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AUGUST NEWS CLUSTER:

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS "WEB SERVICES"

Andrew Updegrove

In *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange*, Sherlock Holmes famously urged: "Come Watson! The game is afoot!" In so doing, he employed both meanings of the word "game." First, as in a valuable quarry, and second, in the sense of a competitive challenge against a wily opponent. For better or worse, engaging in standard setting is often played as the same sort of game: the pursuit of a valuable standards goal, often in competition with others who are seeking to capture the prize instead. At the moment, "web services" is the name of the biggest game, and many companies are jockeying to have final standards reflect their individual strategic best interests.

In the May issue of the *Consortium Standards Bulletin*, we featured web services standards, and who should set them. Since then, the level of activity in this area has, if anything, increased. Not only are diverse standard setting organizations competing to set standards in this area, but individual companies -- and ad hoc coalitions of companies -- are jockeying to get their web services proposals adopted by leading standard setting organizations over rival submissions. At the same time, the debate continues over whether the benefits of web services standards will begin to be enjoyed soon, years from now, never, or all of the above. The following selection of press releases and articles highlights these issues, and more. For ongoing coverage in this area, visit <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/news/> anytime.

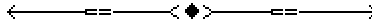
***The Handoff:** There are many ways to set standards. At the one extreme, the holy grail is to have your product become the next Microsoft Windows -- a de facto standard owned by a single vendor. Since such successes are far and few between, there is another extreme: setting standards collaboratively in accredited SDOs or unaccredited consortia. When stakes are high, however, efforts frequently emerge that attempt to split the difference. In some cases, it may be deemed expedient to produce a standard (or prototype standard) in a collaborative group and then offer it to an existing standards body that might not otherwise have been interested in launching the effort internally, or perhaps may not have been capable of achieving the same result in the same time period. In other cases, the effort is motivated by a desire to influence the ultimate result by creating the work in an environment where the creators hold all of the cards. When the results of the latter type of efforts are offered to standard setting organizations, it raises difficult questions for the proposed recipient, whose reputation as an open environment is at stake. The following two articles describe two efforts to initiate a web services standard outside of the normal process, and then transfer it into that process.*

Sun's Proposed New Web Services Standards

By Charles Babcock

InformationWeek, July 29, 2003 - Sun Microsystems Inc. is attempting to initiate a new round of Web services with a proposal for a set of standards that work on top of XML and Web Services Description Language. But Sun and its partners have yet to say to which standards body they will submit their proposed spec. Arjuna Technologies, Fujitsu Software, Iona Technologies, Oracle, and Sun have teamed up to propose that individual Web services be called up and combined to form "composite applications." ... Among the standards bodies that might receive the Sun proposal are the Oasis Open consortium of vendors setting XML standards; the World Wide Web Consortium; and the Internet Engineering Task Force.

For the full story: <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=12803408>



IBM, CA Square Up to HP on Management **By Keith Rogers**

Loosely Coupled, July 30, 2003 - IBM and Computer Associates teamed up at a key web services standards meeting yesterday in a surprise rebuff to a submission by Hewlett-Packard. At stake is the future development path of IT management software. Although the initial purpose of the rival proposals is merely to establish standards that govern web services manageability, the ultimate aim is to roll out the same standards as a foundation for the entire IT management spectrum....HP had grabbed headlines on July 21st, when it formally announced it would submit its Web Services Management Framework to the web services distributed management (WSDM) committee of e-business standards body OASIS....IBM and CA... [have] joined forces with web services management specialist Talking Blocks to present their own vision, dubbed WS-Manageability, to the OASIS meeting.

For the full story: <http://www.looselycoupled.com/stories/2003/wsdm-ws-infr0730.html>



When will we get there? While the debate continues over whether web services are the one true path to interoperability (or just another over-hyped methodology of more modest potential), actual implementations are beginning to provide answers. In the first story, InformationWeek's Tony Kontzer notes some early impressive results -- including several based on consortium efforts -- but sees a need for IT departments to more decisively get with the program. But in the second, Erika Morphy, of CIO Today decries the raising of web services techniques to "cult status," and sees a far longer road ahead before web services technology becomes ubiquitous.

Web Services Are Poised To Change Business **By Tony Kontzer**

InformationWeek, July 1, 2003 - Executives from many of the biggest IT vendors gathered in San Francisco this week to share thoughts on building the agile, or adaptive, enterprise, and two opposing themes jumped out: While Web services are the odds-on favorite to help create business agility, IT departments aren't designed to change as quickly as the companies they support. Web services are growing more important, but the business world has yet to take full advantage of their potential, said Chris Thomas, Chief E-strategist for the Solutions Market Development Group at Intel...Thomas pointed to the nonprofit RosettaNet consortium, which has processed \$5 billion worth of transactions in its effort to establish open standards for E-business processes, as an example of early Web-services success. He also noted that chemical provider Air Products and Chemicals Inc. has saved \$1.5 million by using XML to eliminate one customer touch point in its transaction processes, and that it also has seen a 20% reduction in transactional errors.

For the full story, see: <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=10817892>



Web Services: Integration Miracle Worker? **By Erika Morphy**

CIO Today Magazine, August 5, 2003 - For all the hype surrounding Web services, one might expect this technology to be as central to IT operations as, say, your standard server or ubiquitous desktop. In truth, it is still in its nascent stages, with some analysts predicting it will take decades -- not years -- for it to reach the status of mainstream adoption. Yet even the diehard skeptics, and there are more than a few, admit that Web services will indeed be around, and have a significant role to play, decades from now.

For the full story, see: <http://www.ciotoday.com/perl/story/22028.html>