Web Services and Java (Position Statement)

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Abstract—Web Services are an established technology introduced under a new guise, building on the historical foundations of Remote Procedure Call (RPC) technology, rather than inventing a new paradigm for inter-process communication.

SOAP-RPC and WSDL in the Web Service domain are analogous to IIOP and IDL in CORBA, while the document mode of SOAP is comparable to EDI. As such, SOAP does not enable new applications to be built because of its principles, but because of its acceptance. Where CORBA failed to gain mind-share through reasons ranging from varying vendor support to platform complexity, SOAP has succeeded by virtue of a simple standard adopted by a range of vendors. A key driver for the future adoption of Web Services, is the possibility to wrap legacy systems with a standard wrapper for use by a wide range of applications. It is in this arena that Java represents the best platform for Web Services as it has the support of the infrastructure vendors:

- Legacy vendors like IBM, SAP, Oracle
- Middleware vendors like Tibco, Seebeyond, Webmethods
- Application Server vendors like BEA, IONA, Sun

This support is why Java represents the best platform for Web Services. The key to any successful infrastructure project is not the wire protocol that is used, but the infrastructure that exposes the service. With a history in standards based communication in CORBA, Java has the firmest basis for using Web Services, it represents the only multi-vendor Web Services platform and J2EE application servers represent the most stable and scalable environment for deploying any applications. With its J2ME Web Services standards due out soon it provides an end-to-end solution for all types of Web Services communication, which rounds out the offering.

Web Services is about moving towards a service oriented architecture across the business, and extracting value from the systems that already exist. As such Java and J2EE in particular represent the platform that works within the infrastructure and which has the support of the vendors who supply that infrastructure. Web Services must be as reliable as the legacy applications they expose, this means that you need a platform that has proven 24/7 reliability, and which has demonstrated that it was here two years ago and will be here in two years time. For new development and green field work the choice or more open. But Web Services will provide most value to businesses that use them to expose the investments they have already made. And this means choosing a platform that works with many vendors and with proven track-records at supply software infrastructure. Only Java provides such a platform with J2EE.