken/rule_mai... x +

localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&scriptname=editproject&id=70



Business Rules Maintenance Tool

START PAGE

PASSWORD

LOGOUT

PROJECTS

HISTORY


ACTIVITY

SEARCH

EXPORT



IMPORT

Projects List (18)

? 

Filter:




project



Rent a Ferrari

sample project

group: Admin, owner: admin user

updated: 2016-08-06 13:18 

Step 2 - Create a Rulegroup

A rulegroup is part of a project and contains all rules that belong together and define a certain business logic. You may have multiple rulegroups in a project.

Click on the displayed name of the project and a page listing all rulegroups will be presented.

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule G

Business Rules Maintenanc... x WEB.DE Freemail - E-M... x uwegeercken/rule_mai... x +

localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=listrulegroups&projectid=7

DATAMELT

Business Rules Maintenance Tool

START PAGE

PASSWORD

LOGOUT

PROJECTS

HISTORY

ACTIVITY

SEARCH

Rule Groups List (0) - Project: Rent a Ferrari

Filter:

project

Rent a Ferrari

sample project

Click on the icon to create a new rulegroup.

A page is presented where the details of the rulegroup have to be entered:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Group Maintenance - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL: `localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selecteditrulegroup&id=0&projectid=70&mode=add`. The page header includes the "DATAMELT" logo and the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool". On the left, there is a vertical menu with the following options: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, SEARCH, EXPORT, and IMPORT. The main content area is titled "Add Rule Group - Project: Rent a Ferrari" and contains a form with the following fields: Name, Description, Valid from, and Valid until. The "Valid from" and "Valid until" fields have a format hint of "(format: YYYY-MM-DD)". At the bottom right of the form, there are "save" and "cancel" buttons.

Enter a name and description for the rulegroup. Select a date range from – to indicating in which time period the rulegroup is valid.

Click on "save" and then "close" to go back to the page listing all rulegroups for the project.

Your page should look similar to the one shown below.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Groups List". The address bar shows the URL: `localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&scriptname=editrulegroup&id=139&projectid=70`. The browser tabs include "Business Rules Maintenanc...", "WEB.DE Freemail - E-M...", and "uwegeercken/rule_mai...".

The application interface features a sidebar on the left with the following navigation options: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, SEARCH, EXPORT, IMPORT, CHECKS, and ACTIONS. The main content area is titled "Business Rules Maintenance Tool" and displays "Rule Groups List (1) - Project: Rent a Ferrari".

Below the title bar, there is a filter input field labeled "Filter:". The main content area shows two items:

- project**
Rent a Ferrari
sample project
- rulegroup**
Group 1
Rulegroup 1
valid: 2016-08-01/2099-12-31

Icons for document, folder, and edit are visible next to the rulegroup item.

Step 3 - Create the Rules

Inside a rulegroup there are subgroups. Per default one subgroup is created when a new rulegroup is created. Subgroups contain rules that belong together. Within one subgroup you can either connect the rules with an "and" or with an "or" condition. Multiple subgroups can also be connected using an "and" or with an "or" condition. This way you can construct the complex business logic in any shape or form.

Click on the name of the rulegroup we just created to go to the page which lists subgroups and rules.

The screenshot shows the 'Business Rules Maintenance Tool' interface. The browser address bar indicates the URL: `localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=listrulesubgroups&rulegroupid=139`. The page title is 'Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rules List - Mozilla'. The main content area displays the 'Rules List' for the project 'Rent a Ferrari' and rule group 'Group 1'. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation links: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, SEARCH, EXPORT, IMPORT, and CHECKS. The main content area shows three panels: 'project' (Rent a Ferrari, sample project), 'rulegroup' (Group 1, Rulegroup 1, valid: 2016-08-01/2099-12-31), and 'subgroup' (subgroup_1, subgroup 1). The 'rules connector' section shows 'and' and a red box highlights the 'R' icon, which is used to create a new rule.

Click on the icon to create a new rule.

A page is presented to enter the details of the rule.

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Maintenance - Mozilla Firefox

Business Rules Maintenance Tool

START PAGE
PASSWORD
LOGOUT
PROJECTS
HISTORY
ACTIVITY
SEARCH
EXPORT
IMPORT
CHECKS
ACTIONS
FILES
GROUPS

Add Rule - Project: [Rent a Ferrari](#) - Rule Group: [Group 1](#) - Rule Subgroup: subgroup_1

Name:

Description:

Field to check: Type:

Check:

Field to check against: Type:

Value to check against: Type:

Additional Parameter: Type:

Message Passed: <

Message Failed: <

save cancel

According to the User Details and the Business Rules of the car rental company as listed above we will define the rules details.

Enter a name and description for the rule.

Next enter the field name of your data source that you want to check. In our case we want to check if the user has a valid drivers license. Enter "Drivers_License" for "Field to check" and for the "Type" next to it select "string" (the field in the database contains textual data).

From the drop-down list for "Check", select "is equal to". We want to check if one value (the data from the field) is equal to another value.

In "Value to check against" enter "Yes" and for the "Type" next to it select "string". We want to test the content of the field "Drivers_License" against this value of "Yes".

Ruleengine Sample - "Rent a Ferrari"

Next to the fields "Message passed" and "Message failed" there are buttons. Click on both to auto-generate a message that will be generated once this rule runs. The messages contain placeholders which are filled with the actual values when the rule runs. Of course you could also write your own message by hand.

Your rule should look like this:

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Maintenance - Mozilla Firefox

Business Rules Maintenance... x WEB.DE Freemail - E-M... x uwegeercken/rule_mai... x +

localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selecteditrule&mode=add&id=0&rulegroupid=139&rul

DATAMELT

Business Rules Maintenance Tool

Add Rule - Project: **Rent a Ferrari** - Rule Group: **Group 1** - Rule Subgroup: **subgroup_1**

? ←

Name:

Description:

Field to check: Type:

Check:

Field to check against: Type:

Value to check against: Type:

Additional Parameter: Type:

Message Passed:

Message Failed:

Click on "save" and then "close".

You are back on the page which lists the details for the rulegroup. You can see the first rule we just created.

The screenshot shows the Business Rules Maintenance Tool interface. The browser address bar indicates the URL: `localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&scriptname=editrule&id=240&rulegroupid=139&rulesubgro`. The page title is "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rules List - Mozilla". The main header displays "Business Rules Maintenance Tool". The left sidebar contains navigation links: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, SEARCH, EXPORT, IMPORT, and CHECKS. The main content area shows the Rules List for Project: [Rent a Ferrari](#) - Rule Group: Group 1. The interface includes a toolbar with icons for help, back, save (highlighted with a red box), and add. The rules are displayed in a grid:

project	rulegroup
Rent a Ferrari sample project	Group 1 Rulegroup 1 valid: 2016-08-01/2099-12-31
subgroup_1 subgroup 1	rule Drivers License Check drivers license valid field [Drivers_license] is equal to value [Yes]

The "subgroup_1" row shows a "rules connector: and" and a "rule" icon. The "rule" row shows a "rule" icon and a "rule" icon.

Click to add a new subgroup. We create a new subgroup that contains two rules: one checks for the age of the user and one checks for the extra fee.

You are presented with a page to enter the details of the subgroup:

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Subgroup Maintenance - Mozilla Firefox

Business Rules Maintenance... x WEB.DE Freemail - E-M... x uwegeercken/rule_mai... x +

localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selectedrulesubgroup&rulesubgroupid=0&rulegroupi

DATAMELT

Business Rules Maintenance Tool

START PAGE
PASSWORD
LOGOUT
PROJECTS
HISTORY
ACTIVITY
SEARCH

Add Subgroup - Project: [Rent a Ferrari](#) - Rule Group: [Group 1](#)

? ←

Name:

Description:

Connector to previous subgroup: ▼

Rules are connected using: ▼

Enter a name and description for the subgroup. We will create two rules inside this subgroup and they will be logically connected to each other with an "or" condition: "Age is at or above 26 **or** user is willing to pay an extra fee". So set the drop-down value of "Rules are connected using" to "or".

The subgroup should look like this:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rule Subgroup Maintenance - Mozilla". The address bar shows the URL "localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selectedrulesubgroup&rulesubgroupid=0&ruleg".

The page header includes the "DATAMELT" logo and the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool".

On the left, there is a sidebar menu with the following options: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, HISTORY, ACTIVITY, and SEARCH.

The main content area displays the "Add Subgroup" form. The form header indicates the project is "Rent a Ferrari" and the rule group is "Group 1".

The form fields are as follows:

- Name: Subgroup 2
- Description: Subgroup 2
- Connector to previous subgroup: and ▼
- Rules are connected using: or ▼

At the bottom right of the form, there are two buttons: "save" and "cancel".


Click on "save" and then "close".

Back to the rulegroup page it now shows the first subgroup with the rule we created and the second subgroup we just created now.

Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Rules List - Mozilla

Business Rules Maintenanc... x WEB.DE Freemail - E-M... x uwegeercken/rule_mai... x +

localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&scriptname=editrulesubgroup&rulesubgroupid=184&ruleg



START PAGE

PASSWORD

LOGOUT

PROJECTS

HISTORY

ACTIVITY

SEARCH

EXPORT

IMPORT

CHECKS

ACTIONS

FILES

GROUPS

USERS

CONFIGURATION

DOCUMENTATION

Rules List - Project: [Rent a Ferrari](#) - Rule Group: Group 1

project

Rent a Ferrari

sample project

rulegroup

Group 1

Rulegroup 1

valid: 2016-08-01/2099-12-31

subgroup

subgroup_1

subgroup 1

rule

Drivers License

Check drivers license valid

field [Drivers_license] is equal to value [Yes]

rules connector: and

and

subgroup

Subgroup 2

Subgroup 2

rules connector: or

Uwe Geercken - last update: 2016-08-07

Create the next rule:

Add Rule - Project: [Rent a Ferrari](#) - Rule Group: [Group 1](#) - Rule Subgroup: Subgroup 2

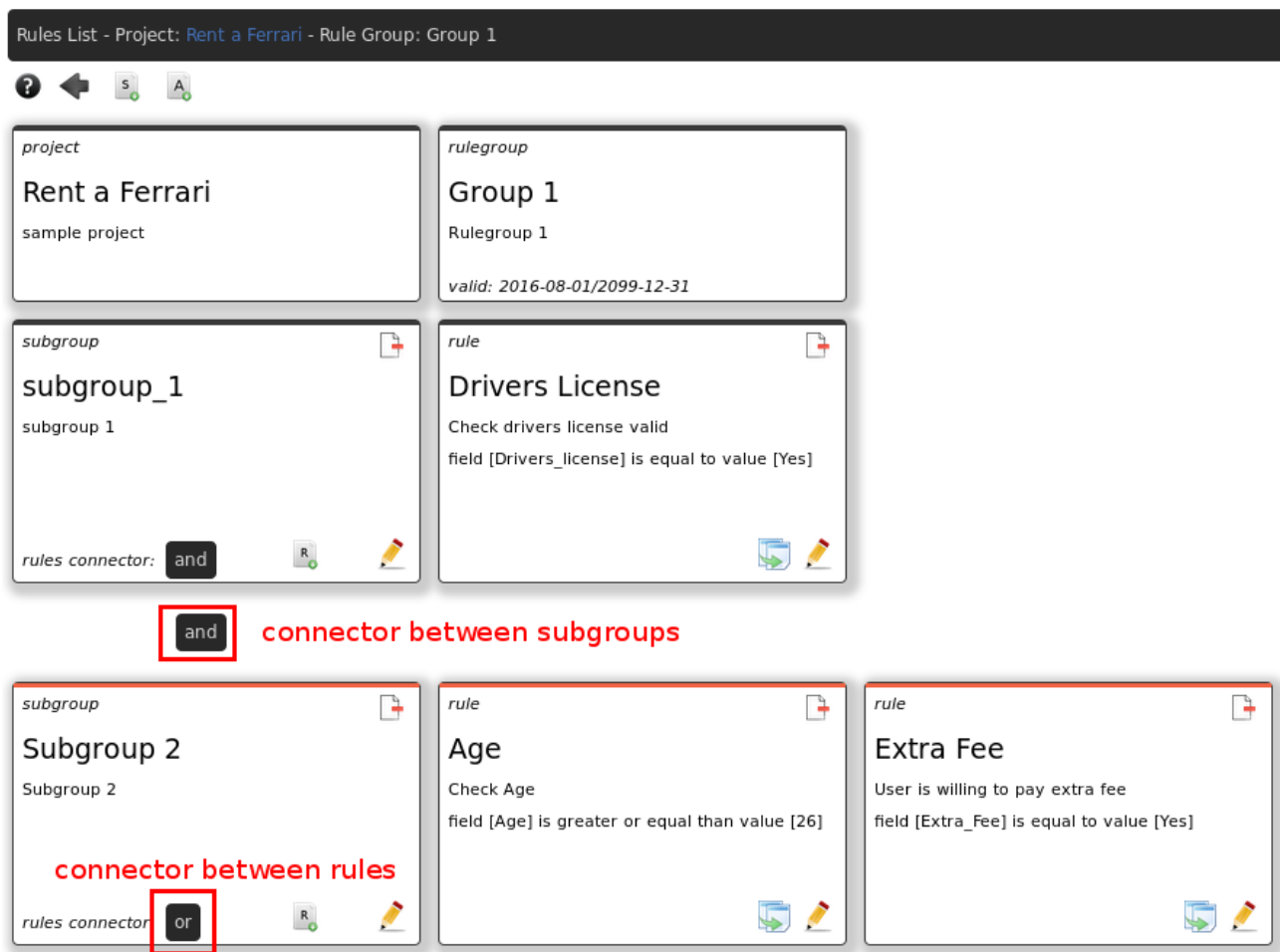
?

←

Name:	<input type="text" value="Extra Fee"/>	
Description:	<input type="text" value="User is willing to pay extra fee"/>	
Field to check:	<input type="text" value="Extra_Fee"/>	Type: <input type="text" value="string"/> ▼
Check:	<input type="text" value="is equal to"/> ▼	
Field to check against:	<input type="text"/>	Type: <input type="text"/> ▼
Value to check against:	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	Type: <input type="text" value="string"/> ▼
Additional Parameter:	<input type="text"/>	Type: <input type="text"/> ▼
Message Passed:	<input type="text" value="Field [Extra_Fee] \$1 correctly is equal to \$0"/>	<input type="button" value="<"/>
Message Failed:	<input type="text" value="Field [Extra_Fee] \$1 incorrectly not is equal to \$0"/>	<input type="button" value="<"/>

Click on "save" and then "close".

We have created now all rules that are required according to the business logic of the car rental company:



So the logic we have created goes as follows:

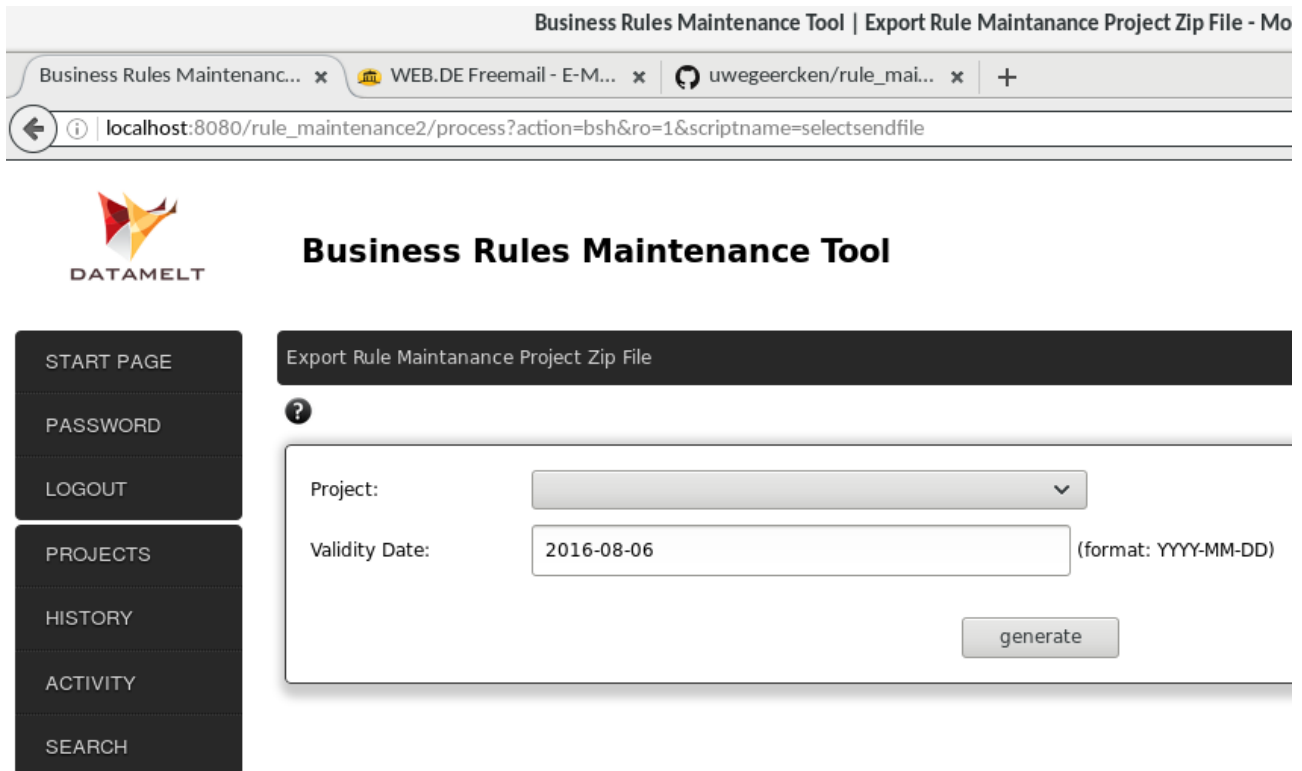
"Check if the user has a drivers license **and** check if the users age is 26+ **or** if the user is willing to pay an extra fee".

The "and" comes from the connection between the subgroups. The "or" comes from the connector between the rules of that subgroup.

Step 4 - Export the project

Our business logic is defined. The final step in the Business Rules Maintenance Tool is to export the complete project. This will create a zip file which contains all the logic we have defined before.

In the menu on the left click on "export".



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Export Rule Maintenance Project Zip File - Mo". The browser tabs include "Business Rules Maintenanc...", "WEB.DE Freemail - E-M...", and "uwegeercken/rule_mai...". The address bar shows "localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selectsendfile".

The main content area features the "DATAMELT" logo and the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool". On the left is a sidebar menu with options: "START PAGE", "PASSWORD", "LOGOUT", "PROJECTS", "HISTORY", "ACTIVITY", and "SEARCH".

The main form is titled "Export Rule Maintenance Project Zip File" and includes a help icon (?). It contains two input fields: "Project:" with a drop-down menu and "Validity Date:" with a text input field containing "2016-08-06". A note "(format: YYYY-MM-DD)" is next to the date field. A "generate" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Select the project you created from the drop-down list. Then select (or enter in the correct format) a validity date. Only rulegroups valid on this date will be included in the exported file. This functionality allows you to plan changes to projects – and thus changes to your business logic – ahead of time.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Business Rules Maintenance Tool | Export Rule Maintenance Project Zip File - M...". The address bar shows the URL "localhost:8080/rule_maintenance2/process?action=bsh&ro=1&scriptname=selectsendfile". The page features the DATAMELT logo and a sidebar with navigation links: START PAGE, PASSWORD, LOGOUT, PROJECTS, and HISTORY. The main content area is titled "Export Rule Maintenance Project Zip File" and contains a form with the following fields:

- Project:** A dropdown menu with the selected value "Rent a Ferrari - sample project".
- Validity Date:** A text input field containing "2016-08-06", with a note "(format: YYYY-MM-DD)" to its right.
- generate:** A button to submit the form.

Finally click on "generate" to create the project zip file. The Web Browser will ask you where in the filesystem you want to store the file.

When the rule engine runs

The rule engine will check the logic of the rulegroup against the data. It determines that the user has a valid drivers license – the rule passes the check. It then determines that the user is **not** at or above the age of 26 – the rule fails. Next it determines that the user is willing to pay an extra fee. This is the “or” connection between the rule for the age and the rule for the extra fee.

The overall logic is:

“rule drivers license passes and (rule age passes or rule extra fee passes)”

As the user is below 26 but is willing to pay an extra fee, the complete logic as such passes the business requirements – the whole rulegroup passes and this means that Maria will be able to rent the Ferrari.

What now?

What can you now do with the file you created?

You can run it with the Java Rule Engine “JaRE”. This means that you have to download the rule engine from the GitHub address shown at the beginning. You will have to write a Java class that reads the data from the database and provides it to the rule engine. You will have to indicate to the ruleengine to use the project zip file you created. And then you can run the ruleengine and retrieve the results.

Using this approach you could also embed the ruleengine in your Java project – a regular application or a web application. Or you could use it from Java related script languages such as Groovy or Beanshell.

Alternatively you can use the Pentaho PDI Tool. PDI (also called “Kettle”) is an ETL tool to create **Extract-Transform-Load** processes. There is a plugin available that allows to connect the Pentaho ETL (transformation) to the rule engine. So you can read the data from the database, pipe it through the rule engine and display or output the results. No hand coding is required for this alternative!

And why?

When you define your rules externally, separately from your IT code or processes then this allows for a clear division of responsibilities: IT users maintain IT code/processes and the Business users manage the business rules. The IT code is cleaner and this is good for quality. Each expert works in his domain of responsibility.

If the business logic is not mixed with the IT code or processes, then the IT code will be easier to maintain and changes can be done in a more agile way without affecting business logic.

Extending or changing the business logic will not require to change the IT logic and having a tool to maintain the business logic is more transparent for the business user.

Final words

I hope this is a good example to start with. The ruleengine and the Business Rules Maintenance Tool, as well as the Pentaho PDI plugin have proven to work in a production scenario.

Once you have worked a while in the Business Rules Maintenance Tool it is a quick and elegant way to define your business logic which is kept in a central place across multiple projects.

All software is free to use and open source at **NO** cost. It can be downloaded from the GitHub address

<http://github.com/uwegeercken>

Please send your feedback. This helps to detect issues and to enhance the tools, so that others will benefit from it.

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