

Layer 7 and GT Software Extend Mainframe SOA Enablement

Dale Vecchio, L. Frank Kenney

Vendors other than IBM continue to offer innovative solutions for supporting IBM mainframe customers' service-oriented architecture strategies. Evaluate SecureSpan Mainframe SOA Gateway if you prefer an XML appliance.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 25 February 2008, Layer 7 Technologies announced the release of its SecureSpan Mainframe SOA Gateway, a mainframe service-oriented architecture (SOA) appliance. It will be generally available in March 2008. The appliance combines the SOA "wrapping" capability of GT's Ivory Service Architect and the XML Appliance capability of Layer 7.

Analysis

Mainframes not only offer strength and reliability; they also represent a decades-long investment in business logic. Some enterprises see SOA as a good way to preserve their investment in IBM mainframes by exposing their logic to the modern architectures of the Web. IBM supports SOA as a mainframe modernization strategy and offers myriad products to support this approach. But the sheer number and complexity of IBM's offerings often leads potential customers to look elsewhere. Further, continued concern regarding the increase in MIPS consumed by the mainframe may lead enterprises to consider solutions that do not increase CPU cycle consumption to keep software costs in line. Enterprises evaluating potential IBM mainframe SOA solutions often express concerns about several issues: SOA governance, security and XML parsing.

Layer 7's newly announced joint solution with GT Software now makes services generated from the mainframe fully governable. Layer 7 already offered good policy management functionality. (Policy management is the ability to define, integrate with existing policies and enforce, during the runtime cycle, policies such as access control and service-level agreement compliance.) But the joint offering can also handle policy management during design cycles (such as service granularity) and enforce reuse and compliance with various Web services standards. Layer 7 also offers the ability to integrate with the two major SOA governance communities, CentraSite Community (Fujitsu and Software AG) and Governance Interoperability Framework (HP).

SOA has largely focused on developing and integrating services across many heterogeneous environments. Implementing the technology and processes for developing services is key, but organizations cannot underestimate the effort behind operating and managing an SOA environment. Governance functions are critical. Layer 7's offering is a good step in helping organizations develop and then manage mainframe-based services. Combined with GT Software's strong development paradigm, Layer 7's solution is a good step toward providing a manageable solution for SOA-enabling mainframe-based applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **IBM mainframe customers:** Clients that are seeking an SOA strategy to extend legacy systems and incorporate them into an SOA governance solution should evaluate the joint Layer 7 and GT Software offering. SOA enablement and SOA governance are important benefits of this unified solution.

RECOMMENDED READING

- "What to Consider When Making Mainframe Modernization Decisions for the Future" — Mainframe applications can be modernized on the mainframe by shifting the focus of application development to SOA and Java. **By Dale Vecchio**

- "Best Practices for Mainframe SOA" — Extending mainframe applications through an SOA can provide long-term value if organizations take a strategic approach. **By Dale Vecchio**

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REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Corporate Headquarters

56 Top Gallant Road
Stamford, CT 06902-7700
U.S.A.
+1 203 964 0096

European Headquarters

Tamesis
The Glanty
Egham
Surrey, TW20 9AW
UNITED KINGDOM
+44 1784 431611

Asia/Pacific Headquarters

Gartner Australasia Pty. Ltd.
Level 9, 141 Walker Street
North Sydney
New South Wales 2060
AUSTRALIA
+61 2 9459 4600

Japan Headquarters

Gartner Japan Ltd.
Aobadai Hills, 6F
7-7, Aobadai, 4-chome
Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0042
JAPAN
+81 3 3481 3670

Latin America Headquarters

Gartner do Brazil
Av. das Nações Unidas, 12551
9º andar—World Trade Center
04578-903—São Paulo SP
BRAZIL
+55 11 3443 1509