
SOA for the Mid-sized Business

The topic of SOA has achieved a great deal of attention this year. For many mid-sized enterprises, it is still unclear how they can use this complex technology for themselves. The German software vendor United Planet has, with its Intrexx portal software, tasked itself with making SOA practical in its application.

Freiburg, 22 May 2007. The term SOA stands for „Service-oriented Architectures” and should make it possible to construct business processes in a markedly more flexible way. How exactly this is to function has previously been described only very vaguely by most software providers. However, it is also clear that enterprise portals, which previously have been put into use primarily for knowledge management, employee self-service, and individualized user dashboards, can play a central role here. Portals and intranets are already the central point at which a majority of data, users, and information comes together. Therefore, the integration of web services makes more sense than in any other piece of software.

Using an agile enterprise as a measure, one that must be able to change its business processes quickly and efficiently upon changes in legal or economic conditions, the search for appropriate tools becomes quite difficult to shape. The large developers IBM, Oracle, and Microsoft offer a great deal of modeling and development tools - however, employing these tools requires immense expenditures for their integration. This causes the introduction of SOA to become a difficult to plan project, at the end of which the owner has lost a great deal of money, but not the inflexibility of its IT structure. Not without reason, Henning Kagermann, CEO of SAP, remarked recently that a SOA could not be cobbled together in an afternoon¹.

The enterprise United Planet, as a vendor of portal software, takes a much different path than the larger providers: as of the next version of Intrexx Xtreme, United Planet will offer a comprehensive web service

¹ Keynote Henning Kagermann at the DSAG conference 2006 in Leipzig, Germany.

Press Release, No. 04-2007

Freiburg, 22 May 2007 • Page 2 of 3

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integration, which can take direct influence over all integrated subsystems within the enterprise portal. Therefore, just as an example, an employee's application for vacation will execute a comparison between the personnel software and the required workflow for the approval procedure. After all affected persons and systems have approved the application, the employee will automatically receive approval of the application and the vacation claim will be automatically booked into the personnel management system. The time recorder can likewise fill the absence calendar in the portal, which will then transmit the data via web service to the human resources department for overtime accounting. This, according to the vendor, requires no specialized knowledge in relation to SOA, as the required functions run in the background.

If this developer has already proven the ability to create comprehensive workflow support and the real-time integration of all JDBC-conforming data sets, according to Manfred Stetz, Director of Development for United Planet, with Version 4 of Intrexx Xtreme, a new dimension of service integration has been opened. "Via the graphical Application Designer, web services can be orchestrated with only a few clicks of the mouse. The complex technology is hidden behind the graphical interface, which is very easy to use," says Stetz. The included Process Manager as well now allows the simple compilation of complex workflows and the integration of all configured services.

Thereby will not only existing services be integrated into portal applications, but rather the portal itself will make web services available via mouse click from its database, which can in turn be used by other software products in the creation of composite systems. Version 4 of Intrexx Xtreme is planned for release at the end of Q2 2007 and will offer mid-size enterprises and public administrations the advantages of quickly and price-competitively instituting the future technologies of SOA and web services.

Press Release, No. 04-2007

Freiburg, 22 May 2007 • Page 3 of 3

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About United Planet

With Intrexx Xtreme, the software vendor United Planet is counted among the market leaders in the segment of private mid-size companies, public administrations, and organizations in Germany. With this sector-neutral standard software, intranets, enterprise portals, and web applications can be created and run with the most modern of functions extremely quickly. Creating a portal with Intrexx Xtreme can be made to exact specifications and can be constructed from already existing components. Several thousand businesses worldwide already run their business processes via an Intrexx portal and profit thereby from immense cost savings.

United Planet is one of the few software firms that specialize exclusively on the development of portal software. In addition to development at the head office at Freiburg, Germany, a wide-reaching network of partners and consultants stand ready to develop individual solutions to optimize business processes for customers.

As one of the founding members of the market segment of complete, “out-of-the-box” and inexpensive intranets, the now internationally active company is a technological leader with its Intrexx Xtreme software. This Java-based software is delivered completely on one DVD and runs on Windows, Linux, and Sun Solaris. Intrexx portals make it possible to integrate third-party data from ERP solutions from almost any developer (SAP, Microsoft, Sage, etc.); a Business Adapter assumes control of data modeling and user management for the corresponding software.

The integration of a Process Manager into the newest version of Intrexx Xtreme software shows the central role that the portal software plays in an organization: out of the intranet of the past, the central processing hub of a business has developed. Out of the plain-looking browser interface with static contents, a living interface for all kinds of business applications and processes has sprung up. Quality, knowledge, and process management, as well as data administration, is just some of the many solutions ready today.

Intrexx and United Planet have received more than 15 awards and innovation prizes internationally.

For more information, visit www.intrexx.com.

Contact Person:

United Planet GmbH
Alexander Marsch
Telephone: +49 (0) 761 / 20703-452
eMail: Alexander.Marsch@unitedplanet.de
Heinrich-von-Stephan-Straße 25
79100 Freiburg
Germany
www.intrexx.com