



FAST Storyboard Tools



FAST aims at providing an innovative visual programming environment that will facilitate the development of next-generation composite user interfaces. It constitutes a novel approach to application composition and business process definition from a top-down user-centric perspective.

At a Glance

Project:

FAST: Fast and Advanced Storyboard Tools



Project coordinator

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SPAIN
Telefónica Investigación y Desarrollo
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
GERMANY
SAP AG
University of Kassel
IRELAND
University of Ireland, Galway
Cyntelix Corporation.

Duration: 36 months

Total cost: 5.575.975,60 Eur

Programme: FP7-ICT-2007-1

Further information:

<http://fast.morfeo-project.eu>

The situation

Nowadays, existing business process management technologies are not user-centric. They currently try to define businesses processes by invoking back-end services, i.e. conceiving them as a kind of structured programs. Therefore, current graphical process definition notations tend to be quite similar to programming flowcharts. This has two drawbacks. First, the promise of enabling users with little or no IT skills to design processes is broken. Second, user interaction becomes hard to be programmed, and flowcharts are too structured so minor but frequent changes in the execution flow are rather difficult to manage. Besides, following the Web 2.0 phenomena, the front-end layer in the next generation of Service Oriented Architectures will rely on existence of gadgets (i.e. a portable chunk of code that can be installed and visualized by an end-user as a part of a mashup-oriented UI, with no additional compilation). Nowadays there is no comprehensive solution available for developing complex gadgets, involving multiple screens and process execution flows. Europe needs such platform to keep pace with the latest developments and stay at the forefront of the future Internet.

Objectives

The main objective of FAST is to provide an innovative visual programming environment that will facilitate the development of next-generation composite user interfaces. It will also set the bases of a new approach to application composition from a top-down user-centred

perspective. By leveraging on FAST, software designers will automatically compose final applications by endowing user interface elements (gadgets) with the enterprise back-end. Semantics plays a relevant role in this promising approach as it is expected to be the glue necessary to bridge the gap between the technical vision of back-end resources, where the power of semantics has already been demonstrated absolutely astonishing, and the user functional vision of the front-end.

Case Study

In the context of Digital Administration, citizens expect to easily locate and manage most of their administrative procedures –like tax payments, tax declarations or administration issues– by themselves, thanks to government Web portals and services. However, most transactions and tasks demand recurrent browsing, searching and discovering through a variety of websites and services allocated in disparate government portals. All this disparate information and functionalities would be more useful and valuable if they were presented together in a unique mashup-based interface. However, the achievement of these goals would require dynamic mashup-based user interfaces made up of a number of screens and support for the underlying process flow, which is a tough task with no help of specifically tailored visual development environments suitable for modelling such a powerful mashup and for deploying it on current mashup platforms.

What do the European partners bring to the project?

FAST partners contribute their own experiences, knowledge and technologies to lead the project to safe harbour.

Specifically, TID offers its deep experience as a worldwide telecommunication provider to set scenarios. They also contribute in core technical aspects related to system integration and SOA Architectures. SAP AG, the world's leading Enterprise Application Provider, brings their knowledge in technical aspects such as semantics, user interface design, and ontologies into the consortium, as well as their experience

in Enterprise SOA and integration of Semantic Web Services and business process management. Cyntelix Corporation has a rich background in Semantic Web technology and collaboration platform, so they provide significant contributions in both technology and industry experience.

Regarding the academia, the National University of Ireland, Galway, a leading research institution in Semantic Web, contributes their leadership in the field of Semantic Web Services, while University of Kassel provides their huge experience in scenario and story-driven modelling and CASE tool construction. Finally, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid contributes their excellent track record in research on Semantics-aware Mobile Web and Web 2.0-based technologies.

In summary, we have a well-balanced presence of both industry and academia in order to offer complementary skills and expertise.

Benefits

FAST outcomes will deliver in 3 years relevant economic and societal benefits, including bridging the gap between people, business and IT by putting a visual face on SOA. It will also cover the “long tail” in enterprise application by empowering users from service consumer to producer.

By leveraging FAST results, software development will benefit from hiding the complexity of programming, and from an increased support for modelling loosely structured user-centric orchestrations, thus overpassing limitations of current business process engines approaches. It will also contribute to software industrialization by shortening time-to-market and improving cost-effectiveness of application development.

The partners will benefit from increased agility, versatility, and reusability of existing IT applications that is required in today's fast-paced business environment. They will also be able to build the technological basis for service marketplaces that can be provided, operated and used by the partners to increase market reach. The outcome of the project will be released as Open Source in the context of the Morfeo Community (<http://www.morfeo-project.org>)

For further information:

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