

## Iona's Fuse Boosts Credibility of Open-Source SOA Software

**Massimo Pezzini**

Iona has committed further to the open-source model, offering integration and support for projects that use Apache service-oriented architecture technology. Fuse may convince those reluctant to adopt such software.

### Event

On 9 July 2007, Iona Technologies announced open-source offerings that support service-oriented architecture (SOA) deployments. The products are branded Fuse, and have been developed in part as a result of Iona's acquisition of LogicBlaze in April 2007.

### Analysis

LogicBlaze was behind the open-source ServiceMix enterprise service bus (ESB) and ActiveMQ message-oriented middleware (MOM). Iona's new range consolidates LogicBlaze's Fuse and Iona's Celtix Enterprise offerings. It includes four products:

- Fuse ESB, based on Apache ServiceMix
- Fuse Message Broker, a MOM product based on Apache ActiveMQ
- Fuse Services Framework, a pluggable Web services-enabling framework based on Apache CXF
- Fuse Mediation Router, based on Apache Camel, for routing and microflows

Fuse ESB incorporates the other Fuse components, which are available as stand-alone products. Iona will not sell them as licensed software, but will release them as open-source software and will provide maintenance and support services through subscriptions.

Iona's Fuse doesn't support some components of LogicBlaze Fuse (such as Jetty, Liferay, jUDDI and Ode) or some components of the original Celtix Enterprise packages (like Apache Qpid and Mule). In part, this is because Iona is focusing on its core business of SOA infrastructure, partly because some technologies (for example, Qpid) are not yet mature and partly because Iona already offers closed-source Artix components in these areas. We expect users of LogicBlaze Fuse and Celtix Enterprise will experience changes in the availability and cost of support.

The announcement is positive for users because it further simplifies the confusing open-source ESB market and makes ServiceMix a more credible product, given its support from a respected and knowledgeable veteran in enterprise middleware like Iona. Fuse gives Iona an opportunity to boost its open-source business — which has had only moderate success so far — by supporting well-known products like ServiceMix and ActiveMQ. Fuse means Iona joins Red Hat, whose open-source JBoss products already enable SOA. Iona's differentiators are the more flexible Apache license and its ability to complement open-source offerings with Artix components. For example, Fuse still lacks important SOA-enabling elements, such as registry/repository and service network management, but Iona can offer some of these as Artix-based products.

Challenges for Iona include:

- Extending the communities supporting Fuse components
- Creating an ecosystem of software vendors, system integrators and other open-source projects to support Fuse
- Enlarging Fuse's installed base significantly
- Demonstrating, through documented references, Fuse's production-readiness to enterprises that are still reluctant to adopt open-source ESB technology

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- **Iona customers and prospects:** Iona's initial claims of a dual open- and closed-source strategy that promotes coexistence, interoperability and integration are still holding up. However, the closed-source strand (Artix) has a more consolidated product and business, and Fuse is still in its early stages. Expect Artix to evolve incrementally and Fuse to develop in a more discontinuous way as technology and business models mature. Expect more integration between Fuse and Artix, although they will have different evolution paths and speeds.
- **LogicBlaze Fuse users:** Although Iona pledges continued support, evaluate alternative sources of maintenance and support for products not in Iona's Fuse.
- **Industry players:** Iona keeps developing its open-source strategy, and the Fuse announcement is a significant milestone. Evaluate opportunities for partnership or prepare responses.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- "Iona Buys LogicBlaze to Strengthen Focus on Open-Source ESBs" — This acquisition shows Iona's increased focus on open-source technology and is a step toward reducing fragmentation in the open-source ESB market. **By Massimo Pezzini, Yefim Natis and Roy Schulte**
- "The Enterprise Service Bus: Communication Backbone for SOA" — Companies that deploy large-scale or long-living SOA systems need an ESB, a communication subsystem that delivers messages and can mediate the interactions between service consumers and providers. **By Roy Schulte**

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