

FAST Newsletter

Issue 1, August 2008

Service Front End Collaboration Working Group

The FAST project has recently agreed to lead a Working Group.

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The great new stuff FAST brings to you

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What did the partners do until now to get the project to work?

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Project Goals

A gadget is a component that encapsulates content and services that can be deployed on desktops, mobile and the web. These moveable mini-applications enable users to craft their personal digital space to meet their unique needs and requirements.

It is undeniable that gadgets have generated significant interest, reshaping the landscape of the World Wide Web (WWW) and having become a standard functional feature of the most predominant operating systems. However, the true potential of gadgets remains untapped as only those possessing the necessary competence are able to develop gadgets.

The main aim of the FAST project is to lower the technical expertise necessary for someone to build their own gadgets for social and work purposes. This will enable more users to create and develop gadgets, thereby addressing the long tail of technology adopters. The fulfilment of this aim is realized in the development of a visual Integrated Development Environment (IDE) for gadgets, with strong emphasis on high usability and user-friendliness. The FAST IDE uses intuitive storyboarding techniques as its foundational paradigm, adopting the use of visual flows supported by control constructs that the user can visually manipulate and combine together. However, the FAST IDE also accommodates the needs of more technically oriented users by providing scoped access to the FAST development language and allowing the integration of common web technologies (eg: AJAX, Javascript, etc).

The FAST IDE strives to further facilitate building gadgets, thus it enables the copying and cloning of gadgets to serve as a starting point of the gadget creation process. In addition to the innovative user paradigm to gadget creation, the FAST project will release its visual IDE supported by a rich set of libraries and services, thus providing users with a wide range of ready to use building blocks and templates.

A key design choice of the FAST project is to totally decouple the resulting gadget from the FAST IDE, thus there is no need for a dedicated execution environment or plug-in, relying exclusively on the most common denominator in terms of web technologies (eg: AJAX, XML, Javascript, etc). Although the focus of the FAST IDE is the creation of a single gadget, the environment supports the management of ecosystems of gadgets that are either in development or deployment. This enables users to manage the lifecycle of all their gadgets in an integrated manner rather than on an individual basis.

Project partners



DERI GALWAY

UNIKASSEL
VERSITÄT

POLITÉCNICA

Telefónica
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Service Front End Collaboration Working Group

Europe does not want to miss the train of the Internet to come. No one really knows what the World Wide Web will look like in a few years' time but there are research lines that hint part of the landscape of the future Internet.

The European Commission fosters the creation of interests groups to set the future trends and standards of the Net. As a result of these efforts, a large number of EU sponsored projects through the Framework Programmes signed the BLED declaration where we pledged this: "Building upon the obligations of our individual project contracts and the goals of the Strategic Agendas of the European Technology Platforms, we confirm our ambitions include:

- Fostering Favourable Conditions through Coordinated Action
- Jointly Designing, Developing and Experimenting
- Increasing Awareness at Policy Level"

The signatory parties also state that "To help us meet these major challenges, we call on the:

- European Member States to strengthen and coordinate their national R&D efforts and initiatives towards the Future Internet.
- European Commission to stress the vision and amplify the related R&D in order to drive Europe ahead of tomorrow's Internet transformations in the way we work, live, and interact.
- European Member States and the European Commission to support the creation and activities of the European Future Internet Assembly proposed in this declaration."

Not very long after, the EC launched the creation of the Working Groups in different key areas. The FAST project has accepted to lead the "Service Front End" working group, an exciting challenge that will bring together projects with common interests and leverage our synergies. Thus, FAST together with the

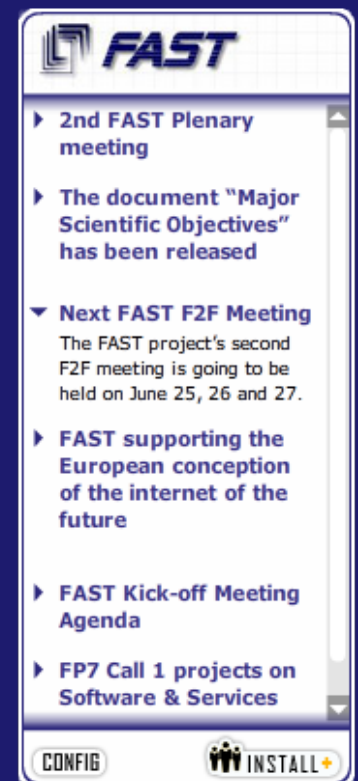
NESSI strategic project ezWeb will take active part in the definition of the standards and strategy in the future evolution of the external layer of the networked applications.

This activity is already ongoing and has successfully attracted the interest of other consortia. There was a first contact in Madrid, in a meeting hosted by the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (June 2008) where we set the agenda and identified the projects to involve in the process. Also, a number of interested parties presented their research focus to the rest of the CWG.

We expect to further advance in the coming concertation meeting in September, 22-23 in Brussels.

FAST Gadget

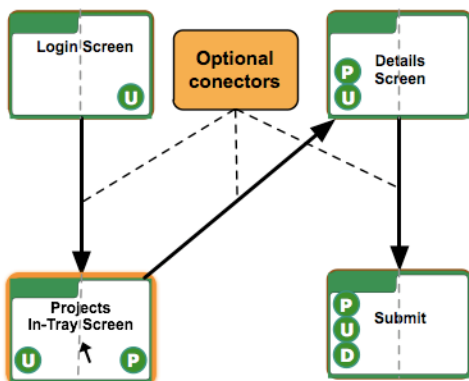
Cyntelix has created a FAST Gadget showing the latest project news. The widget is deployable in the main mashup platforms (igoogle, netvibes, facebook ...). It can be seen on the main page of the FAST website.



The great new stuff FAST brings to you

The FAST project will set up a new visual programming environment for the development of complex front-end gadgets that will run in a range of enterprise mashup platforms. The resulting tool suite will enable the development of mashup-able gadgets involving the modelling and execution of relatively complex business processes, which rely on screen-flow resources and Semantic Web Services stored in a semantically enriched catalogue. The gadget development process will be based on Agile software development techniques from a top-down user-centric perspective.

The resulting development environment will exploit the full power of semantics for both connecting and integrating back-end with front-end following a top-down user-centric approach. Developers will start from the front-end components (screens) that the user will see and interact with. To define the gadget workflow the semantically fitting screens and back-end services will then be visually connected, as indicated in the following figure:



Using the FAST tool will bridge the gap between Business and IT, putting a visual face to Service-Oriented Architectures (SOAs) through the use and consumption of the existing and future lightweight services. Moreover, it will cover the profitable "Long Tail" in Enterprise Application, fully empowering the user, seeing her as a "prosumer" (service consumer and producer).

Using the development tool will allow a faster time-to-market and better cost-effectiveness of application development.

As a core feature of future enterprise mash-up platforms, the FAST development environment will allow for efficiently creating valuable "mashable" gadgets in the forthcoming Internet of Services (IoS), giving enterprises a chance to revolutionize the consumption and composition of services within as well as outside their boundaries. The FAST tool suite represents a perfect solution to tackle the large variety of SMEs that will participate in the forthcoming IoS as it allows partners and consultants to effectively and quickly create exactly the required business applications on the basis of proper web services. The FAST gadget development environment will therefore help a company to extend its product portfolio as it allows for delivering highly flexible solutions enabling on demand individual business functionality. Moreover it will also enable companies to take over the role of intermediary and broker of lightweight gadgets in the forthcoming IoS, helping them to become well established in the SME Mid-market.

The FAST development environment, together with enterprise mash-up platforms, will also be applied by companies to manage company-internal innovation more agilely and effectively by enabling the development of a more flexible and agile generation of business applications such as Business Support Systems and Operational Support Systems. Based on the envisioned user-centric development and visual screen-flow process management environment, employees can be provided with the business functionality they need very quick and at a fraction of the costs required for traditional application development through the company internal IT department.



First achievements

The FAST project had a very good start in March 2008. The kick-off meeting hosted by Telefonica (TID) in Madrid from March 13th to 14th, 2008 presented an early opportunity for the team members get to know each other. The FAST project partners introduced themselves in the initial presentations, which already led to first discussions about the project goals and internal work packages. The project team is very well constructed with each partner adding vital skills to the project and all necessary competences covered. Already, initial synergies emerged from the individual contributions, clarifying a lot of technical issues and concepts to be used in the FAST project.

During the first two months, the whole project team collaborated on the first FAST white paper, defining the central scientific goals of the FAST project. The document covers a broad area of Web 2.0 techniques and topics relevant for the goals of the FAST project. It clarifies the importance and the pro and cons of the state-of-

the-art techniques and identifies the corner stones of the FAST system architecture.

The second face-to-face meeting on June 25th to June 27th, 2008 was co-located with several NESSI working group meetings and a workshop on WEB 2.0 technologies in Madrid. and hosted by Universidad Politecnica de Madrid (UPM). Within the meeting the team agreed on a first design for central components like gadgets and complex gadgets and on other technical issues of the FAST project. Due to the excellent collaboration in the team and because all partners had started to work on technical issues from the start, there were already two presentations of first prototypes held by UPM and University of Kassel. In conclusion, the project has had a great start and we are looking forward to be able to present first prototypes of more general functionality to the public, soon.

List of FAST publications

Since the beginning of the FAST project in March 2008 the following publications have been brought to public to disseminate the new and outstanding ideas of the project.

Documents

- *Major scientific objectives* written by the whole team as part of the deliverables

Papers

Telecom I+D conference 2008

- *FAST: Fast and Advanced Storyboard Tools - Una Nueva Visión para una Arquitectura de Gadgets Semánticos* accepted as poster, written by TID

The Second International Conference on Mobile Ubiquitous Computing, Systems, Services and Technologies (UBICOMM 2008)

- *EzWeb/FAST: Reporting on a Successful Mashup-based Solution for Developing and Deploying Composite Applications in the Upcoming Ubiquitous SOA* written by UPM

IEEE 2008 International Conference on Service Computing (SCC 2008)

- *Enterprise Mashups. Design Principles towards the Long Tail of User Needs* written by SAP

Articles

HMD - Praxis der Wirtschaftsinformatik (journal)

- *Enterprise Mashups. Neue Herausforderung für das Projektmanagement* accepted written by SAP