

Open Mashup Alliance Needs More Support to Create Standardization

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Proprietary approaches have slowed the adoption of enterprise mashup capabilities. The OMA offers a vendor-driven standards-based approach, but its efforts will be hampered by lack of support from larger players.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 24 September 2009, a consortium of companies led by JackBe and including Adobe, Capgemini, HP, Intel and Kapow Technologies launched the Open Mashup Alliance (OMA) to promote specifications for enterprise mashup interoperability and portability.

Analysis

Enterprise mashups are lightweight composite applications created from reusable resources. These resources are often exposed as services based on representational state transfer (REST), but there are no standards for their definition or runtime behavior. Each mashup vendor uses a proprietary approach, and a mashup created for one runtime doesn't execute in other vendor technology environments. In addition to other gating factors, such as the monolithic nature of many back-end IT systems, the risk of lock-in can inhibit enterprise adoption.

OMA encompasses both an industry group and an XML specification for defining mashup-enabled resources and repositories. Extensible Mashup Markup Language (EMML) is an XML dialect for declaring these resources and supported operations and exposing them to mashup assembly tools. JackBe donated EMML to OMA. It is the only specification OMA has announced, and JackBe Presto is the only mashup platform employing it.

Like the Open Ajax Alliance (OAA), OMA is primarily driven by small vendors in an emerging sector. The vendors hope that by banding together and delivering specifications, documentation and reference examples, and promoting them as burgeoning standards, they will influence enterprise technology buyers to demand standards-based products. The market has largely ignored the OAA, however, and the question remains whether "pull marketing" is a workable approach for creating open standards.

OMA is led by JackBe, whose future depends on enterprise adoption of mashups. Other participants are in a position to hedge their bets on future standards evolution. The alliance does not include the "megavendors" — IBM, SAP, Oracle and Microsoft. While membership of at least one megavendor in a standards body does not guarantee success, the lack of megavendor support all but guarantees failure. The success of OMA will depend on the degree to which the consortium can persuade enterprise technology buyers to demand the EMML specification from their technology providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enterprises:

- Although there are no other mashup standards at the moment, do not expect widespread support for EMML to materialize in the near term. At present, only JackBe is implementing EMML. Support from a megavendor would increase its importance.
- Even if your vendors do not support EMML, use OMA as an opportunity to ask about their approach for mashup portability standards, which should be a part of your purchase decision criteria.

RECOMMENDED READING

- "Gartner Reference Architecture for Enterprise Mashups, 2009"— Use Gartner's updated reference architecture for enterprise mashups to determine requirements and evaluate market offerings. **By Anthony Bradley and David Gootzit**
- "Tutorial: Web-Oriented Architecture: Putting the Web Back in Web Services"— Use a Web-oriented architecture to transform traditional application-to-application integration from a "rat's nest" of specialized interfaces to a generic web of globally linked hypermedia. **By Nick Gall, Daniel Sholler and Anthony Bradley**

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