WADE TUTORIAL

DEFINING AGENT TASKS AS WORKFLOWS

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WADE 2.0 OR LATER

WOLF 2.0.1 OR LATER

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1 Introduction

This tutorial describes how to create applications exploiting agents and workflows based on the **WADE** (Workflow and Agents Development Environment) platform. WADE is an extension of **JADE** (http://jade.tilab.com) a popular Open Source framework for the development of distributed agent oriented applications. WADE adds to JADE

1. The possibility of defining agent tasks according to the **workflow** metaphor
2. An architecture and additional components and mechanisms that facilitate the **administration** of a distributed WADE based application in terms of configuration, activation and monitoring.

Being WADE an extension of JADE, a WADE-based application is also a JADE-based application and inherits the basic JADE architectural elements: agents, containers, main container, AMS and DF. A fairly good understanding of JADE basic features (agents, behaviours and messaging in particular) is a prerequisite for the comprehension of this tutorial. People not familiar with JADE are encouraged to read the JADE Programming Tutorial for Beginners (http://jade.tilab.com/doc/JADEProgramming-Tutorial-for-beginners.pdf) first.

The two main features (i.e. workflows and administration support) provided by WADE can be used separately and, as a consequence, WADE-based applications can be classified in two main categories

- Simple JADE applications where some agent tasks ("behaviours" according to the JADE terminology) are defined as workflows (we will talk about "*JADE plus workflows applications*" in this case).
- Applications structured according to the complete WADE architecture and therefore able to exploit all WADE features (we will talk about "*Full featured WADE applications*" in this case).

This tutorial focuses on JADE plus workflow applications. For a detailed explanation of the complete WADE architecture and functionality the reader can refer to the WADE User Guide (http://jade.tilab.com/wade/doc/WADE-User-Guide.pdf).

In principle an application built on top of WADE can be created using "notepad-programming". However, considering that its most carachterizing feature is the possibility of defining agent tasks as workflows, WADE is coupled with a graphical development environment called **WOLF**. WOLF is and Eclipse (www.eclipse.org) plugin and allows

- Easily configuring an Eclipse project targeting the development of a WADE- based application.
- Graphically creating and maintaining workflows that can be executed by WADE agents.

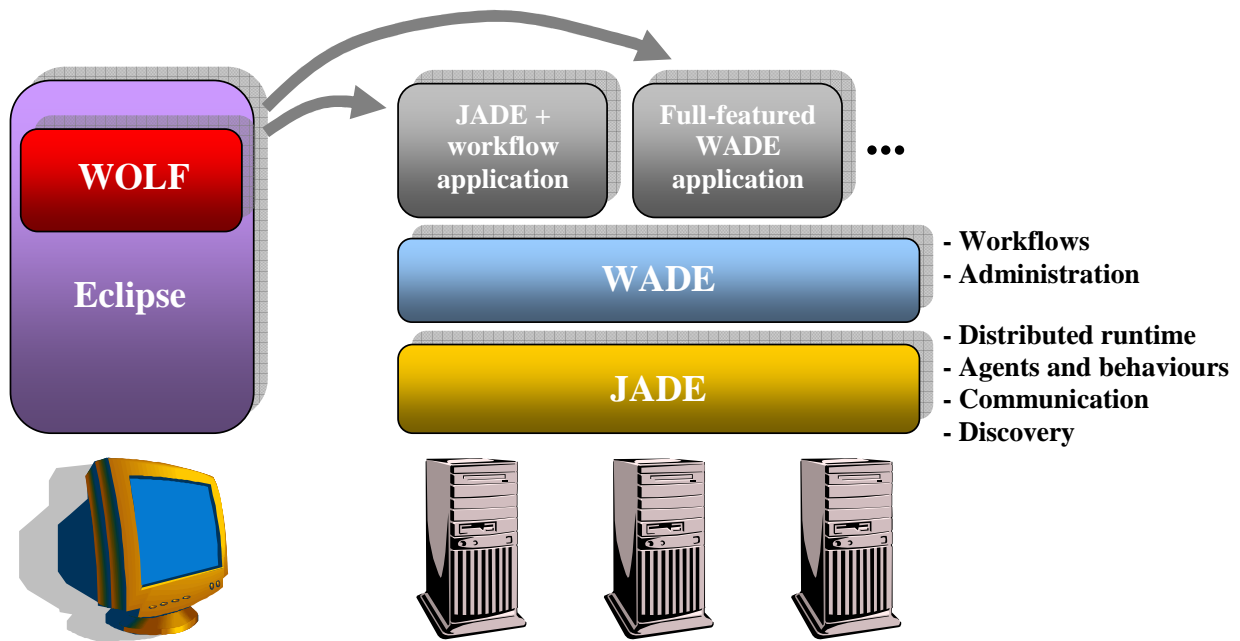Figure 1 summarizes the concepts described above.

Figure 1 - JADE, WADE and WOLF

1.1   Installation

WADE
Installing WADE is as simple as unzipping the WADE distribution zip file (available for download from the WADE website at http://jade.tilab.com/wade) somewhere on your disk.

WOLF
As mentioned WOLF is an Eclipse plugin and therefore it is necessary to have **Eclipse** version 3.3 (Europa) or later already installed. Actually **versione 3.4 is suggested** as it fixes some bugs that may create annoying problems when using WOLF. Furthermore WOLF makes use of the **GEF** (Graphical Editing Framework) plugin for graphic rendering version 3.3 or later that must be installed too. Both Eclipse and GEF can be downloaded from the Eclipse website at http://www.eclipse.org.
At this point the easiest way to install WOLF is unzipping the WOLF distribution zip file (available for download from the WADE website at http://jade.tilab.com/wade) into the Eclipse home directory. Refer to the Eclipse documentation for more details about plugins installation.
If a previous version of WOLF is already installed, it is necessary to remove it from the Eclipse `plugins` directory (by simply deleting the subdirectory related to WOLF) before installing the new one.

Both WADE and WOLF require **Java 5** or later.

1.2   The "Toys Assembler" case study

In order to show how to develop WADE based applications this tutorial makes use of a simple case study where we want to create an application that is able to assemble toys. More in details the application must be able to assemble "puppets" rather than "wagons" by putting together the necessary components.

- A puppet is composed of
    - o   1 head
    - o   1 body
    - o   2 arms

> o 2 legs
- A wagon is composed of
  > o 1 cockpit
  > o 4 wheels

Components are stored in a store-room. An external application (StoreKeeper) embeds an inventory where components availability and position in the store room are recorded. The StoreKeeper application makes available such information by means of a Web Service interface that gets the required type (head, leg, wheel...) and quantity of component as input parameters.

However the Toys Assembler application we are developing must take into account that the real position of components in the store room can be different with respect to that provided by the StoreKeeper, because someone may have moved the components without updating the inventory. In that case the Toys Assembler application must be able to find the components itself.

The Toys Assembler application must get the type of toy (puppet or wagon) to assemble from the user, check the availability of the related components and retrieve their position invoking the StoreKeeper web service, retrieve the components in the store room and finally assemble the toy. In order to retrieve the components in the store room the Toys Assembler application has to control some robots able to perform three different actions
- Fix a destination in the store room
- Move towards the currently fixed destination
- Look around and load components in sight
Of course these robots, as well as the actual toy components assembling operation are completely emulated.
Figure 2 summarizes the Toys Assembler scenario.

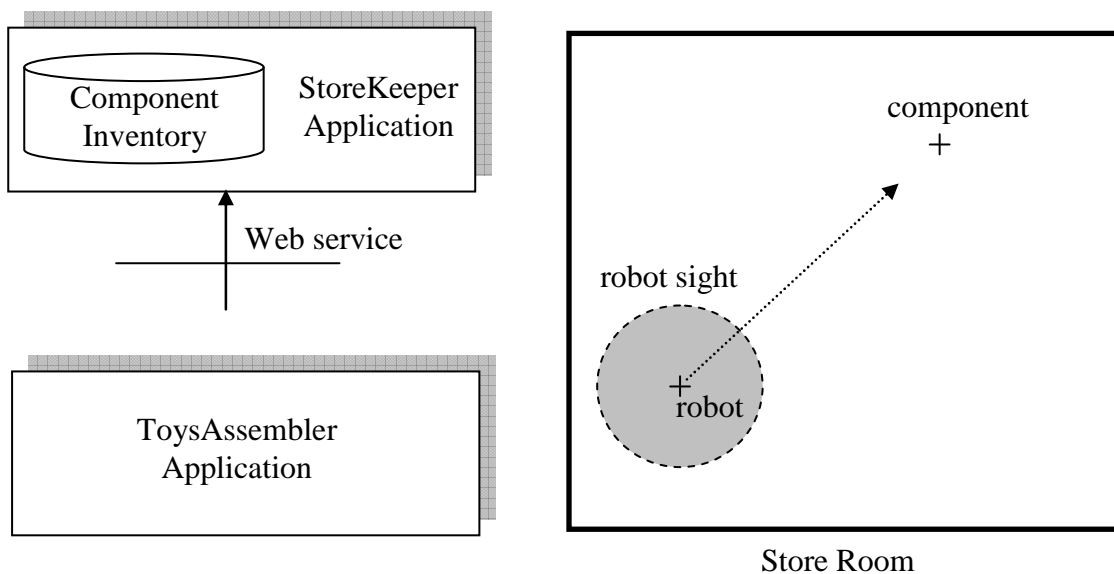**Figure 2 - The Toys Assembler scenario**

1.2.1 Additional material

The complete source code of the Toys Assembler application we will develop in this tutorial is available for download from the WADE web site at XXX. The same package also includes the StoreKeeper application ready to be started.
More in details the ToysAssempler.zip file is structured as follows

```
ToysAssembler/
    |--- ...
```

```
       |---src/        ← This includes the full ToysAssembler application sources
StoreKeeper/
     |---build.xml
     |---startStoreKeeper.bat
     |---startStoreKeeper.sh
     |---...
     |---src/        ← This includes the StoreKeeper application sources
     |---lib/        ← This includes the StoreKeeper application libraries
```

The `StoreKeeper` directory, besides the sources and libraries of the StoreKeeper application, includes two scripts (one for Windows and the other for Linux/Unix) that can be used to start it. Here is how the StoreKeeper application output looks like.

```
-----------------------
The Store-Keeper web service is accessible at URL
http://localhost:2000/axis/services/StoreKeeperPort?wsdl
-----------------------
added head {x=125 y=240 quantity=100}
added body {x=250 y=120 quantity=100}
added leg {x=250 y=240 quantity=100}
added arm {x=375 y=240 quantity=100}
added wheel {x=125 y=120 quantity=100}
added cockpit {x=375 y=120 quantity=100}
```

As can be seen from the output above, when activated the StoreKeeper application prints to the standard output the URL where the WSDL describing its Web Service interface can be retrieved.

2   Creating a "JADE plus workflows" application

In this section we start creating the Toys Assembler application and in particular we will setup an Eclipse project suitable to develop it, define the application structure and write the code of the main agent classes. In next section we will focus on the definition of the tasks our agents will have to execute in form of workflows.

2.1   Creating the "Toys Assembler" project

Having installed WOLF into the Eclipse IDE as described in section 1.1, the first step to develop the Toys Assembler application is to *create a suitable Java project* (note that WADE, as well as JADE, is fully written in Java and therefore an Eclipse project targeting the development of a WADE based application is always a Java project). Let's call it `ToysAssembler`.
Be sure that the project uses Java 5 or later, because, as mentioned before, both WADE and WOLF require it.

In order to enable all the features supported by WOLF on the ToysAssembler Java project it is necessary to *add the WADE nature* to the project. This can be done by right-clicking on the project root and selecting the "`WADE Tools --> Add WADE Nature`" menu item (refer to the Eclipse documentation for more details about "natures").

Once the Wade Nature has been added, a new section called "Wade Configuration" is added to the Properties of the project (see Figure 3). In this section it is possible to automatically *add all libraries required by WADE to the project classpath* and *manage WADE related configuration* for the project.
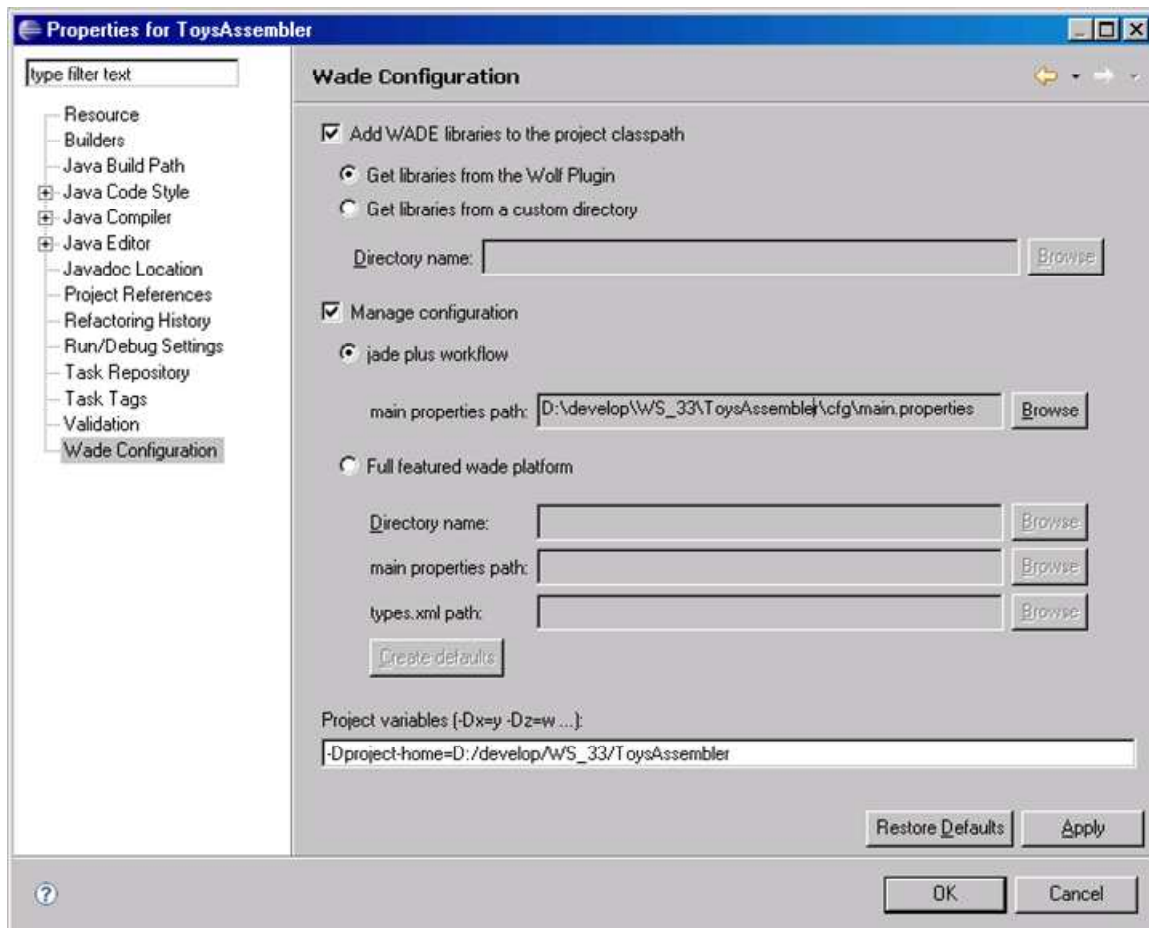
Figure 3 - WADE Configuration property page for the ToysAssembler project

WADE libraries can be taken either from the WOLF plug-in itself or from a custom directory (typically the directory where the WADE distribution file was unzipped). Let's use the simple option and get WADE libraries from the WOLF plug-in (see Figure 3).

Since we are creating a JADE application whose agents are able to execute workflows, in the "Manage Configuration" section we select the "Jade Plus Workflow" option. At that point we can indicate the pathname of a properties file including the configurations to launch the JADE Main Container of our Toys Assembler application. Let's create a cfg directory under the project root[1] a minimal configuration property file (`main.properties`) in the root directory of the project as below and select it using the `Browse` button

```
# Toys Assembler Main Container property file
platform-id= TOYS-ASSEMBLER
gui= true
```

2.2 Starting the Toys Assembler application Main Container

In order to test if everything is OK it is possible to start the Main Container of the Toys Assembler application by right clicking on the ToysAssembler project and selecting the `WADE Tools -->` `Run Main Container` menu item.

---

[1] By default WADE-based applications assumes configuration files to be located in the `<project-home>/cfg` directory. Therefore, unless there are specific needs, we suggest to follow this practice.
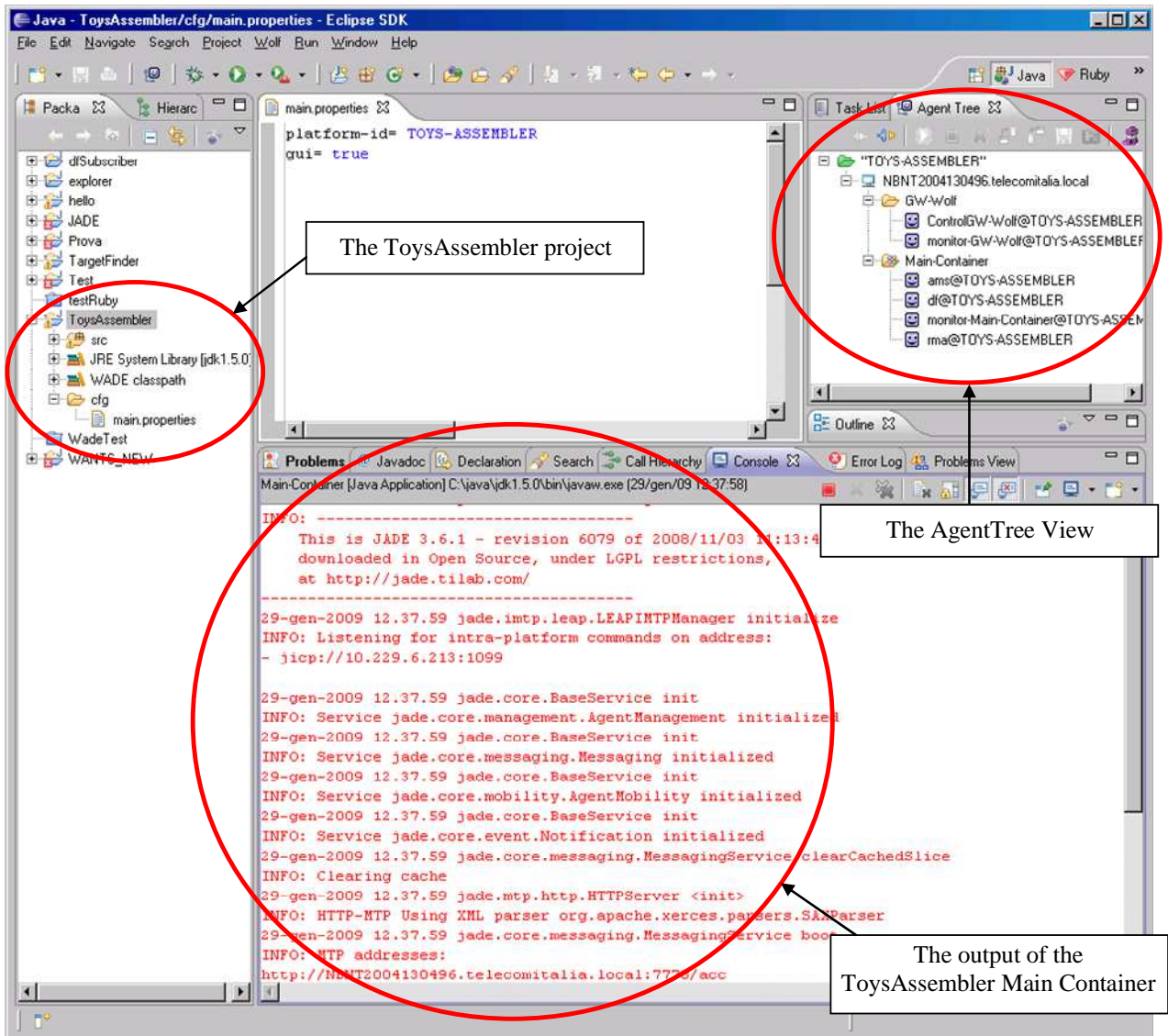
Figure 4 - The Agent Tree View

As shown in Figure 4, the AgentTree should automatically appear and show hosts (just the localhost in this case), containers and agents active in the platform (refer to the Wade User Guide for a more detailed description). Since we set the `gui` configuration option to `true` in the `main.properties` file, the usual JADE RMA GUI should also appear as a stand alone window.

2.3 Application Structure

Having created and configured the ToysAssembler project we can now start developing the application code. As shown in Figure 5 we structure it with an Assembler Agent responsible for getting the user input and coordinating the toys assembling process, plus a number of Searcher Agents corresponding to the (emulated) robots that will retrieve toys components in the store room.
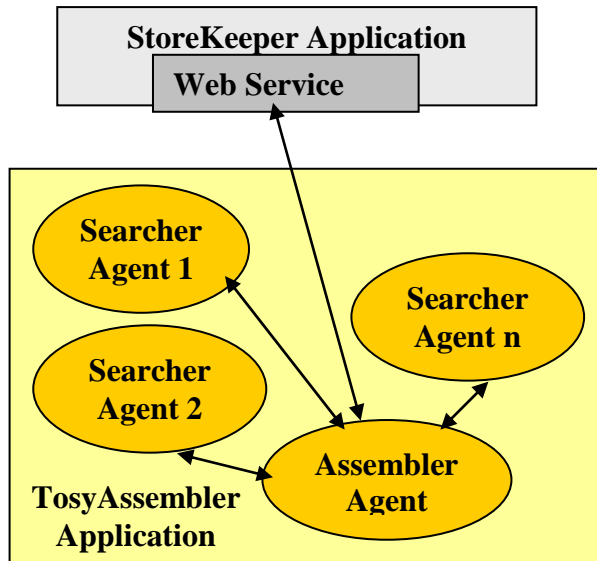
Figure 5 - Toys Assembler application Structure

In terms of packages we create a `toysassembler` main package with three sub-packages:

- `assembler`, to hold the `AssemblerAgent` class and the related classes
- `searcher`, to hold the `SearcherAgent` class and the related classes
- `workflows`, to hold the classes implementing the workflows executed by agents

Classes related to toy assembling domain entities such as a Toy-Component and a Store-Room are kept in the main `toysassembler` package.

2.4 Main Agent classes

We will define the tasks to be executed by both the Assembler Agent and the Searcher Agent as workflows and therefore both the `AssemblerAgent` class and the `SearcherAgent` class will not inherit from the `jade.core.Agent` class directly, but rather from the `WorkflowEngineAgent` class (the base class for all agents executing workflows) included in the `com.tilab.wade.performer` package.

Here is how the `AssemblerAgent` class can look like

```
...
public class AssemblerAgent extends WorkflowEngineAgent {

  private AssemblerAgentGui myGui;
  private DispatchingCapabilities dc = new DispatchingCapabilities();
  private List searcherAgents = new ArrayList();
  private int index = 0;

  /**
   * Agent initialization
   */
  protected void agentSpecificSetup() throws AgentInitializationException {
    super.agentSpecificSetup();

    // Create and show the gui
    myGui = new AssemblerAgentGui(this);
    myGui.initGui();
    myGui.setVisible(true);
```

```java
    // Initialize the DispatchingCapabilities instance used
    // to launch workflows
    dc.init(this);

    // Subscribe to the DF to keep the searchers list up to date
    ServiceDescription sd = new ServiceDescription();
    sd.setType("Searcher-Agent");
    DFAgentDescription dfTemplate = new DFAgentDescription();
    dfTemplate.addServices(sd);
    SearchConstraints sc = new SearchConstraints();
    sc.setMaxResults(new Long(-1));
    ACLMessage subscribe = DFService.createSubscriptionMessage(
                        this,
                        getDefaultDF(),
                        dfTemplate,
                        sc);
    addBehaviour(new SubscriptionInitiator(this, subscribe) {
        ...
    } );
  }

  ...

  /**
   * Return the type of this agent. This will be
   * inserted in the default DF description
   */
  public AgentType getType() {
    AgentType type = new AgentType();
    type.setDescription("Assembler-Agent");
    return type;
  }

  /**
   * Select a suitable SearcherAgent
   */
  public AID getSearcherAgent() {
    if (searcherAgents.isEmpty()) {
      throw new RuntimeException("No SearcherAgent available");
    }
    if (index >=searcherAgents.size()) {
      index = 0;
    }
    return (AID) searcherAgents.get(index++);
  }

  /**
   * The method invoked by the GUI when the user requests
   * the assembling of a toy
   */
  void assembleToy(final String type) {
    ...
  }
}
```

As all WADE agents (i.e. agents extending the `WADEAgentImpl` class) the `WorkflowEngineAgent` class already defines the `setup()` method to perform WADE specific initializations. Therefore agents extending it will have to put their initialization code in the `agentSpecificSetup()` method. Such initializations in the case of the `AssemblerAgent` class basically corresponds to

- The creation and display of a GUI by means of which the Assembler Agent can get the type of toy to assemble from the user.
- The initialization of a `DispatchingCapabilities` instance that will be used to start the execution of workflows.
- The activation of a behaviour that subscribes to the DF and keeps up to date a list of agents of type "`Searcher-Agent`" (the `searcherAgents` member variable). This list is used to select a suitable `SearcherAgent` (method `getSearcherAgent()`) to delegate the component retrieval task to as will be described section 3.7.

The `AssemblerAgentGui` class is a minimal Swing GUI whose code is out of the scope of this tutorial. The only interesting thing to know is that the `assembleToy(String toyType)` callback method of the `AssemblerAgent` class is invoked whenever the user selects a type of toy and presses OK. In this method the execution of the `AssemblingToy` workflow is launched by means of a `DispatchingCapabilities` instance as will be described in section 4.

WADE agents automatically registers with the DF providing a default description. Such description contains, among others, the agent type as returned by the `getType()` method of the `WADEAgentImpl` class. When creating a "full featured WADE application" (see the WADE User Guide) agent types can be defined declaratively and it is possible to associate configuration properties to each agent type. Since we are now dealing with a "JADE plus workflow application" we have to override the `getType()` method to make it return the "`Assembler-Agent`" type.

The code of the `SearcherAgent` is definitely simpler since, unlike the `AssemblerAgent`, it does not have agent-wide variables or non-workflow behaviours.

```java
public class SearcherAgent extends WorkflowEngineAgent {
  ...

  /**
   * Agent initialization
   */
  public void agentSpecificSetup() throws AgentInitializationException {
    super.agentSpecificSetup();

    // A SearcherAgent can search for 1 component set at a time
    // --> Set the pool-size to 1 so that we cannot execute workflows
    // in parallel
    setPoolSize(1);
  }

  ...
}
```

The only interesting things to note is the setting of the workflow execution pool size to 1. This means that Searcher Agents will be able to execute one workflow at a time. This reflects the fact that for instance a robot retrieving 4 wheels in the store room to assemble a wagon cannot retrieve 2 arms at the same time.

3 Creating workflows

In this section we describe how to create workflows that can be executed by `WorkflowEngineAgent-s`. **Workflows in WADE are Java classes that extend the `com.tilab.wade.performer.WorkflowBehaviour` class**. As a consequence the first

step to do to create a workflow is to create a new class and make it extend
`WorkflowBehaviour`.

```
package toysassembler.workflows;

import com.tilab.wade.performer.WorkflowBehaviour;

/**
 * The main toy assembling workflow
 */
public class AssemblingToysWorkflow extends WorkflowBehaviour {
}
```

3.1   Opening the workflow graphical editor

WOLF provides a **graphical view** suitable to show a workflow in graphical form and to define/edit the flow of execution managing activities and transitions. The graphical view is kept in synch with the **code view** (i.e. that usual Eclipse Java editor) so that modifications done in the graphical view are immediately reflected to the code view.

In order to open the workflow graphical editor (implementing the graphical view) it is sufficient to right-click on a workflow class and selecting the `WADE Tools --> Open Workflow` menu item as depicted in Figure 6.

Clearly, since the `AssemblingToyWorkflow` class we created in pervious section is empty, the graphical view shown by the workflow graphical editor is empty too. The palette appearing on the right side of the graphical editor can be used to define the execution flow insering activities and transitions as described in next section.
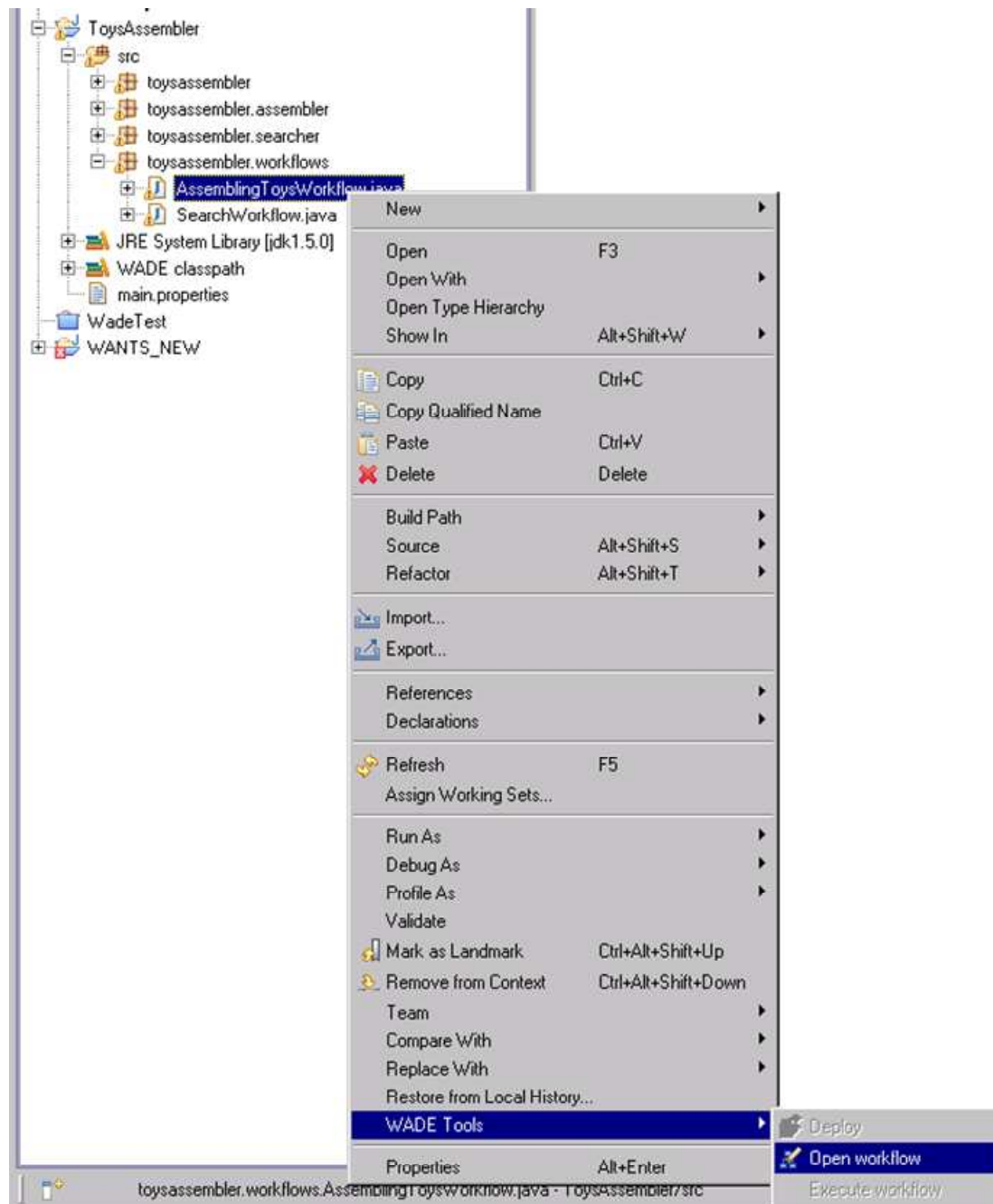
Figure 6 - Opening the Workflow Graphical Editor

3.2 Creating activities

WADE workflows are composed of activities of different types such as calling a Web Service, invoking another workflow or executing raw code directly included in the workflow class (a complete description of all activity types is available in the WADE User Guide).

Let's start defining our workflow by inserting an activity that initializes the list of components to be assembled on the basis the type of toy indicated by the user. For this purpose we have a simple `Catalogue` class included in the `toysassembler` package that provides the information we need by means of the static method `getRequiredComponents(String toyType)`. Our activity therefore mainly corresponds to the invocation of that method. Considering that, we use a Code Activity to implement it. Select the `Code` item in the palette, then click somewhere in the (empty at the moment) graphical view. The Activity Properties dialog box appears, as depicted in Figure 7, where we can define the activity name and order (initial, final or intermediate).
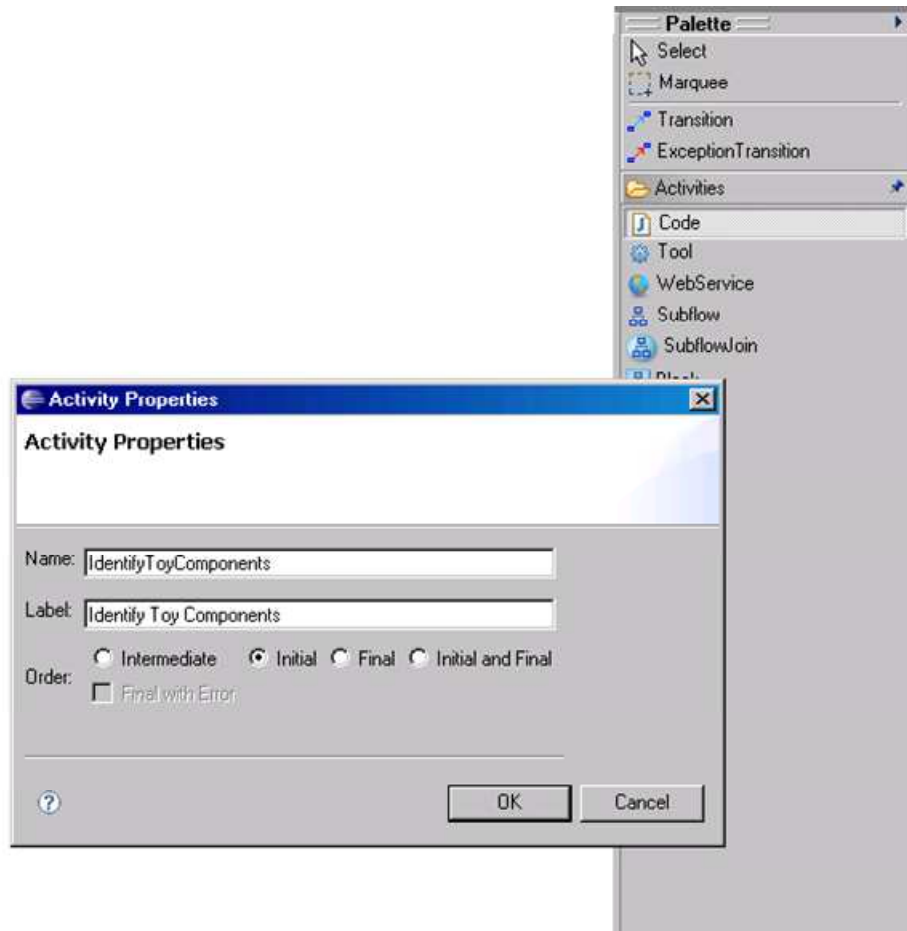
Figure 7 - Inserting a Code Activity

We name the activity `IdentifyToyComponents` and we mark it as `Initial`. As soon as we click on the `OK` button a box representing the newly inserted activity appears in the graphical view as depicted in Figure 8.
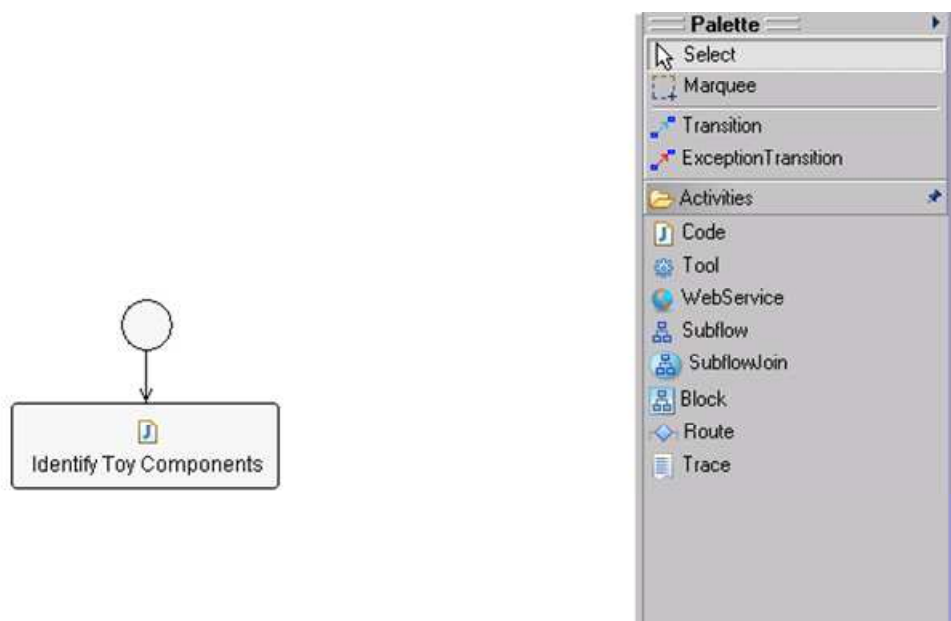

Figure 8 - The Initial Activity

The circle above the activity box indicates that this is the initial activity of the workflow i.e. the execution entry point.

By right-clicking on the activity box and selecting the `Go to code` menu item we jump to the code view in an empty method that WOLF created for us and that will be executed when the `IdentifyToyComponent` activity is visited. We fill the body of this method with the code to initialize the list of components we need to assemble the requested toy. In particular we keep this list in an `Iterator` variable called `requiredComponents`.

```
...
@FormalParameter
private String toyType;
...
private Iterator requiredComponents;

...

  protected void executeIdentifyToyComponents() throws Exception {
    System.out.println("--- Start assembling "+toyType+"...");
    List l = Catalogue.getRequiredComponents(toyType);
    requiredComponents = l.iterator();
  }
...
```

3.3   Workflow parameters

In the code snippet presented in previous section we make use of a member variable called `toyType` of type `String` that represents the type of toy we have to assemble. This variable is annotated with the `@FormalParameter` annotation included in the `com.tilab.wade.performer` package (refer to the Java documentation for information about annotations). This means that this variable represnts a parameter of our workflow and will be automatically initialized at workflow execution time with the value passed as actual parameter in the workflow execution request (see section 4).

```
// INPUT parameter: the type of toy to assemble
@FormalParameter
private String toyType;
// OUTPUT parameters: whether or not the toy was successfully assembled and,
// in case it is not, the component that was not available
@FormalParameter(mode=FormalParameter.OUTPUT)
private boolean toyAssembled = false;
@FormalParameter(mode=FormalParameter.OUTPUT)
private String missingComponent;
```

The code above shows that our Assembling Toy Workflow also has two output parameters (a `boolean` parameter indicating whether or not the toy was successfully assembled and a `String` parameter indicating, in case the toy could not be assembled, the missing component) whose values will be automatically passed back to the requester when the workflow execution completes.

3.4   Creating Transitions

Going on in the definition of the Assembling Toy Workflow we can now add new activities and link them by means of transitions. In particular we add a second activity where we get the next Component Set to retrieve. Note that what we get from the `Catalogue` of toy components in the first activity is actually a list of `ComponentSetDescriptor` objects each one describing a set of required components in terms of their type and quantity. For instance to build a wagon we need

- 1 cockpit (component set #1)

- 4 wheels (component set #2)

After that we add a transition from the `IdentifyToyComponents` activity to the `SelectNextComponetSetToSearch` activity. To do that select the `Transition` item in the palette, click on the source activity box, and then click again on the destination activity box. The Transition Properties dialog box appears. As soon as we click the `OK` button a thin arrow connecting the two activities appears as depicted in Figure 9.
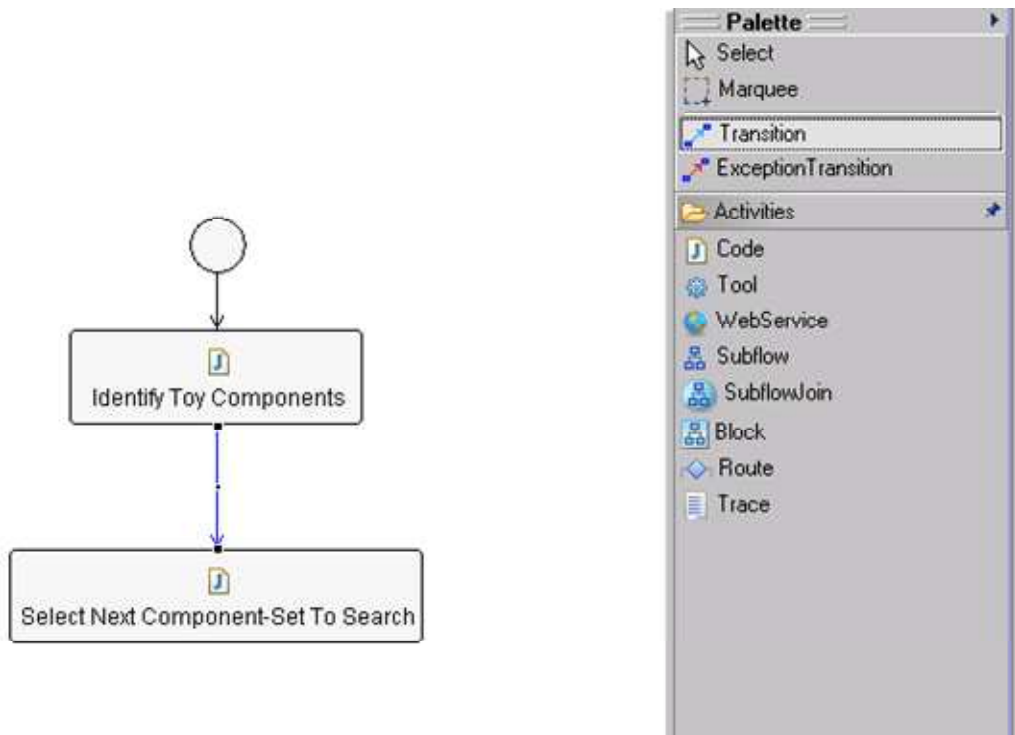

Figure 9 - Unconditioned Transition

The transition we inserted is unconditioned. Of course it is possible to associate a condition to a transition by checking the `Add a condition to the transition` checkbox in the Transition Properties dialog box. For each transition condition WOLF generates a `boolean` method in the workflow class that implements it. Such method is executed each time the condition is evaluated. If the method returns `true` the related transition is followed.

3.5 The Assembling Toy Workflow

By adding new activities and transitions to our Assembling Toy workflow we end up with the execution flow depicted in Figure 10. In particular the activity labeled `Get Component-Set Coordinates` invokes the web service provided by the StoreKeeper external application and gets back whether or not the required quantity of components of a given type (e.g. 4 wheels) is available in the store room and, in that case, the position where to find them. WebService activities are described in more details in section 3.6.

Two transitions exit from this activity: if the components described in the current component-set are available (conditioned transition) the execution flow goes on to the `MapCoordinatesToRoom` activity; alternatively (unconditioned transition) the `ComponentNotAvailable` activity is executed where we simply fill the `missingComponent` output parameter as shown below.

```java
protected void executeComponentNotAvailable() throws Exception {
  System.out.println("--- "+currentComponentSet+" not available!");
  missingComponent = currentComponentSet.getType();
}
```
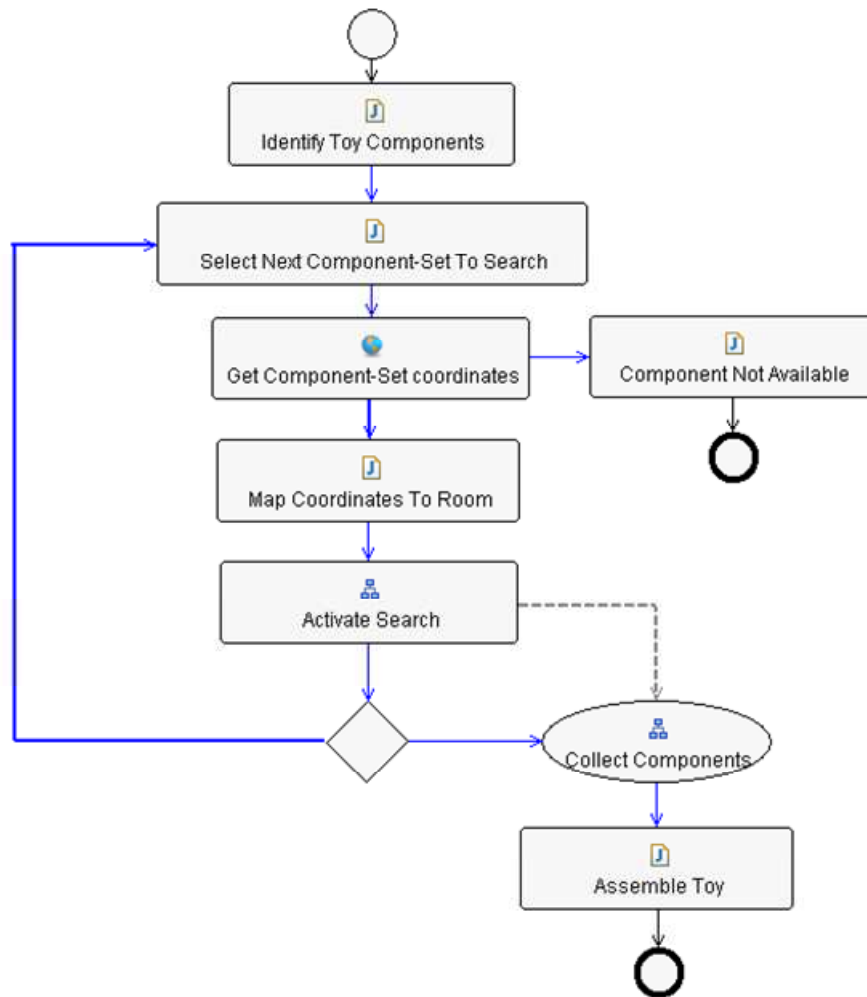
Figure 10 - The Assembling Toy Workflow

The `MapCoordinatesToRoom` activity creates a `Room` object initialized with the nominal position of the components to retrieve as returned by the StoreKeeper application. The created `Room` object is then passed to a Searcher Agent for the actual retrieval in the `ActivateSearch` activity. Since the task to retrieve a set of components of a given type carried out by Searcher Agents will be defined as a workflow too (see the `SearchWorkflow` class in the case study code), the `ActivateSearch` activity is an activity of type `Subflow`. This is to say that the execution of that activity corresponds to the execution of another workflow, possibly (as in this case) carried out by a different agent. Subflow activities are described in more details in section 3.7. In particular in this case the `SearchWorkflow` subflow is executed asynchronously with respect to the main Assembling Toy workflow. In this way we don't have to wait for the retrieval of the first set of components before handling the next one.

Once all component retrieval tasks have been delegated to available Seracher Agents, we go to the `CollectComponets` activity where we just wait for the Searcher Agents to complete their tasks, collect all retrieved components and finally (`AssembleToy` activity) assemble the toy. The `CollectComponents` activity is an activity of type SubflowJoin and will be described in more details in section 3.7.

3.6   Invoking Web Services

WADE and WOLF provide an easy way to invoke web services from within a workflow by means of WebService activities. In order to use such activities it is necessary to import the WSDL

describing the web service to be invoked in advance[2]. This can be done by right-clicking on the project root and selecting the WADE Tools → Import WSDL menu item. The Import WSDL dialog box appears as depicted in Figure 11 where it is possible to specify the WSDL to import (either as a file or as an HTTP URL) and a project source folder where the classes generated by the import operation will be stored.
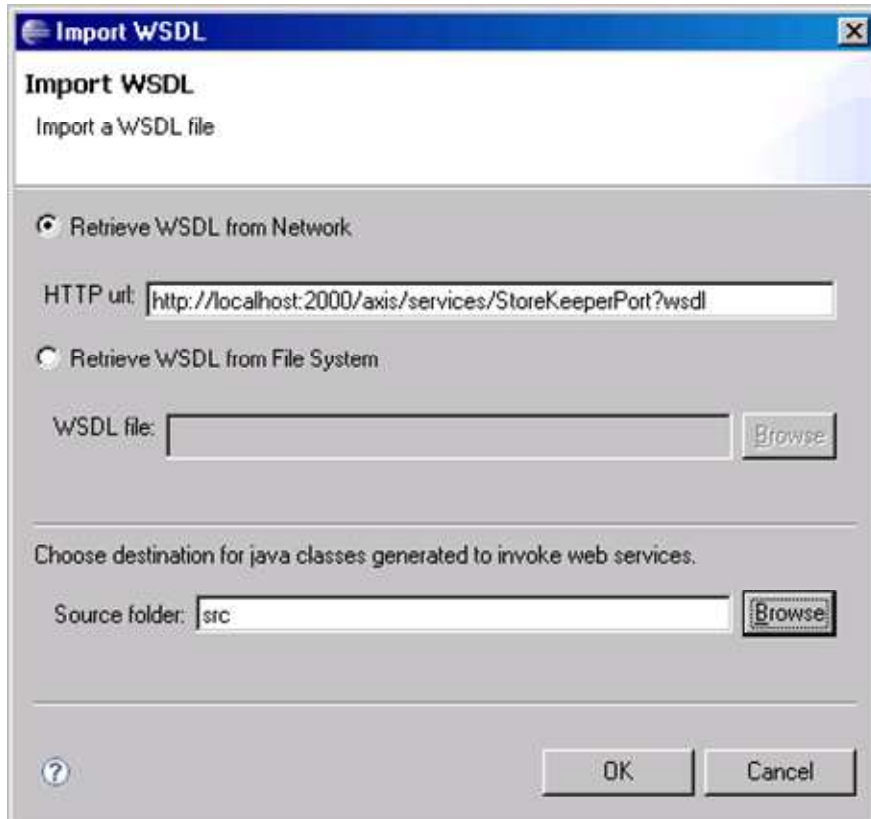

Figure 11- The Import WSDL dialog box

With reference to our Toys Assembler case study, we need to invoke the web service provided by the StoreKeeper external application to retrieve the availability and location of a given type and quantity of components. When activated (see section 1.2.1), the StoreKeeper application prints to the standard output the URL where the WSDL describing its Web Service interface can be retrieved. Select the Retrieve WSDL from Network radio button, then insert the StoreKeeper web service WSDL URL in the HTTP url text field. After that select the src source folder of our ToysAssembler project and click OK.

The import operation generates a set of classes (in the indicated source folder) that will be used at workflow execution time to actually invoke the web services described by the imported WSDL. Unless they have specific customization needs, developers don't need to care about such classes as WOLF and WADE hide all the details of the web service invocation process.

If the imported WSDL declares some complex types, suitable Java bean classes are also generated in the indicated source folder to represent them. In our case the StoreKeeper WSDL declares the Point complex type that is used to indicate the position of the requested components in the store room and we can see the StoreKeeper.Point (generated) class that represents it.

Once a WSDL has been imported it is possible to invoke the related web service operations by means of WebService activities. In order to insert a WebService activity select the WebService

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[2] A new version supporting dynamic invocation (with no WSDL import phase) is under development

item in the Workflow Graphical Editor palette and then click somewhere in the graphical view. The Web Service Activity Properties dialog box appears, as depicted in Figure 12. Having specified the activity name and (optionally) label, as usual for all activities, it is possible to select a web service among the available ones in the `Web Service` combo box. In our case, since we only imported the StoreKeeper web service WSDL, we can only select the `StoreKeeperService` item. Once the Web Service has been selected it is possible to choose the actual operation to invoke in the `Operation` combo box. Let's select the `getComponents` operation (the only operation exposed in the StoreKeeper web service). As soon as the operation has been set a suitable table to manage the operation parameters is shown. By double-clicking in the `Value` cell of each input parameter row, the user is prompted to insert a value in form of a Java expression. Similarly for each output parameter the user is prompted to select a member variable of the workflow class where to store the returned value. For the "`type`" and "`quantity`" input parameters we insert `currentComponentSet.getType()` and `currentComponentSet.getNumber()` respectively. As far as output parameters ar concerned we go to the code and create the following member variables.

```
...
private boolean componentSetAvailable;
private Point componentPosition;
...
```

Then we use them to store the "`availability`" and "`location`" output parameters of the `getComponents` operation.
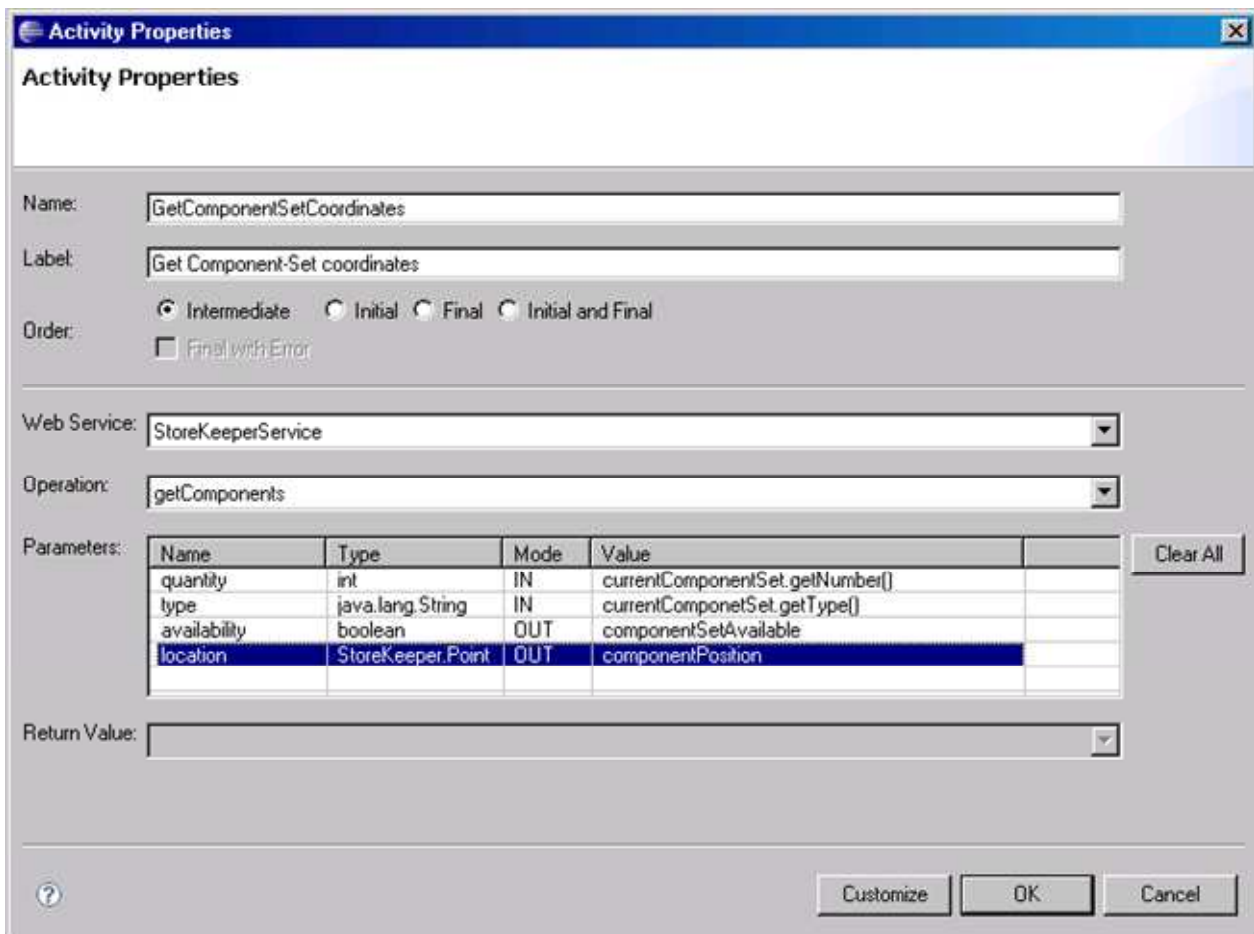

Figure 12 - The Web Service Activity Properties dialog box

Let's switch back to the Java editor and look at the code generated by WOLF. As for Code activities (see section 3.2), a new method was inserted called. The code of this method however is fully managed by WOLF and in general there is nothing else we have to do.

```
...
protected void executeGetComponentSetCoordinates(WebService ws)
                throws Exception {
  ws.fill("quantity", currentComponentSet.getNumber());
  ws.fill("type", currentComponentSet.getType());
  performWebService(ws);
  componentSetAvailable = (Boolean) ws.extract("availability");
  componentPosition = (Point) ws.extract("location");
}
...
```

Note the structure of the method: there is a "*fill section*" where input parameters (if any) are initialized, the actual execution section (implemented by the method `performWebService()`) and finally an "*extract section*" where output parameters (if any) are stored into workflow member variables. This structure is common to all methods associated to activities where a workflow building block (i.e. a web service, a subflow or an external tool) is invoked.

3.7   Subflows

In this section we show how to define activities of type Subflow i.e. activities whose execution consist in the invocation of another workflow possibly delegated to a different agent. With reference to our ToysAssembler case study, having checked the availability of a given set of components and retrieved their position in the store room, the Assembler Agent has to activate a Searcher Agent to actually retrieve the components. From the point of view of the Assembler Agent this is just a step in the main AssemblingToys workflow. On the other hand for the Searcher Agent this means executing the `SearchWorkflow` depicted in Figure 13. The `SearchWorkflow` is not described in this tutorial since it is fully composed of Code activities that were already addressed in section 3.2. Interested readers may inspect its details looking at the case study code.
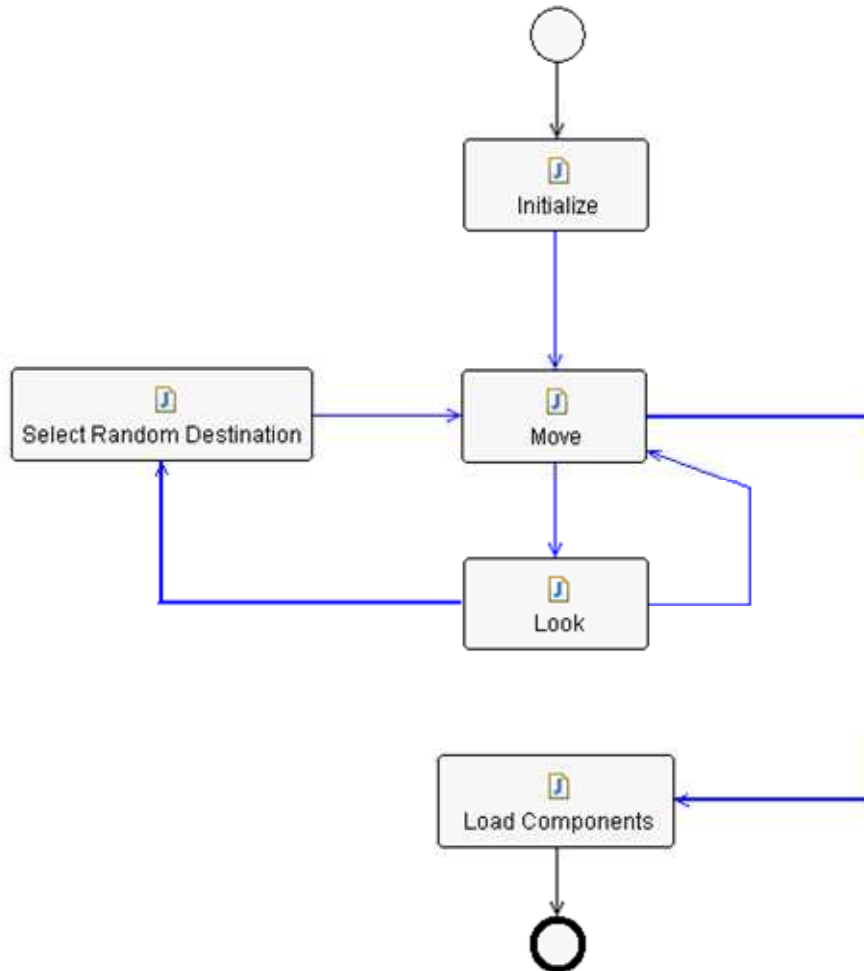
Figure 13 - The SearchWorkflow

In order to insert a Subflow activity select the `Subflow` item in the Workflow Graphical Editor palette and then click somewhere in the graphical view. The Subflow Activity Properties dialog box appears, as depicted in Figure 14. Having specified the activity name and (optionally) label, as usual for all activities, it is possible to select the workflow to execute/delegate in the `Subflow Name` text field. As soon as the workflow has been set a suitable table to manage the workflow parameters is shown. Managing subflow parameters is very similar to managing WebService operation parameters described in section 3.6.

The execution of a subflow can be

- *Synchronous* i.e. the main workflow waits for the completion of the subflow. In this case the output parameters of the subflow are managed within the Subflow activity itself.
- *Asynchronous* i.e. the main workflow just triggers the execution of the subflow and then goes on. This means forking the execution flow. Later in the main flow it will be necessary to insert a SubflowJoin activity to join the forked flow. Clearly in this case subflow output parameters are non yet available when the Subflow activity completes. They will be managed in the SubflowJoin activity.

In our ToysAssembler scenario we want Searcher Agents retrieving components in the store room to work in parallel and therefore we select the `Asynchronous` execution radio button.

Finally, in the Performer field, we insert an expression returning the local name of a suitable Searcher Agent. This basically means casting the myAgent local variable (note that workflows are behaviours and ...) to AssemblerAgent and calling the getSearcherAgent() method described in section 2.4 as below.

```
((AssemblerAgent) myAgent).getSearcherAgent().getLocalName()
```
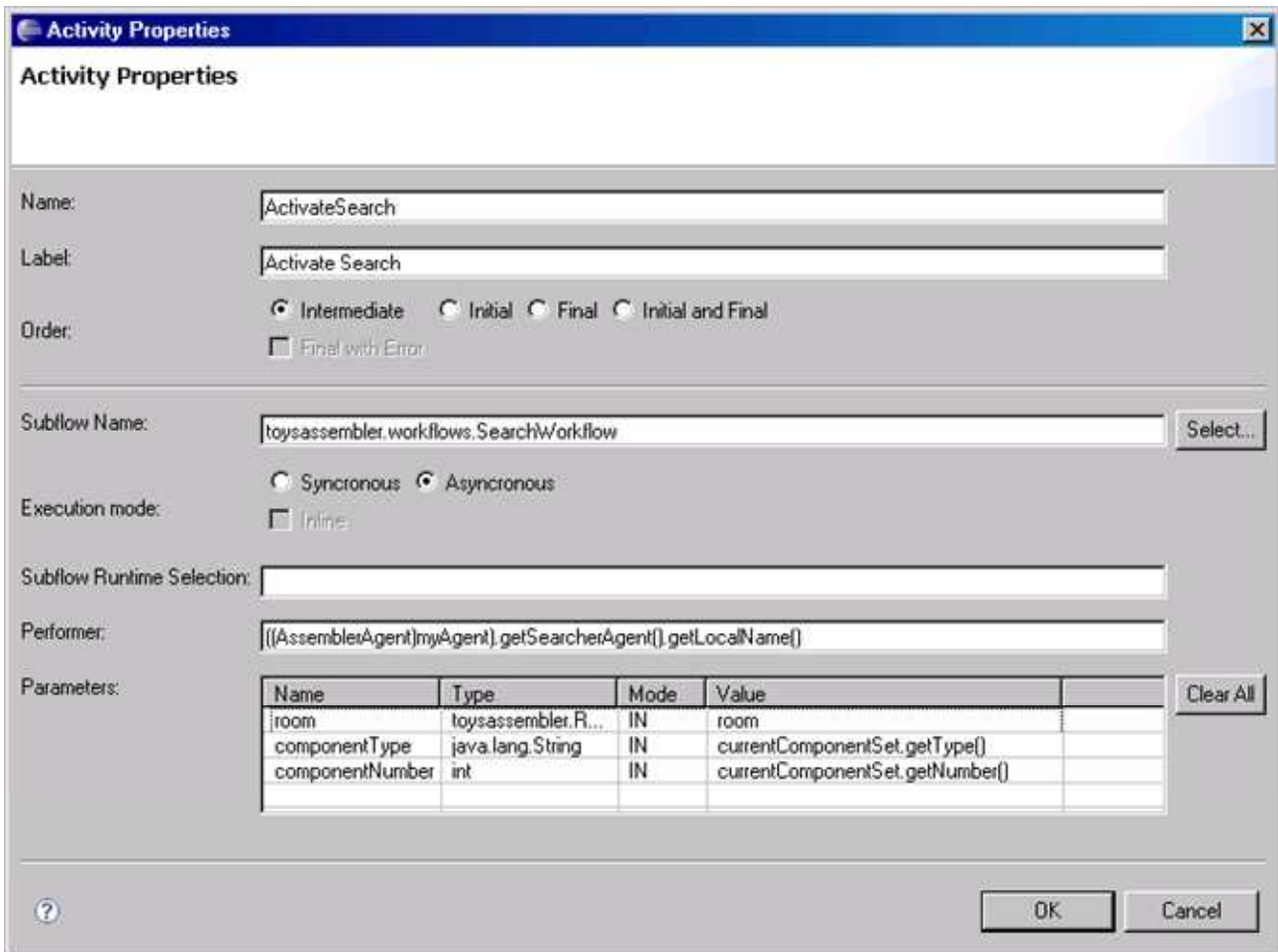
Figure 14 - The Subflow Activity Properties dialog box

If we switch to the Java editor and look at the `executeActivateSearch()` method generated by WOLF, we can see that its structure is similar to that of method `executeGetComponentSetCoordinates()` presented in section 3.6. Since we selected the asynchronous execution, output parameters are not managed in the Subflow activity and therefore there is no *extract section*.

3.7.1 Joining asynchronous flows
TBD

3.8 Workflow class structure

In this section we review the structure of a workflow class.

- Each activity corresponds to a `void` method called `execute<activity-name>`
  - o In the case of Code activities the body of this method is under the responsibility of the developer. In all other cases WOLF manages the method body on its own.
- Each transition condition corresponds to a `boolean` method called `check<condition-name>` whose body is under the responsibility of the developer.

- The workflow class includes two `private` methods that actually define the flow of operations called `defineActivities()` and `defineTransitions()`. Such methods are completely managed by WOLF.
- WOLF also generates a suitable constant for each activity name.
- The workflow class is annotated by means of the `@WorkflowLayout` annotation (fully managed by WOLF) that maintains all information related to the graphical appearance of the workflow such as activity positions and transition routing points.

All other parts of the workflow class (i.e. member variables, additional methods, inner classes if any and so on) can be managed by developers as they like with no impact at all on the execution flow. Figure 15 summarizes the above structure highlighting in yellow the sections that are automatically managed by WOLF.
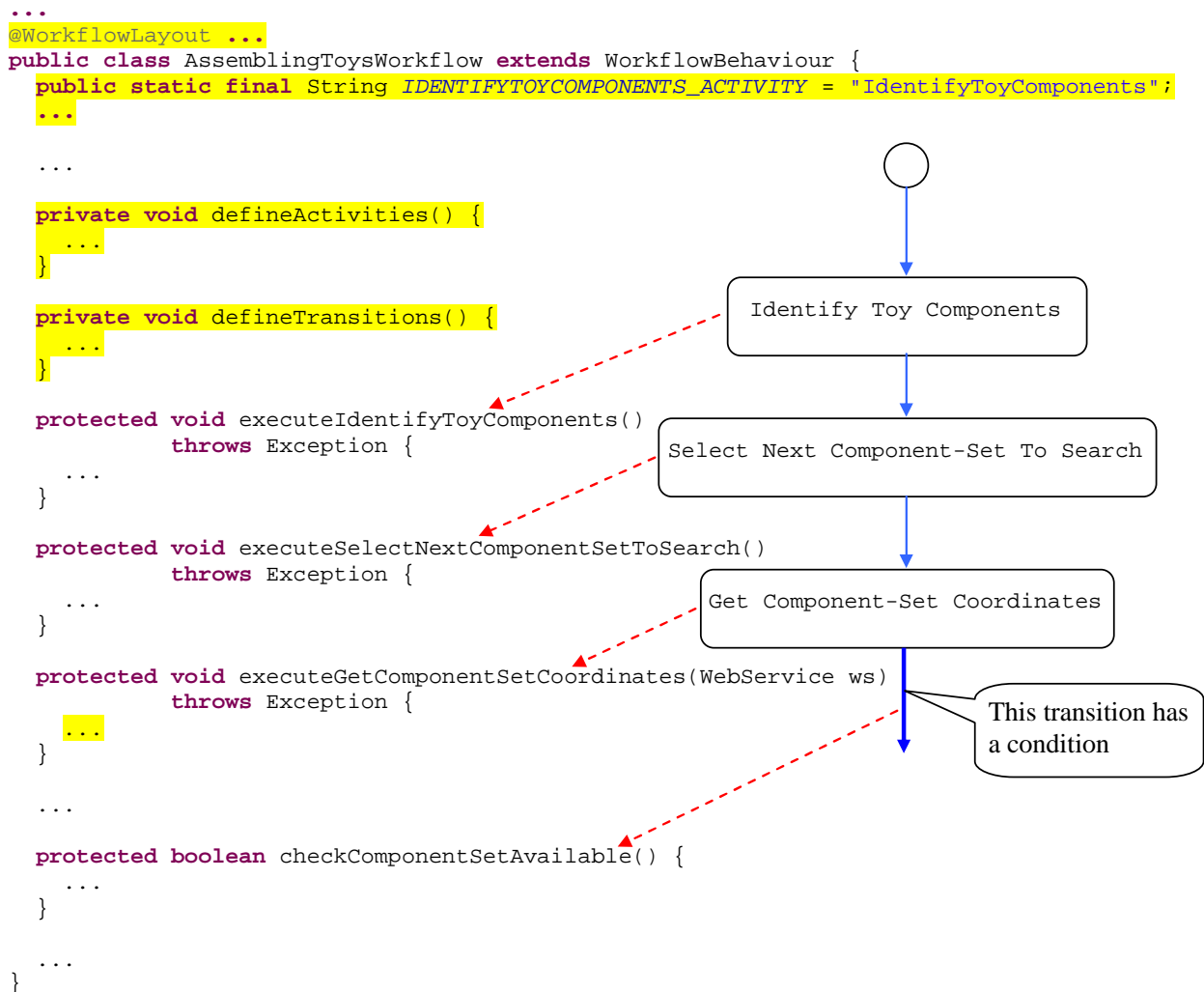
```java
...
@WorkflowLayout ...
public class AssemblingToysWorkflow extends WorkflowBehaviour {
    public static final String IDENTIFYTOYCOMPONENTS_ACTIVITY = "IdentifyToyComponents";
    ...

    ...

    private void defineActivities() {
        ...
    }

    private void defineTransitions() {
        ...
    }

    protected void executeIdentifyToyComponents()
            throws Exception {
        ...
    }

    protected void executeSelectNextComponentSetToSearch()
            throws Exception {
        ...
    }

    protected void executeGetComponentSetCoordinates(WebService ws)
            throws Exception {
        ...
    }

    ...

    protected boolean checkComponentSetAvailable() {
        ...
    }

    ...
}
```


Figure 15 - Workflow class structure

4   Executing Workflows

In this section we show how to launch the execution of a workflow from a piece of code by means of the `DispatchingCapabilities` class. The code snippet below shows the `assembleToy()` method of the `AssemblerAgent` class that, as described in section 2.4, is invoked by the Assembler Agent GUI whenever the user selects a toy type and presses `OK`.

```java
void assembleToy(final String type) {
  // Prepare the WorkflowDescriptor including the workflow class
  // and INPUT parameters
  Map params = new HashMap ();
  params.put("toyType", type);
  WorkflowDescriptor wd = new WorkflowDescriptor(
                          "toysassembler.workflows.AssemblingToysWorkflow",
                          params);
  try {
    // Dispatch the workflow to myself
    dc.launchWorkflow(getAID(), wd, new WorkflowResultListener() {
      ...

      public void handleExecutionCompleted(jade.util.leap.List results,
                                           AID executor,
                                           String executionId) {
        // The workflow was successfully executed
        System.out.println("Execution OK ("+executionId+")");
        Map params = ElementDescriptor.paramListToMap(results);
        Boolean assembled = (Boolean) params.get("toyAssembled");
        String missingComponent = (String) params.get("missingComponent");
        if (!assembled.booleanValue()){
          myGui.showMessage("Can not assemble "+type+"!\n"+
                            missingComponent+" not available!","Failure!!!",
                            JOptionPane.WARNING_MESSAGE);
        }
        else{
          myGui.showMessage(type+" successfully assembled!",
                            "Success!!!",
                            JOptionPane.INFORMATION_MESSAGE);
        }
      }
    }, null);
  } catch (WorkflowException e) {
    // TODO Auto-generated catch block
    e.printStackTrace();
  }
}
```

The code above creates a `WorkflowDescriptor` object including the workflow fully qualified class name and the input parameters in form of a `Map`. Then it uses the `launchWorkflow()` method of the `DispatchingCapabilities` object initialized at agent startup (see section 2.4) to dispatch the workflow execution request to the local agent. Note that the `DispatchingCapabilities` class can be used to dispatch workflow execution requests to remote agents as well. The third parameter of the `launchWorkflow()` method allows specifying a `WorkflowResultListener` that will be notified when the launched workflow completes (method `handleExecutionComplete()`). The output parameters of the executed workflow are stored in the first parameter of the `handleExecutionComplete()` method in the form of a `jade.util.leap.List` of `Parameter` objects. However in general it is more convenient to handle them as a Map. The `paramListToMap` static method of the `ElementDescriptor` class can be used for that purpose.

5 Launching a WADE application

At this point we are ready to try our Toys Assembler application. Of course we need to tell JADE which agents to launch at startup. In order to do that we add the following line to the `main.properties` file

```
agents=assembler:toysassembler.assembler.AssemblerAgent;searcher1:
toysassembler.searcher.SearcherAgent;searcher2:toysassembler.searc
her.SearcherAgent
```

stating that an `AssemblerAgent` called `assembler` and two `SeracherAgent`-s called `searcher1` and `searcher2` will be activated.

At this point we can run the Toys Assembler Main Container as described in section 2.2. The GUI of the Assembler Agent (see Figure 16) should appear in the upper left corner of the screen.

Figure 16 - The Assembler Agent GUI

Clicking on the OK button activates the assembling of a puppet and further GUIs showing robots retrieving the required components in the store room should appear as depicted in Figure 17.
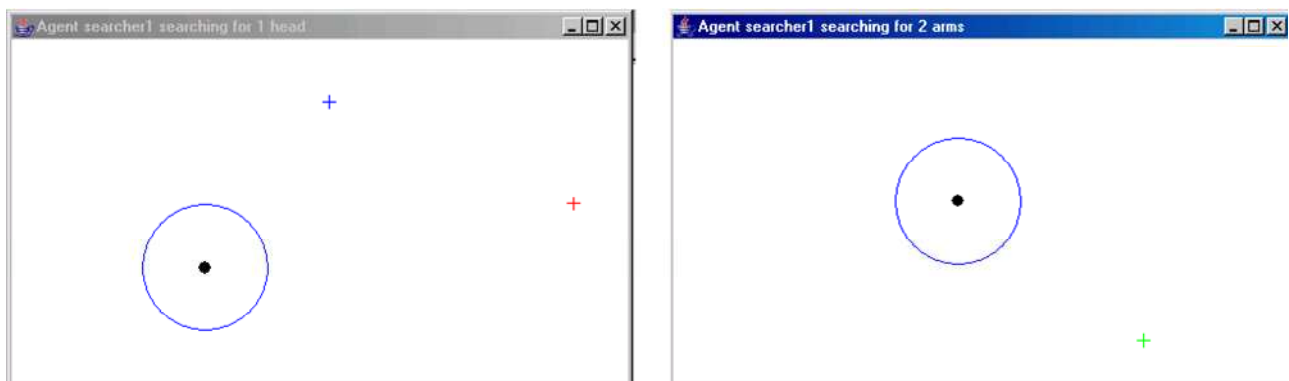

Figure 17 - Room GUIs

Since we activated two Searcher Agents and the assembling of a puppet requires 4 component sets to be retrieved (1 head, 1 body, 2 arms and two legs) each Searcher Agent receives 2 consecutive workflow execution requests from the Assembler Agent. However, considering that a Searcher Agent can retrieve one component set a a time (see section 2.4), each of them serves the first request immediately. The second is enqueued and will be served as soon as the first workflow execution completes.

5.1 Launching a WADE application outside Eclipse

Once the Toys Assembler application is ready, we would like to be able to execute it outside the Eclipse environment. As usual for Java applications, the first step to do that is to package its classes into a jar file. This can be done in several ways. A possible option is to use the Export feature of Eclipse. In particular right click on the Toys Assembler project root and select the `Export` menu item. Then select `Java` → `JAR File` as depicted in Figure 18.
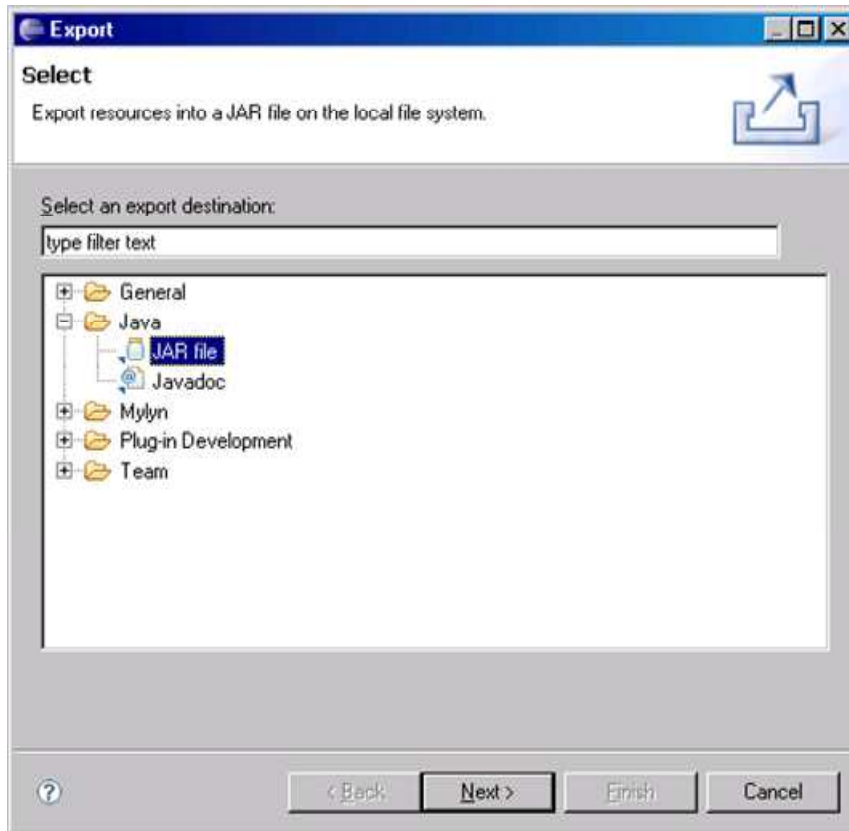

Figure 18 - Creating the project jar file by means of the Eclipse Export feature

Choose `<ToysAssembler-project-root>/lib/toysAssembler.jar`[3] as export destination and press `Finish`.

Having created the `toysAssembler` jar file in the `lib` directory it is possible to use the startup scripts included in the WADE distribution to easily launch the ToysAssembler application outside the Eclipse environemnt. In order to do that it is sufficient to add a simple property file called `toysAssembler.properties` in the `projects` subdirectory of the directory where WADE was unzipped.

```
<wade-home>/
      |---...
      |---projects/
      |       |---...
      |       |---toysAssembler.properties
```

The `toysAssembler.properties` file is intended to tell WADE where to find the project (i.e. the application) to start and, in case such project has a structure different than the default one, where to find the project libraries and configurations. Since we organized our Toys Assembler

---

[3] Keeping the application code into one or more jar files included in the <project-home>/lib directory is the default for WADE-based applications. Therefore, unless there are specific needs, we suggest to follow this practice.

project according to the default structure of a WADE based application (i.e. libraries into the `lib` directory and configurations into the `cfg` directory), it is sufficient to set the `project-home` property to the root directory of our Toys Assembler project as below.

```
# Toys Assembler project property file
project-home=D:/develop/ToysAssembler
```

The WADE startup scripts are based on ANT (http://ant.apache.org) 1.6.5 or later. Refer to the ANT documentation for information about ANT installation.

Having created the `toysAssembler.properties` file as described above, the Toys Assembler application can be simply launched by going to the WADE home directory and typing
`startMain toysAssembler`
on Windows and
`./startMain.sh toysAssembler`
on Linux