

Prosystech OPC UA Java SDK

Client SDK Tutorial

Hello world!

Welcome to the Prosystech OPC UA Java SDK Tutorial for Client software development. With this quick introduction you should be able to grab the basic ideas behind the Java UA SDK.

Note that this Tutorial assumes that you are already familiar with the basic concepts of the OPC UA communications, although you can get to the beginning without much prior knowledge.

For a full reference on OPC UA communications, we recommend (*Mahnke, Leitner, Damm: OPC Unified Architecture, Springer-Verlag, 2009, ISBN 978-3-540-68898-3*).

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1. Installation

You should have been able to install the SDK files on your system by now. If you are still struggling, check the installation instructions in README.txt (and at the download site).

2. Sample applications

The SDK contains a sample client application, `SampleConsoleClient`. This tutorial will refer to that code while explaining the different steps to take in order to accomplish the main tasks of an OPC UA client.

3. UaClient object

The `UaClient` class is the main class you will be working with. It encapsulates the connection to the OPC UA server and handles the various details in the actual OPC UA communications, providing you a simple interface to access from your applications. These are the lines in the `SampleConsoleClient.java` that create the `UaClient`:

```
private static UaClient client;
...
client = new UaClient(serverUri);
```

4. Server connection

The `serverUri` argument, in the previous example, defines the server you are connecting to. Some sample URIs are

URI	Server
<code>opc.tcp://<hostname>:52520/OPCUA/SampleConsoleServer</code>	Prosys OPC UA Java SDK Sample Console Server
<code>opc.tcp://<hostname>:4841</code>	Unified Automation Demo Server
<code>opc.tcp://<hostname>:62541/Quickstarts/DataAccessServer</code>	OPC Foundation QuickStart Data Access Server

where `<hostname>` is the host name of the computer in which the server is running.¹

Instead of using the complete URI like this, you can alternatively define the connection in parts using the properties `Protocol`², `Host`, `Port` and `ServerName` of `UaClient`. These make up the URI as follows:

```
<Protocol>://<Host>:<Port><ServerName>
```

¹ Note that 'localhost' may also work. The servers define a list of *endpoints* that they are listening to. The client can only connect to the server using an URI that matches one of these endpoints. But the `UaClient` will convert it to the actual hostname, if the server does not define 'localhost' in its endpoints.

Also IP number can only be used, if the server also defines the respective endpoint using the IP number.

For Windows hostname resolution, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb727005.aspx>. If you are using the client in Linux, you cannot use NetBIOS computer names to access Windows servers. In general it is best to use TCP/IP DNS names from all clients. Alternatively, you can always use the IP address of the computer, if you make sure that the server also initializes an endpoint using the IP address, in addition to the hostname.

² Note that the OPC Foundation Java stack only supports the binary (`opc.tcp`) protocol at the moment, so even if the server would support HTTP protocol, you will not be able to use it from your Java client.

5. Security settings

OPC UA applications enable full security, integrated in the communications. In the client, you can decide which kind of security settings you want to use in your connections.

5.1 Application Identity

In every case, all applications must define an application instance certificate, which is used to validate that the other application we are communicating with, is the one that we trust. The servers will only accept connections from clients, which they have granted access to.

All OPC UA applications must also define some characteristics of themselves. This information is communicated to other applications via the OPC UA protocol, when the applications are connected.

5.1.1 Application Description

The characteristics of the OPCUA applications are defined in the following structure:

```
ApplicationDescription appDescription = new ApplicationDescription();
appDescription.setApplicationName(new LocalizedText(APP_NAME,
    Locale.ENGLISH));
// 'localhost' (all lower case) is converted to the actual host name in
// the URI
appDescription
    .setApplicationUri("urn:localhost:UA:SampleConsoleClient");
appDescription
    .setProductUri("urn:prosysopc.com:UA:SampleConsoleClient");
appDescription.setApplicationType(ApplicationType.Client);
```

5.1.2 Application Certificate

You can define the client application certificate using the `ApplicationIdentity` property of `UaClient`. In the `SampleConsoleClient` you will find the following line:

```
final ApplicationIdentity identity = ApplicationIdentity
    .loadOrCreateCertificate(appDescription, "Sample Organisation",
        /* Private Key Password */"opcua",
        /* Key File Path */new File(validator.getBaseDir(), "private"),
        /* Enable renewing the certificate */true);3
```

Here you see a sample of creating a self-signed certificate using the service of `ApplicationIdentity.loadOrCreateCertificate`. On the first run, it creates the certificate and the private key and stores them on files `SampleConsoleClient.der` and `SampleConsoleClient.pem`, respectively (`appDescription.getApplicationName()=APP_NAME="SampleConsoleClient"` defines the file names). The private key is used by the client, to create a secret token sent to the server. The certificate is used by the server to decrypt the token and validate that the client created it.⁴

³ If your application does not use security (see 5.2), you may also create the identity without any certificate, using the default constructor. However, you should always set the `ApplicationDescription` to the identity.

⁴ Note that if some other application gets the same key pair, it can pretend to be the same client application. The private key should be kept safe, in order to reliably verify the identity of this application. Additionally, you may secure the usage of the private key with a password, required to open it for use (but you need to add that in clear text in your application code, or prompt it from the user). The certificate is public and can be distributed and stored freely in the servers and anywhere else. **Note:** As from version 1.3 the SDK stores private keys in `.pem` format, which supports password protection. If you get the certificate and private key from an external CA, you may get a `.pfx` file: if such is present (and `.pem` is not present), the application will use it. Before 1.3, the SDK (and Java stack) stored the private keys in `.key` files, which are plain binary files.

The fourth parameter in `loadOrCreateCertificate` simply defines the path where the certificate files are stored. Do not mind about it at the moment: it is clarified later...

The last parameter enables automatic certification renewal, when it gets out-dated.

5.1.3 Application Identity

Now, we can just assign the identity to the Client:

```
client.setApplicationIdentity(identity);
```

In addition, you can add *Software Certificates* that your application has received from the OPC UA certification process⁵ to the `ApplicationIdentity`. These are used to validate your application's conformance to the OPC UA protocol, to the server applications it is communicating with.

5.2 Security Mode

Once the certificate is defined, you may decide, which level of security is used in actual communications by setting the `SecurityMode`:

```
client.setSecurityMode(SecurityMode.BASIC128RSA15_SIGN_ENCRYPT);
```

This is the default setting, providing full encryption between all communications. It will, of course, affect the performance of the communications, but in general, you had better use secure communications, unless you have a good reason to omit it. If you decide so, you can disable security with

```
client.setSecurityMode(SecurityMode.NONE);
```

There are also several other alternatives. You can use `SecurityMode.BASIC128RSA15_SIGN` to sign all communication messages, but leave them unencrypted. The server may also support other security standards and levels, in which case you can define a custom `SecurityMode`. To find out which security modes are supported by the server, call

```
client.getSupportedSecurityModes();
```

5.3 User Identity

In addition to verifying the identity of the applications, OPC UA also enables verification of user identities. In `UaClient`, you can define the identity of the user with – surprise – `UserIdentity`! The `SampleConsoleClient` does not do that by default, as it depends on each server, what kind of user identities it supports. Anyway, you can define a user identity, for example to use a standard user name & password combination as:

```
client.setUserIdentity(new UserIdentity("my_name", "my_password"));
```

Another alternative is to use a certificate and private key, similar to the application instance identity, or a WS-SecurityToken provided by an external security system (e.g. SAML or Kerberos). To find out which user token types are supported by the server, call

```
client.getSupportedUserIdentityTokens();
```

5.4 Validating Server Certificates

An integral part of all OPC UA applications, in addition to defining their own security information, is of course, to validate the security information of the other party.

⁵ OPC Certification Process Web site, <http://www.opcfoundation.org/Certification.aspx>

To validate the certificate of the OPC UA servers, you can define a `CertificateValidator` in `UaClient`. This validator, if assigned, is automatically used to validate the certificates received from the server.

Now, to provide a standard certificate validation mechanism that can be used to define certain certificates as trusted, the SDK contains a specific implementation of the `CertificateValidator`, the `PkiFileBasedCertificateValidator`. You can create the validator as follows:

```
final PkiFileBasedCertificateValidator validator = new
    PkiFileBasedCertificateValidator();
client.setCertificateValidator(validator);
```

This validator stores the received certificates in a file directory structure, such as

```
PKI\
    CA\
        certs\
        rejected\
```

The trusted certificates are stored in the “certs”-directory and the untrusted in “rejected”. By default, the certificates are not trusted so they are stored in “rejected”. You can then manually move the trusted certificates to the “certs” directory.

Additionally, you can plug a custom handler to the Validator by defining the `ValidationListener`:

```
validator.setValidationListener(validationListener);

private static CertificateValidationListener validationListener = new
CertificateValidationListener() {

    @Override
    public ValidationResult onValidate(Cert certificate,
        ApplicationDescription applicationDescription,
        EnumSet<CertificateCheck> passedChecks) {
        // Called whenever the PkiFileBasedCertificateValidator has
        // validated a certificate
        [...]
    }
}
```

The `SampleConsoleClient` uses this method to prompt the user whether to accept the server certificate when connecting for the first time. The user can accept the certificate permanently, just once or reject it. In the first case the certificate is placed in the “certs” directory automatically, and in the latter cases it is placed in the “rejected” directory. In the last case, connection to the server is cancelled, due to the certificate problem.

You are of course free to use the listener to define any custom logic, but in principle, you should only trust certificates for which `passedChecks equals CertificateCheck.COMPULSORY`. Normally you can trust self-signed certificates, so that check is not included in the `COMPULSORY` definition. Most OPC UA certificates will probably be self-signed, because they are easy to generate automatically. A proper Certificate Authority should be preferred in real systems to enable a properly managed system for certificate management.

5.5 Teach Yourself the Security Details

OPC UA uses security heavily to guarantee that the applications can be safely used in real production environments. The security only works when configured properly, so you should make yourself familiar with the concepts and learn to configure these systems.

Read the OPC UA book for more details on the OPC UA security settings and how they should be applied. The security technology follows standard PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) principles, so all material related to that can also be used to understand the basics.

Also try different settings in different environments so that you know more than guess.

6. Connect / Disconnect

Once you have managed to get over the first, compulsory hurdles of defining where and how to connect, you can simply connect to the server with

```
client.connect();
```

If that fails, you will get an exception. If the actual connection cannot be made, you will get a `ServerConnectionException`. If you get a connection, but something goes wrong in the server, the `UaClient` typically throws a `ServiceException`. You may also see a `ServiceFaultException`, `ServiceResultException` or some other runtime exception, which are thrown from the actual UA stack⁶.

Once you have the connection, you can start playing with the server. In the `SampleConsoleClient` you are taken to a menu where you can pick up the tasks you want to try to.

Once you are through, you can simply

```
client.disconnect();
```

6.1 Connection Monitoring

Each service call that you make to the server can fail, for example, if the connection is lost due to network problems or the server is simply shutdown.

6.1.1 ServiceException

The service calls (described in the following sections) raise `ServiceException` in case of communication or other service errors.

6.1.2 Timeout

The Java stack handles temporary communication errors by retrying to establish a lost connection in certain cases. It also takes care of timeout handling, i.e. the synchronous service calls are monitored for a response until the timeout delay occurs without a response. You can define the default timeout (ms) to use in the `UaClient`:

```
client.setTimeout(30000);
```

6.1.3 Server Status monitoring

`UaClient` monitors the value of `ServerStatus`, which is a compulsory object in the OPCUA server address space. It will do this every `StatusCheckInterval`, which is 1 second by default. It will use a specific timeout setting, `StatusCheckTimeout` (default 10 s) to detect communication breaks.

You can listen to changes in the status by defining your own `ServerStatusListener`, for example as follows:

```
private static final class ServerStatusChangeHandler implements
    ServerStatusListener {
    @Override
```

⁶ Often the original exception from the stack is also available as the Cause from the `ServiceException`.

```

public void onShutdown(UaClient uaClient, long secondsTillShutdown,
    LocalizedText shutdownReason) {
    // Called when the server state changes to Shutdown
    printf("Server shutdown in %d seconds. Reason: %s\n",
        secondsTillShutdown, shutdownReason.getText());
}

@Override
public void onStateChange(UaClient uaClient, ServerState oldState,
    ServerState newState) {
    // Called whenever the server state changes
    printf("ServerState changed from %s to %s\n", oldState, newState);
    if (newState.equals(ServerState.Unknown))
        println("ServerStatusError: " +
            uaClient.getServerStatusError());
}

@Override
public void onStatusChange(UaClient uaClient,
    ServerStatusDataType status) {
    // Called whenever the server status changes, typically every
    // StatusCheckInterval defined in the UaClient.
    // println("ServerStatus: " + status);
}
}

```

6.1.4 Automatic reconnect

Since SDK version 1.3.0, UaClient will enable automatic reconnections, in case the communication fails. Whenever the status read fails due to a connection or timeout error or if the server notifies about shutdown, it will start reconnect attempts every second, according to the procedure suggested in the OPC UA Specifications.

If you wish to disable the automatic reconnect feature, call `UaClient.setAutoReconnect(false)`. In this case, you can try to reconnect yourself, by calling `UaClient.reconnect()` until it succeeds.

7. Browse the address space

The first thing to do is typically to find the server items you wish to read or write. The OPC UA address space is a bit more complex structure than you might expect to, but nevertheless, you can explore it by browsing.

In the UaClient, the address space is accessed through the – you guessed it – `AddressSpace` property! You can call `browse` to request *nodes* from the server. You start from the `RootFolder` (to which the `nodeId` is initialized to) and follow *references* between the nodes. There may be a huge number of references from a node, so you can define some limitations on what kind of results you wish from the server. You can set these with the different properties of the `AddressSpace`, e.g.:

```

client.getAddressSpace().setMaxReferencesPerNode(1000);
client.getAddressSpace().setReferenceTypeId(
    Identifiers.HierarchicalReferences);

```

by which you define a limit of 1000 references per call to the server⁷ and that you only wish to receive the *hierarchical references* between the nodes.

Now, if you call

⁷ although the AddressSpace will use this internally, while communicating with the server, and may provide you all the nodes the server has.


```
List<ReferenceDescription> references = client.getAddressSpace()  
    .browse(nodeId);
```

you will get a list of `ReferenceDescription` entries from the server. From these you can find the *target nodes*, which you can browse next. In the `SampleConsoleClient`, you may choose which node to browse next, or to end browsing and stay at the node you are at that point. Check the code and see what methods it is actually using to play around in the address space.

8. Read values

Once you have a node selected, you can read the *attributes* of the node. There are actually several alternative read-calls that you can make in the `UaClient`. In `SampleConsoleClient` we use the basic

```
DataValue value = client.readAttribute(nodeId, attributeId);
```

which reads the value of a single attribute from the server. The attribute to read is defined by the `attributeId`. Valid IDs are defined in the `Attributes` class. Note that different node types (or `NodeClasses` according to the UA terminology) support different attributes. For example, the `Attributes.Value` attribute is only supported by the `Variable` and `VariableType` nodes.

In general, you should avoid calling the read methods for individual items. If you need to read several items at the same time, you should consider using `client.read()`. It is a bit more complicated to use, but it will only make a single call to the server to read any number of attributes.

Or if you really want to monitor variables that are changing in the server, you had better use the *subscriptions*, as described below.

9. Write values

Similar to reading, you can also write values to the server. For example:

```
boolean status = client.writeAttribute(nodeId, attributeId, value);
```

As a response, you get a `status` – `false` indicates that the server will complete the write operation *asynchronously*, instead of writing the value immediately (to the device).

If the operation fails, you will get an exception. For service call errors, such that the server could not handle the service request at all, you can expect `ServiceExceptions`. For an individual operation that fails, you will get a `StatusException`. An example of the latter one is a failing write operation, when you try to change a value whose *access rights* do not permit the change.

If you perform several operations at a single call, you can only expect a `ServiceException`. For each operation you will get a `StatusCode`, which indicate which individual operations succeeded and which failed. Use `StatusCode.isBad()` and `.isGood()` to check whether the operation failed or not. The `StatusCode` provides a complete code, which you can check against known errors in `StatusCodes`. In case of failure, you may also get additional information in a `DiagnosticInfo` structure. These fields are present in the exceptions. You can also examine the result codes of the last service call from `client.getLastServiceDiagnostics()` and `getLastOperationDiagnostics()`.

10. Subscribe to data changes

In order to monitor changes in the server, you define *subscriptions*. These include a number of *monitored items*, which you listen to. To monitor data changes, you use `MonitoredDataItem`. For example:

```
subscription = new Subscription();
```

```
MonitoredDataItem item = new MonitoredDataItem(nodeId, attributeId,
    MonitoringMode.Reporting);
subscription.addItem(item);
client.addSubscription(subscription);
```

This defines a subscription with a single item. Of course, you can define any number of subscriptions and any number of items in any subscription. The subscription defines the default monitoring properties for all its items, but the items may also define individual sampling intervals, for example (see the properties of `MonitoredDataItem`).

In the client, you can then just listen to the change notifications, which the server is instructed to send when the item values change according to the subscription properties:

```
item.addChangeListener(dataChangeListener);
```

The listener is defined as follows:

```
private static MonitoredDataItemListener dataChangeListener =
    new MonitoredDataItemListener() {
        @Override
        public void onDataChange(MonitoredDataItem sender,
            DataValue prevValue, DataValue value) {
            MonitoredItem i = sender;
            println(dataValueToString(i.getNodeId(),
                i.getAttributeId(), value));
        }
    };
```

You can add a notification listener either to the subscription or to each item (above). The latter will provide you more detailed information on the data changes, but creating the listener to the subscription can be easier to use and more light-weight. The `SampleConsoleClient` demonstrates both, but uses mainly the item based listener.

You may also wish to listen to the alive and timeout events in the subscription. These will help you to monitor that the server is actively monitoring the values, even when they are not actually changing so that new data change notifications would be sent.

```
subscription.addAliveListener(new SubscriptionAliveListener() {
    @Override
    public void onAlive(Subscription s) {
        // the server acknowledged that the connection is alive,
        // although there were no changes to send
    }
    @Override
    public void onTimeout(Subscription s) {
        // the server did not acknowledged that the connection is alive,
        // and the maxKeepAliveCount has been exceeded
    }
});
```

11. Subscribe to events

In addition to subscribing to data changes in the server variables, you may also listen to events from *event notifiers*. You can use the same subscriptions, but instead of `MonitoredDataItem` you use `MonitoredEventItem`. You define an *event listener* which gets notified when new events are received from the server. Additionally, you must also define the *event filter*, which defines the events that you are interested in and also the event fields you wish to monitor. We have defined the fields as follows:

```
private final static QualifiedName[] requestedEventFields = {
    new QualifiedName("Message"), new QualifiedName("SourceName"),
```

```
new QualifiedName("Time"), new QualifiedName("Severity") };
```

So we can define the `selectClause` of the filter respectively:

```
NodeId eventType = Identifiers.BaseEventType;
UnsignedInteger eventAttributeId = Attributes.Value;
String indexRange = null;
SimpleAttributeOperand[] selectClauses = new
    SimpleAttributeOperand[requestedEventFields.length];
for (int i = 0; i < requestedEventFields.length; i++) {
    QualifiedName[] browsePath = { requestedEventFields[i] };
    selectClauses[i] = new SimpleAttributeOperand(
        eventType, browsePath, eventAttributeId,
        indexRange);
}
EventFilter filter = new EventFilter();
// Event field selection
filter.setSelectClauses(selectClauses);
```

And next we filter the events we want, using the `whereClause`:

```
// Event filtering: the following sample creates a
// "Not OfType GeneralModelChangeEvent" filter
ContentFilterBuilder fb = new ContentFilterBuilder();

// The element operand refers to another operand -
// operand #1 in this case which is the next,
// LiteralOperand
fb.add(FilterOperator.Not, new ElementOperand(
    UnsignedInteger.valueOf(1)));
final LiteralOperand filteredType = new LiteralOperand(
    new Variant(Identifiers.GeneralModelChangeEvent));
fb.add(FilterOperator.OfType, filteredType);
filter.setWhereClause(fb.getContentFilter());
```

This one just filters out possible `ModelChangeEvents`. There are various operators that you can use. Most of them require two arguments, e.g. `'fb.add(FilterOperator.Equals, operand1, operand2)'`.

And finally we are ready to create the event item, using the `nodeId` and filter:

```
MonitoredEventItem eventItem = new MonitoredEventItem(nodeId, filter);
eventItem.addEventListener(eventListener);
subscription.addItem(eventItem);
```

The event listener is defined as follows, and used to react to the event notification:

```
private static MonitoredEventItemListener eventListener =
    new MonitoredEventItemListener() {
        @Override
        public void onEvent(MonitoredEventItem sender,
            Variant[] eventFields) {
            println(eventToString(sender.getNodeId(), eventFields));
        }
    };
```

12. History Access

The UA Servers may also provide history information for the nodes. You can read the `Historizing` attribute of a `Variable` node to see whether history is supported.

12.1 Reading history

To actually read history data you have several options. The basic way is to use `UaClient.historyRead`, which is recommended if you need to do several readings at once. This example reads a complete history for a single node (specified by `nodeId`):

```
HistoryReadDetails details = new ReadRawModifiedDetails(false,
    DateTime.MIN_VALUE, DateTime.currentTime(),
    UnsignedInteger.MAX_VALUE, true);
HistoryReadValueId nodesToRead = new HistoryReadValueId(
    nodeId, null,
    QualifiedName.DEFAULT_BINARY_ENCODING, null);
HistoryReadResult[] result = client.historyRead(details,
    TimestampsToReturn.Both, true, nodesToRead);

HistoryData d = result[0].getHistoryData().decode();
DataValue[] values = d.getDataValues();
```

What you need to be aware of is that there are several “methods” that the `historyRead` actually supports, depending on which `HistoryReadDetails` you use. For example, in the above example we used `ReadRawModifiedDetails`, to read a raw history (the same structure is used to read Modified history as well, therefore the name).

To make your life a bit easier, `UaClient` also defines several convenience methods to make specific history requests. For example, the above can also be performed with

```
DataValue[] result = client.historyReadRaw(nodeId,
    DateTime.MIN_VALUE, DateTime.currentTime(),
    UnsignedInteger.MAX_VALUE, true, null, TimestampsToReturn.Source);
```

12.2 Updating or deleting history

To modify existing history data in the server, you can use the `historyUpdate` method or, again, one of the convenience methods, which provide you more semantics. See the documentation for the various `historyUpdateXxx` and `historyDeleteXxx` methods in `UaClient` for more about those.

13. Calling methods

OPC UA also defines a mechanism to call methods in the server objects.

To find out if an object defines methods, you can call

```
List<UaMethod> methods = client.getAddressSpace().getMethods(nodeId);
```

`UaMethod` is a node object, which get stored into the Node Cache (see chapter 15). If you wish to perform a light browse, you can just call:

```
List<ReferenceDescription> methodRefs =
    client.getAddressSpace().browseMethods(nodeId);
```

to get a list of the method references from the node.

The `UaMethod` is initialized with the `InputArguments` and `OutputArguments` properties, which you can examine for the argument name, type, etc.

```
Argument[] inputArguments = method.getInputArguments();
Argument[] outputArguments = method.getOutputArguments();
```

To actually call the method, you need to provide a valid value (as `Variant`) for each of the `InputArguments`, and just call it:

```
Variant[] outputs = client.call(nodeId, methodId, inputs);
```

As a result you get values for the `OutputArguments`.

Note also that you can use the `DataTypeConverter` to convert the `inputArguments` to the correct data type, before calling the method. The OPC UA specification defines that the server may not convert the arguments, but it must return `Bad_InvalidArgument` errors for them. See the sample code (`SampleConsoleClient.readInputArguments()`) for more details.

14. Register / Unregister nodes

These services are meant for improved performance. You can request the server to prepare some nodes, to which you will refer often in your client application, by registering them with the `RegisterNodes` service call. The server may also define new, more efficient `NodeIds` for the nodes, which the client can then use instead of the `NodeIds` it received by browsing the address space.

You can access these from the `AddressSpace`. To register a Node for quick access, call:

```
NodeId[] registeredNodeId = client.getAddressSpace().registerNodes(  
    nodeId);
```

When you are done, you can unregister the nodes, using for example,

```
NodeId[] nodes = client.getAddressSpace().unregisterAllNodes();
```

15. Node Cache

The `AddressSpace` object in the `UaClient` can also cache nodes on the client side. The `Node` objects will help you to browse the address space and to use the information in your application.

You can simply request the node objects from the address space using the methods `getNode`, `getType`, `getMethods`, etc.

To see it in action, just go and explore the sample code in more detail – especially the methods, `printCurrentNode()` and `referenceToString()`.