

Monday, May 5, 2008

Cinco de Mayo @ JavaOne

May 4th Arrived in San Francisco after a smooth flight, this flight is so quick from So Cal, you get a little reading in and before you know it you're on the ground again. Grabbed a shuttle to the hotel, Serrano Hotel, got my room and headed out for a little stroll to find some grub before I get an early start on Monday. Grabbed a tuna melt at TAD's which is a few blocks away. Never been, food wasn't bad and they seemed to have a big breakfast menu. Considerably cheaper than the Ponzu which is running about 30.00 a meal (maybe I'll check it out before I leave). I must say, there is something about San Francisco, cool air hitting your face, homeless asking for money every corner, street musicians playing saxophone/guitar and what else they have, cable cars going by, people on the move, that's really enjoyable. Every time I come here, there is some real character to this place that is like no other place I've been. Quite nice to walk the streets, to see the hustle and bussel moving through the streets being apart of it for a week is a nice change. The weather is cool jacket weather that feels great from the heat of the south lately. After my walk, I headed back to the hotel, prepared myself for the day to come, set the alarm and hit the hay.

May 5th - Cinco de Mayo Got up at the break of dawn, 6:10 am (that's early for me), headed over to Moscone North, grabbed my registration and went to the lower level to pick up my materials for the conference. It's been since 2004 since I've visited Moscone and JavaOne, it looks similar to previous years, it always looked good and ready to deliver. This year is no exception. I guess I was so anxious to get over to the center and get my learn on that I had about two hours before my first Session, Developing Enterprise Applications with the Spring Framework, with two backpacks in tow I headed back to the hotel to drop some of this mess off. Headed back, I grab a coffee and a piece of Banana Nut Bread from Starbucks, then it's over to the Intercontinental Hotel (Nice hotel) for the session.

Spring Framework by Chris Richardson Since I've used Spring Framework with uPortal and some of the other projects at work, the first half of this session was simply a reminder of configuration possibilities and reasons why to use the framework, like the removal of DRY (Don't Repeat Yourself) code, easy testing with Mock Objects (Chris used JMock 2), removal of dependancies. Chris also covered xml configuration and annotation based configuration, even covered Java Config for configuring Spring. I guess I must have skipped the Bean Scopes somewhere along the way because Chris' explanation of them eye opening, kind of woke me up (hey you know you can do this?)

Bean Scopes Singleton The default and most common Only create a single instance Use for stateless beans Prototype Create a new instance each time you need one When its injected or requested by getBean() Use for stateful beans Request and Session Use in web applications for request/session-specific state The bean lives for the lifetime of request or session Referencing beans are injected with a proxy

Next, he covered Transactional Services in Spring. Transactional services offered by Spring simplify user's code by removing the repeated code. Spring allows you to write metadata to create transactional POJOs. Via the help of Aspect Oriented Programming (AOP) and Spring your code can be greatly reduced. Before I get into the Spring AOP I'd like to cover a few AOP basics.

AOP Basics

Joinpoint

● Well-defined point during the execution of your application

● You can insert additional logic at Joinpoint's

● Examples of Jointpoint's

- Method invocation
- Class initialization
- Object initialization

Advice

● The code that is executed at a particular joinpoint

● Types of Advice

- before advice, which excutes before joinpoint
- after advice, which executes after joinpoint
- around advice, which executes around joinpoint

Pointcuts

● A collection of joinpoints that you use to define when advice should be executed

● By creating pointcuts, you gain fine-grained control over how you apply advice to the components

● Example

- A typical joinpoint is a method invocation.
- A typical pointcut is a collection of all method invocations in a particular class

● Pointcuts can be composed in complex relationships to further constrain when advice is executed

Aspects

● An aspect is the combination of advice and pointcuts

For more on Spring AOP see
<http://www.javapassion.com/j2ee/springaopbasics.pdf>.

Spring wraps objects with proxies that can execute extra advice before method invocation, after invoking a method, or instead of a method. Transactions are managed through `TransactionInterceptor`. This class manages transactions and intercepts method calls then delegates to the `PlatformTransactionManager`.

By wrapping objects, your components are unaware of the transactional code that is executed when your object interact with other objects what are using Spring's AOP Transaction Management. Management is configured through an xml configuration or via Spring Annotations. Check out for annotation configuration.

Spring allows programmers to remove tightly coupled, duplicated and tangled code with code that is easier to maintain, test, and develop. Chris did a good job of explain how Spring can help. The AOP/Transaction management was a real eye opener and features that I don't currently use. The dependency injection part of spring has been something I've been using for quite some time. I'm not going to cover every aspect of the session but I've tried to highlight some of the key points that Chris when over in the session. Additional projects that Chris is involved with are: <http://code.google.com/p/aop-ood><http://code.google.com/p/projecttrack><http://code.google.com/p/aridpojos><http://code.google.com/p/ormunit><http://code.google.com/p/umangite><http://code.google.com/p/cloudtools>

Web 2.0 Leveraging the Project jMaki and Google Web Toolkits for Rapid Website Development

jMaki

This session started with Evan Troyka discussing jMaki. jMaki is a wrapper for different ajax libraries like dojo and Yahoo ui. jMaki uses jsp tags, JSF components, php libraries, and phobos implementations for different deployments. A jMaki component consists of three different files, component.js, component.htm, and a component.css. An optional file is the config.json. This is a central location for configuration of javascript libraries, API keys, CSS dependencies, jmaki Glue handler mappings, mapping extensions, and theme information. jMaki glue lets you wire together jMaki widgets via a publish/subscribe event model. This was interesting to see how you can use different components from ajax libraries via one technology like JSF or JSP tags. Some additional information on jMaki can be found at:

<http://forums.java.net/jive/forum.jspa?forumID=96>

<http://weblogs.java.net/blog/carlavmott>

<http://weblogs.java.net/blog/gmurray71>

<http://weblogs.java.net/blog/arungupta>

GWT

The real value (for me) in this session was the second half where David Geary went over GWT Toolkit. I've messed with this a little but I haven't really dug into the project much. Wow was this helpful to see the possibilities with GWT. GWT is a java library that allows you to compile Swing like code into JavaScript. This eliminates the need to test code for cross browser compatibility or learn JavaScript altogether. Some of the features of GWT:

- Debug client-side UI in Java code

- Make remote method calls to a servlet

- Incorporate Javascript with native methods

- Use widgets and implement new ones

- Use the browser history mechanism

- Integration with JUnit

- Internationalization

More on GWT later. You can also look at <http://coolandusefulgwt.com>.

I've been trying finish this damn entry the last two days, there was just so much information at JavaOne, it make it difficult to cover all that was there. To think I'm still on Monday, Java University, before the conference session really started.

Really today was jammed with material, each session was 3 hours long and we stopped after 8pm. I was toast, tons of information and it's only the beginning. I really hope to finish the blog but I'd like to get some sleep for tomorrow is another day of learning.

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Posted by Brad Rippe at 23:45

Friday, May 2, 2008

JavaOne - May 5 - May 9th

JavaOne 2008 Without actually thinking anyone would read this, I've been trying to spend a little more time writing in my blog. But work and life in general seem to get in the way. Good News is on the horizon! I'm about to close on a new home with my squeeze, Lisa, and I'm off to JavaOne this week. I know, can't get much better than that! It's been since 05, the last time I went to San Fran to visit Duke and the city by the bay, so I'm going to try to make the most of it. Major changes to Java and other languages based on the JVM have arrived so the goal is to check some of those languages out (Grails, JRuby). Also I want to get more information on JSR 296. I've started a development in that area and I'm curious to see what is going on with that. I will for sure check out some Spring session as it's moving to 2.5 release, so I'm sure there is valuable information there. As I'll need that because I've been messing with the new Spring Web Flow 2.0.0 RC1 release. I also have a session on jMaki, not to sure what to expect, but it should be interesting as I haven't been messing much with the Ajax stuff, so this seem like a good time to check it out of some hot clam chowder. Other notables are a session on JXTA which I haven't seen nor heard much from in years (I did my thesis using this technology). I'm quite interested to see if anything changed there (Wait as I'm getting the link, I see there is a new version 2.5 that has been released in November 07). So as I prepare for my trip, I'm looking forward to all the information I can cram into my brain for the week and feel comfortable knowing that all the paperwork is in place for the new pad, for when I return, we can have a smooth transition from our current location to the new one. (Let's hope these damn gas prices give)

Posted by Brad Rippe at 16:02

Thursday, April 17, 2008

MAVEN DEPENDENCIES

MAVEN DEPENDENCIES Dependency scope is used to limit the transitivity of a dependency, and also to affect the classpath used for various build tasks.

There are 5 scopes available:

compile This is the default scope, used if none is specified.

Compile dependencies are available in all classpaths of a project. Furthermore, those dependencies are propagated to dependent projects.

provided This is much like `compile`, but indicates you

expect the JDK or a container to provide the dependency at runtime. For example, when building a web application for the Java Enterprise Edition, you would set

the dependency on the Servlet API and related Java EE APIs to scope `provided` because the web container provides those classes. This scope is only available on the compilation and test classpath, and is not transitive.

runtime This scope indicates that the dependency is not required for compilation, but is for execution. It is in the runtime and test classpaths, but not the compile classpath.

test This scope indicates that the dependency is not required for normal use of the application, and is only available for the test compilation and execution phases.

system This scope is similar to `provided` except that you have to provide the JAR which contains it explicitly. The artifact is always available and is not looked up in a repository.

import This scope is only used on a dependency of type `pom` in the `section`. It indicates

that the specified POM should be replaced with the dependencies in that POM's `section`. Since they are replaced,

dependencies with a scope of `import` do not actually participate in limiting the transitivity of a dependency. For more

Posted by Brad Rippe at 10:21

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

iPhone Totally Rocks

Ok after years of procrastination, I've finally broken down and gotten a new phone, but not just any phone, I got an iPhone. After hearing all the hype and the expense I've fought the urge the purchase a new phone for some time. My previous phone was the Treo 650. Now I guess this phone serviced its purpose, but the interface had issues and I could never really tell how many voice messages were in my inbox without calling. The internet of the phone, was pretty much unusable. Now for the iPhone, this thing is cool. Really cool! I can tell when people call, leave voicemail, sms, and the internet with the 802.11b/g capability, forget it! This thing rocks! I didn't think one little device would be so much help and distraction all in one little package. I mean I really don't spend that much time away from the computer, and now with this little device, its really difficult to not take it to lunch and dinner and read what's up in the world wide web. I'd really like to write some code for this thing, but I don't own a mac, but this thing may just cause me to breakdown an purchase yet another Apple product.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:57

Luminis IV & uPortal

Random Note:Luminis IV is built on top of uPortal 2.5.3.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:30

Blog Export: Brad's Blog, <http://bradrippe.com/serendipity/>

Tuesday, April 15. 2008

Log Time No Post

ForFilesJust a quick note to self, deleting Apache files older than 60 days:forfiles /p f:\Apache\Apache\logs\ /s /m ssl.log /d -60 /c "cmd /c del @file" Oh yeah! Blog more often!

Posted by Brad Rippe at 12:40

Friday, August 24, 2007

uPortal 2.6.0

Quick Notes for me:Tidy.jar has dom implementations that must be removed. These class file conflict with the dom implementation that is in JDK 1.6. Quick fix to remove the org.w3c.dom class files from the tidy.jar.xml-apis.jar must be removed as well for the same reason. CAS Setup InformationTesting remember to generate a cert with name localhost.
[http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/UPM/01+CAS+Authentication+for+the+ImpatientSSL IssuesProxy Validation Issues](http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/UPM/01+CAS+Authentication+for+the+ImpatientSSL+IssuesProxy+Validation+Issues)

Posted by Brad Rippe at 13:55

Blog Export: Brad's Blog, <http://bradrippe.com/serendipity/>

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

SD West 2007 - Random Notes

March 21, 2007 – Day One
Session 1: Effective Aspect-Oriented Programming – Ron Bodkin
bodkin@newaspects.com
<http://www.eclipse.org/aspectj> Eclipse with AspectJ Plugin or Spring AOP or JBoss also have tools for eclipse as well. Pointcut defines the join point where we want to call the aspect.
public aspect MeteringPolicy {
 pointcut useTitle() : execution(public void Song.play()) ||
 execution(public void Song.showLyrics());
 after() returning : useTitle() {
 MeteringService.trackUse();
 }}
Terms: advice method (do the following thing), pointcut
ajc links the aspects to the java objects. You need to use ajc at some point to grab the pointcuts in the java code. However, Spring will use proxies that are called instead of requiring the use of ajc (aspects compiler) to modify the bytecode. Used for tracing, monitoring, handling boiler plate code, used for understanding your system better.
Example: call(* Remote+.*(..) throws RemoteException);
This example can be used to handle all the RemoteExceptions so the programmer doesn't have to write the code to handle RemoteExceptions. This removes the boiler plate code of the try/catch in every call that throws a RemoteException.
Advice: Start small, only a few should write the aspects. Incremental adoption works best.
Random Notes:
AspectJ 5 (latest, most flexible)
Spring AOP – handles a subset of the JAspects advices
JBoss AOP
Check out Glassbox for performance monitoring and problems. Uses load time weaving.
Session 2:
Crystal Clear: A Human Powered Methodology for Small Teams – Alistair Cockburn
Talk about agile coming out well or not well. What's the difference?
Crystal Clear – Questions
Small teams hasn't been working well... Nothing written down
specs not clear
more changes than people can do
resource-starved project ...
req'ts /it infrastru / Techniques for getting max benefit from limited resources
Guidelines to use agile
When Customer/sponsor
Successful projects where listening to the people (people-centric) and constantly modify the methodology.
Different people do different things. Can't drive a methodology down someone's throat. Different projects and people use different methods (pair programming, uml design, test driven development, etc). happy people ship, happy code!
People like to be told what to do, so they won't do it. Each person has to say what they are going to do.
Crystal's purpose: Keep people from hurting each other, keeping each other informed
Crystal's nature: A set of conventions that get updated
Six people or less. Give them a whiteboard, let them ship code, and you're almost done.
Thinks of each project as a game.
Primary Goal: Deliver the project
Secondary Goal: From the seven principles of methodology design
Face-to-face communication is the cheapest and fastest channel for exchanging information
Recommended Reading
The Goal (Paperback) by Eliyahu M. Goldratt (Author), Jeff Cox (Author)
Frequent Delivery
Osmotic Communication – no private offices, communication is easy
Reflective Improvement – What are we doing, how are we doing it. How do we improve.
Personal Safety
Focus – don't work on two or more projects
Easy Access to Expert Users
Technical Environment with (agile places this first, that's ok)
Frequent integration
Automated testing
Config management
Critical technique in Crystal: Slide 20
Reflection Workshop. Discuss and determine what things you're going to try. Try these are things you can control and do.
Sets projects based on color. Clear, Orange, Yellow, etc.
Session 3: An Overview of TR1 – Scott Meyers
meyers@aristeia.com
<http://www.aristeia.com>
Technical Report 1 – Future standard of functionality to be in standard C++
Currently in the std::tr1 eventually maybe in the std namespace. You must have a TR1 conformant library for this to work.
New Functionality: C99 Compatibility
TR1 is a specification. This is an interface specification not an implementation. To understand the functionality in TR1: http://www.aristeia.com/EC3E/TR1_info.html
10 of the 14 libraries in TR1 are modeled on Boost libraries. Boost will bring its libraries into conformance with TR1.
gcc 4.0 – has some of the TR1. To get it, you can use Boost library, it has 11 of the 14. You can also look at Dinkumware.
Smart pointers declared in the header. Check out auto_ptr and shared_ptr. "this" is a raw pointer. Be careful when returning shared pointers to yourself. Operators: static_pointer_cast, dynamic_pointer_cast, const_pointer_cast
Relational: ==, !=,

Posted by Brad Rippe at 22:12

Friday, December 1, 2006

Gradebook TODO:: What's Next?

Now I have a good portion of the Gradebook app working in uPortal. Next I need to add the export in Excel and CSV formats to the instructor view, but before I got that far, I'm going to add data from a live course. I mean the course information with the roster. The student view needs to be tested and examined before I can do anything else. Once I have the course and students loaded I'll return to export features, then I should be ready for demo day... Just wanted to write a quick note to myself, so I remember where I'm at on this. It took me all week to get to work on this, so I didn't want to forget my train of thought. If I get the chance, I'd like to start working on my course material for my C++ course. Well I better find some way to wind down so that I can start another day tomorrow.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 01:36

Gradebook Portlet URL Errors

Now that I have the application (Sakai Gradebook) working as a portlet, I had to modify a few more things that the portlet framework didn't like. 1) I was receiving Portlet Exceptions on resources. `assignmentDetails.jsp` and `courseGradeDetails.jsp` were receiving exceptions when trying to retrieve the `dhtmlpopup.css` and the `dhtmlpopup.js`. The jsps use relative links to reference these files. I had to add the portlet context to the references to stop the exception from being thrown. `org.apache.pluto.core.impl.PortletResponseImpl.encodeURL()` checks for absolute urls. If the resource is reference via a relative url, a `PortletException` is thrown. 2) Beans defined in the ui project are defined with request scope. These beans had to be modified to use session scope. Since the request is split in an action request and a render request, when the jsps are being rendered, there aren't any request variables in scope. This is solved by changing the bean scope to session and using my `RoleListener` to handle removing the bean upon new requests. Example, when assignment details are requested for each homework assignment, upon the initial request a session bean is created say for homework #1. Now if we make a new request to view details of homework #2, the session bean exists from the initial request and homework #1 is displayed again. Thus the session bean needs to be removed to create a new bean with the data pertaining to homework #2. Again this works fine if we're using the application as a standalone application, but since the app has been pushed into a portlet framework, uportal, the requests don't work as designed. 3) The popup for gradebook logs doesn't show the close icon due to it being specified as a relative link. I've changed the the following
line: `closeIconUrl="dhtmlpopup/dhtmlPopClose.gif"` to `closeIconUrl="{pageContext.request.contextPath}dhtmlpopup/dhtmlPopClose.gif"` in the `gradingEventLogs.jspf` file. I also modified the tag library descriptor, `gb-jsp.tld`, changing the `rtexprvalue` to true so that the attribute "closeIconUrl" accepts and evaluates the `{pageContext.request.contextPath}` expression. `closeIconUrl false true` Now the eventLogs popup shows correctly in the portal. One minor issue was that the popup was showing up lower than I liked so I removed the `dhtmlGetPageYOffset()` from the `dhtmlPopupShow()` function so that it displays the popup where the log image is clicked on (this is located in the `dhtmlPopup.js`). 4) **** Is another issue with the portlet getting the proper context for tags in the myfaces library. In the `addAssignment.jsp`, it uses the `inputCalendar` component. When this component is loaded it initialize the calendar. However, the component needs `popcalendar_init.js` and the `popcalendar.js` to initialize the calendar component. I assume that the issue is due to the application being in the portal context while trying to get the js files from that context and not the portlet context. I'll have to look into this later. However, a quick fix is to add the two js files to the js directory in the ui package in the Gradebook, then add references to the to files in the `assignmentEditing.jspf` file after the description text in the tag.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 01:35

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Integrating Sakai Gradebook in Uportal

As you may or may not know I've been trying to integrate Sakai's Gradebook applicaiton into uportal. I thought this may save some resources by not having to have a full implementation of Sakai in place to take advantage of the code that is available. Even if this is the end result of this whole exploration. At least I was able to get up close and personal with Sakai. So to begin with I copied the standalone-app in the sakai gradebook src and decided to modify my code in a new directory instead of messing with the standalone app. Thus, I called the new directory, "uportal-app". Then I added a portlet.xml file containing the following:

```
Gradebook Portlet      gradebook      gradebook
org.apache.myfaces.portlet.MyFacesGenericPortlet      default-view      /index.jsp
-1      text/html      view      help      gradebook      gradebook      portlet,
gradebook      username      displayName      uPortalTemplateUserName
      memberOf
```

There are two things to take note of here. One is the portlet-class which is located in the myfaces.jar that is provided in the application to begin with. The second is the index.jsp file which I provide for the instructors/students to choose which grade/gradebook they want to work with first (more on this later). The standalone application has an index.htm file with essentially logs the user into the application. The html file won't work in the portlet beside the fact that if the user is seeing the gradebook application in uportal, they are already logged in. Next, I had to add modifications to the web.xml file. Here I define a new servlet to respond to the portlet context:

```
gradebook
org.apache.pluto.core.PortletServlet      portlet-class      org.apache.myfaces.portlet.MyFacesGenericPortlet
      portlet-guid      sakai-gradebook-uportal-app.gradebook      and the mapping to the servlet      gradebook
      /gradebook/*
```

Issue 1 Once the application is built, the index.jsp should respond. However, the Filters that are defined in the web.xml no longer work when the application is converted to a portlet. AuthnFilter and AuthzFilter will not be called from the normal execution of the portlet. These filters are defined in the following

```
classes:org.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.ui.standalone.AuthnFilterorg.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.ui.RoleFilterThe
workaroundI defined two PhaseListener classes which provided similar functionality to the two filters:
org.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.jsf.AuthnPhaseListener and org.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.jsf.RolePhaseListener. I
placed the code in the beforePhase() method for each of the classes. These classes provide authorization and
authentication information. The RolePhaseListener determines if a users has the ability to do something with the
gradebook. I'm going to assume that you are either a student or instructor and will at least have the ability to modify or
see your grades. Thus I omitted the RolePhaseListener and am only utilized the AuthnPhaseListener at the moment. To
support the new AuthnPhaseListener and to provide user information from uportal instead of Sakai, I have added the
following classes to the gradebook service
app:org.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.facades.uportal2impl.AuthnUportal2Imporg.sakaiproject.tool.gradebook.facades.up
ortal2impl.ContextManagementUportal2ImplThen the uportal-app/src/webapp/WEB-INF/spring-facade.xml file was
modified to utilitze these new classes as:
This replaces the standalone implementations and can
now provide uportal specific information about the users. Issue 2If you now build and deploy the application you will
receive a NoClassDefinitionFound in org.sakaiproject.jsf.app.SakaiVariableResolver at line 137. The class that isn't
found is org.sakaiproject.component.cover.ComponentManager. The VariableResolver attempts to retrieve the
WebApplicationContext from the ServletContext and then load a Bean the Spring Framework. If a reference to the
WebApplicationContext can't be obtained, the VariableResolver attempts to load the Object from the Sakai Component
Manager. This is all fine and well, however, since this a portlet in uportal the Component Manager doesn't exist nor can
the WebApplicationContext be obtained from the ServletContext. The workaroundI defined a new class,
org.sakaiproject.jsf.app.UportalVariableResolver, that obtains the WebApplicationContext from the FacesContext and
then attempts to load the Bean from the WebApplicationContext.wac =
FacesContextUtils.getRequiredWebApplicationContext(context);instead ofwac =
WebApplicationContextUtils.getWebApplicationContext((ServletContext)
context.getExternalContext().getContext());Now this code is not in the gradebook application, but is in the JSF app in
Sakai. Once I added my new UportalVariableResolver, I have to configure it from the faces-config.xml located in the
jsf/app/META-INF directory. Here I replace the SakaiVariableResolver with the new UportalVariableResolver and then
bld the jar and install it into my Maven repository. Once that is complete I can rebuild my Gradebook application and it
will place this new sakai-jsf.x.x.x.jar into my WEB-INF/lib directory and all is well again (Well not quite).
```

Posted by Brad Rippe at 16:33

Tuesday, October 17, 2006

Sakai Gradebook App

Today I'm starting with a uportal-app directory which is a copy of the standalone-app directory. This way I can make changes and mistakes to the uportal-app without messing with the standalone-app. To speed up compile time I moved the standalone-app out of the gradebook directory altogether and will move it back once I'm done messing with the uportal-app. I modified the maven.xml in the uportal-app directory to point to the appropriate directories in uportal-app instead of standalone-app. I.E. So now each goal in the uportal-app/maven.xml file points to the project.xml in that directory. Now to build the application I need to use:
maven -Duportal_standalone=true -Dmaven.test.skip=true clean build
In addition to the changes in the maven.xml file I also added a portlet.xml file to the uportal-app/WEB-INF/ directory. This is my attempt to portletize the (my new word) the web application. A little needed info:
<http://maven.apache.org/general.html#skip-test> Here's a little info on the technologies this application uses: Sakai, Hibernate, JSF, Maven, Spring, etc. as if that wasn't enough. So I'm trying to wrap my head around this stuff here. The goal of the day is to get the application to run as a portlet. So we'll see how far I get.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 15:54

Thursday, October 5, 2006

Sakai

Building Sakai_ | V | _ _Apache_ | |V| / ` \ V / -) '\ ~ intelligent projects ~|| |,|/_|||_| v. 1.0.2 Create build.properties in the %USERPROFILE% directory and place the following in the file:maven.repo.remote = <http://www.ibiblio.org/maven/>,<http://cvs.sakaiproject.org/maven/maven.tomcat.home> = d:/tomcat/If the remote repository is not set to use <http://cvs.sakaiproject.org/maven/> and <http://www.ibiblio.org/maven/> the build will fail with an attempt to download the sakai-2.2.jar file, mail-1.3.1.jar, and other jar files. Once the build.properties is saved, before you can build sakai, you need to install the sakai plugin:maven plugin:download -DgroupId=sakaiproject -DartifactId=sakai -Dversion=sakai.2.2 For more on using Maven to build Sakai, see the Using Maven page on the Sakai Wiki. I was almost overwhelmed by all the content on the Sakai Wiki. Cool stuff... If you are using SQL Server, you must modify the hibernate mapping files, GradeMapping.hbm.xml and GradeScale.hbm.xml.GradeMapping.hbm.xml modify line 25:GradeScale.hbm.xml modify line 32:Again, Percent is a keyword and the column names must be escaped.Now from the sakai source root directory execute: maven sakaiThis builds all the projects in the sakai source. If you only want to use the gradebook application, cd to the sections directory, modify the gradebook hibernate properties and execute:maven -Dmode=standalone -Dhibernate.properties.dir=d:/projects/sakai-src/gradebook/app/standalone-app/src/hibernate cln bldthen execute:# Regular standalone build and deploy to my test Tomcat server. maven -Dstandalone=true cln bld # Initialize my local database with the Gradebook tables. # this creates a gradebook.sql in the standalone-app/target directory # for ms sql server this gradebook.sql creates fields titled "PERCENT" # this must be escaped with the brackets [PERCENT] since it is a keyword maven schema-standaloneHere are is the sql statements I used to create the tables:create table GB_GRADABLE_OBJECT_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, OBJECT_TYPE_ID int not null, VERSION int not null, GRADEBOOK_ID numeric(19,0) not null, NAME varchar(255) not null, REMOVED tinyint null, POINTS_POSSIBLE double precision null, DUE_DATE datetime null, NOT_COUNTED tinyint null, EXTERNALLY_MAINTAINED tinyint null, EXTERNAL_STUDENT_LINK varchar(255) null, EXTERNAL_INSTRUCTOR_LINK varchar(255) null, EXTERNAL_ID varchar(255) null, EXTERNAL_APP_NAME varchar(255) null, primary key (ID));create table GB_GRADEBOOK_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, VERSION int not null, GRADEBOOK_UID varchar(255) not null unique, NAME varchar(255) not null, SELECTED_GRADE_MAPPING_ID numeric(19,0) null, ASSIGNMENTS_DISPLAYED tinyint not null, COURSE_GRADE_DISPLAYED tinyint not null, ALL_ASSIGNMENTS_ENTERED tinyint not null, LOCKED tinyint not null, primary key (ID));create table GB_GRADE_MAP_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, OBJECT_TYPE_ID int not null, VERSION int not null, GRADEBOOK_ID numeric(19,0) not null, GB_GRADING_SCALE_T numeric(19,0) null, primary key (ID));create table GB_GRADE_RECORD_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, OBJECT_TYPE_ID int not null, VERSION int not null, GRADABLE_OBJECT_ID numeric(19,0) not null, STUDENT_ID varchar(255) not null, GRADER_ID varchar(255) not null, DATE_RECORDED datetime not null, POINTS_EARNED double precision null, ENTERED_GRADE varchar(255) null, SORT_GRADE double precision null, primary key (ID), unique (GRADABLE_OBJECT_ID, STUDENT_ID));create table GB_GRADE_TO_PERCENT_MAPPING_T (GRADE_MAP_ID numeric(19,0) not null, [PERCENT] double precision null, LETTER_GRADE varchar(255) not null, primary key (GRADE_MAP_ID, LETTER_GRADE));create table GB_GRADING_EVENT_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, GRADABLE_OBJECT_ID numeric(19,0) not null, GRADER_ID varchar(255) not null, STUDENT_ID varchar(255) not null, DATE_GRADED datetime not null, GRADE varchar(255) null, primary key (ID));create table GB_GRADING_SCALE_GRADES_T (GRADING_SCALE_ID numeric(19,0) not null, LETTER_GRADE varchar(255) null, GRADE_IDX int not null, primary key (GRADING_SCALE_ID, GRADE_IDX));create table GB_GRADING_SCALE_PERCENTS_T (GRADING_SCALE_ID numeric(19,0) not null, [PERCENT] double precision null, LETTER_GRADE varchar(255) not null, primary key (GRADING_SCALE_ID, LETTER_GRADE));create table GB_GRADING_SCALE_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, OBJECT_TYPE_ID int not null, VERSION int not null, SCALE_UID varchar(255) not null unique, NAME varchar(255) not null, UNAVAILABLE tinyint null, primary key (ID));create table GB_PROPERTY_T (ID numeric(19,0) identity not null, VERSION int not null, NAME varchar(255) not null unique, VALUE varchar(255) null, primary key (ID));alter table GB_GRADABLE_OBJECT_T add constraint FK759996A7325D7986 foreign key (GRADEBOOK_ID) references GB_GRADEBOOK_T;alter table GB_GRADEBOOK_T add constraint FK7C870191552B7E63 foreign key (SELECTED_GRADE_MAPPING_ID) references GB_GRADE_MAP_T;alter table GB_GRADE_MAP_T add constraint FKADE11225325D7986 foreign key (GRADEBOOK_ID) references GB_GRADEBOOK_T;alter table GB_GRADE_MAP_T add constraint FKADE11225181E947A foreign key (GB_GRADING_SCALE_T) references GB_GRADING_SCALE_T;create index GB_GRADE_RECORD_STUDENT_ID_IDX on GB_GRADE_RECORD_T (STUDENT_ID);alter table GB_GRADE_RECORD_T add constraint FK46ACF7526F98CFF foreign key (GRADABLE_OBJECT_ID) references GB_GRADABLE_OBJECT_T;alter table GB_GRADE_TO_PERCENT_MAPPING_T add constraint

```
FKCDEA021162B659F1 foreign key (GRADE_MAP_ID) references GB_GRADE_MAP_T;alter table
GB_GRADING_EVENT_T add constraint FK4C9D99E06F98CFF foreign key (GRADABLE_OBJECT_ID) references
GB_GRADABLE_OBJECT_T;alter table GB_GRADING_SCALE_GRADES_T add constraint FK5D3F0C95605CD0C5
foreign key (GRADING_SCALE_ID) references GB_GRADING_SCALE_T;alter table
GB_GRADING_SCALE_PERCENTS_T add constraint FKC98BE467605CD0C5 foreign key (GRADING_SCALE_ID)
references GB_GRADING_SCALE_T;create index GB_GRADABLE_OBJ_ASN_IDX on GB_GRADABLE_OBJECT_T
(OBJECT_TYPE_ID, GRADEBOOK_ID, NAME, REMOVED);create index GB_GRADE_RECORD_O_T_IDX on
GB_GRADE_RECORD_T (OBJECT_TYPE_ID);If you want, you can load your local database with test data. If you
dothis, you can skip the "schema-standalone" step above, since the dataload will automatically create all needed tables.
maven load-full-standalone
```

Posted by Brad Rippe at 01:08

Wednesday, September 27, 2006

Blogging, IronPython, Linux

Wow... I can't believe I wait so long to post to this blog. Since I had issues with Blogger.com, I kind of got side tracked and wasn't too interested in my blog anymore. Not to mention the fact that I finished the Livestrong ride months ago and haven't been putting in hard hard efforts on the bicycle either. So what's new with me. The usual work and play. I've still been riding about five days a week and have been looking for another event to participate in. Linux Environment Variables - Quick Random Notes Environment Variables on fedora 5 are set in the /etc/profile.d/ directory. Example "maven.sh":
`export MAVEN_HOME=/usr/share/maven-1.0.2
export PATH=$MAVEN_HOME/bin:$PATH`
Fedora 5 is using Common Internet File System instead of Samba. Thus to mount a share use the following:
`mount -t cifs //server/share /mnt/mountdir -o username=domain\username`
As you can see I've been been trying to use Linux more and more...
IronPython
Now this language is rather interesting. It allows you to create and modify Windows Forms and Presentation Foundation applications on the fly. In order to get this working I had to download and install the Pre-Release Windows Vista .NET 3.0 Framework and Runtime and the Windows SDK for Windows Vista. In addition to the IronPython 1.0 release and the IronPython Samples.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 10:07

Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Java and .NET playing nicely

Recently I needed an instance of uPortal to communicate with our Windows machines to have them do some work on behalf of the user that signed into uPortal. At first I tried to do this all in Java and quickly found out that this wasn't going to be very elegant, given that the Windows 2003 servers already have IIS and ASP .NET running on them. Thus I was faced with what I'm sure other have faced. I didn't want to start another web server just to respond to requests from the portal. Especially if it required starting another JVM. So, what to do, what to do. Well I just wrote a little .NET Web Service in C# (not difficult) to handle the requests and do the work. This was coming from never writing a web service in Visual Studio before. Microsoft has done a good job at letting you create web services relatively straight forward in VS 2005. C# Web Service To create the web service in VS 2005, from the top menu create a new web site. Create a New Web Site from the ASP .NET Web Service Template. From this dialog you can select the language of choice, C#, J#, or VB and the location of your files (Pretty self-explanatory). VS create a bare bones, Hello World Web Service. At this point you have a web service that returns a simple string "Hello World" that we are all so familiar with. You can build this solution and test it by setting a breakpoint and pressing "F5". While debugging on the local machine you're able to invoke methods from a web page which also provides a link to the service's WSDL. This makes it easy to create and debug the service before you have to write any code to consume the service. If the HelloWorld method is invoked, the service returns a nice bit of xml code: Hello World In a few clicks, visual studio has created the application class file, Service.cs; the Web Service entry point, Service.asmx; and the web service configuration file, Web.config. For more information on the generated file, see the documentation on MSDN. Now that the basic structure of the web service is in place. We can write code that actually does something instead of just respond with "Hello World". Modify the ServiceThe whole .NET/Java relationship came into light because I needed to generate webs in IIS from a Java Application Server which resides on a different from the IIS server. So the Java App needed the ability to function as an administrator on the IIS. In the Web Service application code, I first changed the Namespace to something meaningful,

```
"http://www.iisserver.com/webgenerator".WebService(Namespace =
"http://www.iisserver.com/webgenerator/")[WebServiceBinding(ConformsTo = WsiProfiles.BasicProfile1_1)]public class
Service : System.Web.Services.WebServiceNext I changed the HelloWorld method definition to:public string
generate(string account)and add some database access to the body of the method. Basically the generate method looks
in a database table for commands that need to be executed to create webs on the IIS server and executes those
commands on the server. So here's the bulk of the method which is straight forward:[WebMethod]public string
generate(string account) { /** conStr is the static connection string / SqlConnection conn = new
SqlConnection(conStr); SqlConnection conn2 = new SqlConnection(conStr); SqlDataReader accountReader =
null; SqlCommand sql;/** returns the exact path to the command shell executable. */ string command =
Environment.ExpandEnvironmentVariables("%comspec%"); string returnInfo = ""; string fpID = "0"; / I've
simplified this example so you don't have to look at all the code / try { sql = new
SqlCommand("SELECT FrontPageID, Command "+ " FROM WebFrontPageRequest " +
"WHERE Account = "+account+ " AND Completed = 0", conn); conn.Open();
accountReader = sql.ExecuteReader(); do { while(accountReader.Read()) {
fpID = accountReader["FrontPageID"].ToString(); conn2.Open(); /** Update the command */
sql = new SqlCommand("UPDATE "+ "WebFrontPageRequest SET "+ "Completed = 1 WHERE
FrontPageID = "+ fpID, conn2); sql.ExecuteNonQuery(); conn2.Close();
string readerCmd = accountReader["Command"].ToString();
ProcessStartInfo startInfo = new ProcessStartInfo(command,args); startInfo.UseShellExecute =
false; startInfo.RedirectStandardOutput = true; startInfo.RedirectStandardError = true;
startInfo.WindowStyle = ProcessWindowStyle.Normal; startInfo.CreateNoWindow = false;
Process proc = Process.Start(startInfo); proc.WaitForExit();
if (proc.ExitCode != 0) { // TODO: clean up your mess
returnInfo = returnInfo+ "unsuccessful "+ command+args+
proc.StandardOutput.ReadToEnd() +"\\n" + proc.StandardError.ReadToEnd()
+"\\n"; } else { returnInfo = returnInfo+ "successful "+
proc.StandardOutput.ReadToEnd(); } }
while(accountReader.NextResult()); } catch(Exception e) { conn2.Open(); sql = new
SqlCommand("UPDATE WebFrontPageRequest "+ "SET Completed = 0 "+ "WHERE
FrontPageID = "+ fpID, conn2); sql.ExecuteNonQuery(); conn2.Close(); return
e.Message; } finally { if(accountReader != null) accountReader.Close();
conn.Close(); conn2.Close(); } return returnInfo;}(For more on C# and database access, see Accessing
Data with ADO.NET or http://www.c-sharpcorner.com/Database.asp)Now that there is a method to do some work, the
```

Blog Export: Brad's Blog, <http://bradrippe.com/serendipity/>

web service can be built and published to a production server. There is an option to publish the service under the build menu. Once the service is on production server is when the real fun begins which brings us to the Application Pool but before I get to the Application pool here's a little brief on the new issue. Up to this point, there is a web service that is attempting to create webs on an IIS server. Well when the service is called I can see the service start and then die. IIS runs under the ASPNET account which doesn't have administrative rights to execute commands like `owadmin.exe`, or `cacls.exe`, etc. Since the server is providing services for multiple users I didn't want to grant ASPNET the rights to satisfy the requests of the service because others could then write code that utilizes these rights. Thus, I had to create a new local account and grant it administrative rights. If you use my approach, you will also have to grant the account rights to log on as a service. For more information on "IIS 6 & Service Unavailable Errors" see Brian Desmond's Blog. You'll have to modify the security settings for your new account before the Web Service will execute without error. You need to make sure that the new account has setting to log on as a service. You can get a good idea of what is needed by looking at the ASPNET account security settings. Application Pool Application Pools allow .NET applications to run in isolation of each other. Each pool has it's own worker process, thus, if one pool chokes, it won't affect the other applications running on the system. For my purposes, I have multiple application running on the server, most of which are out of my control and don't need special privileges to do their work. However, the web service that was created does need rights. So, I configured a new application pool to run as another user for the web service and only the web service. To create a new Application Pool, from the IIS manager, there is a folder called "Application Pools", right click on the folder and select "New" -> "Application Pool". From the next dialog, name your Application Pool. I also selected to use the default app pool as a template. This allowed me to take advantage of configurations that already exist in the default pool. Once the new app pool is created, you need to modify the pool's identity. Initially the pool uses the Network Service account. I changed this to use the new user administrative account created above. This will allow the worker process to execute the commands needed to generate a web. For more on application pools, see the article on <http://www.developer.com/net/asp/article.php/2245511>. Now that the application pool is configured, the web site that hosts the application must be configured to use the new pool. To configure the pool, go to "Web Sites" in IIS and right click on the web that is hosting the web service. Select "Properties". From the properties dialog you can set the application pool that this web will use from the lower drop-down list. Once the pool is set, restart the web. Now the web service is running under an account that has proper rights to execute the tools needed to create webs on the server. On a side note, I've seen posts where users are trying to impersonate an administrative account to execute tools like `owsadm.exe`. This will not work because the web application is running under the ASPNET account and doesn't have proper rights to execute those tools. Often I see users using the `ProcessStartInfo` object to impersonate the administrator like: `ProcessStartInfo.UsernameProcessStartInfo.PasswordProcessStartInfo.Domain` This doesn't work and the process will hang or if you set a timeout, it will be killed without ever doing the work because the `CreateProcess` API is called, and the Platform SDK states: "If the calling process is impersonating another user, the new process uses the token for the calling process, not the impersonation token". Since the underlining process is ASPNET, the process doesn't work. My work around, was to create a new pool running under a less restrictive process solely to execute tools and whalla! Apache Axis Back to Java! The Apache Group has come out with some really helpful tools to get me through my day; Ant, Commons, Maven2, Tomcat, to name a few. For consuming web services, I don't think they could make it much easier with Axis. The when you download Axis it comes with a tool to convert a WSDL to client bindings, `WSDL2Java`, which allows you to consume a web service in a few lines of code, but before we look at the client code, here's how I generated the bindings: `java org.apache.axis.wsdl.WSDL2Java`
`http://mywebservice.url/Service.asmx?WSDL` Executing the `WSDL2Java` tool created, five Java classes: `Service.java` `ServiceLocator.java` `ServiceSoap.java` `ServiceSoap12.java` `ServiceSoapStub.java` The generated classes are described in the table below (from the Axis site)

WSDL clause	Java class(es) generated	
For each entry in the type section	A java class	
A holder if this type is used as an inout/out parameter	For each portType	A java interface
For each binding	A stub class	
For each service	A service interface	A service implementation (the locator)

 Once the Axis classes have been compiled I can use them to invoke the web service as follows:

```
import edu.fullcoll.axis.stubs.*;
public class TestClient {
    public static void main(String [] args) {
        try {
            ServiceLocator loc = new ServiceLocator();
            ServiceSoap port = loc.getServiceSoap();
            System.out.println(port.generate("webaccount"));
        } catch (Exception e) {
            System.err.println(e.toString());
        }
    }
}
```

 This main should output something like "successful", if all goes well. At which point I am satisfied that I can incorporate this snippet of code into a portlet or any other Java application to access a .NET service. The coding of the application wasn't difficult, just getting all the pieces to function properly since I wasn't that familiar with .NET and impersonation or .NET application pools. Additions to the code, I added some security to the web service to ensure that only authorized users have access to the service. You can get information on securing your ASP application at MSDN. Hopefully this helps if you're trying to get these two worlds to function in harmony. With the help of Apache and Microsoft, this whole process was a lot easier than I had planned. Enjoy!

Posted by Brad Rippe at 12:12

Ok this past week, I took it for granted that an old linux machine without updates would be ok on the internet without

someone screwing with it. I was wrong! So I was working late and checking out the box which I hadn't touched in forever, and to my surprise someone was able to take advantage of one of the old ssh vulnerabilities in my system. Just when you take a hacker for granted, they get yah!! I saw I usage on the server, and see they started a daemon to scan external machines, not good stuff for me. When I rebooted the machine, the System init files were corrupt and I got this nasty message about "Freeing unused kernel memory". So the first step was to force the reinstallation of the SysVinit package. I booted in rescue mode and chrooted to /mnt/sysimage and forced the installation with: `rpm -ivh --force /mnt/cdrom/RedHat/RPMS/SysVinit*.rpm` Now I could reboot and the system would come up, unfortunately I had a slew of problems with this machine due to the rootkit. I could see the what files were changed by using `lsattr -aR` on the respective directories /bin /sbin /usr /var /etc /home. The files the rootkit changed were marked as immutable and the dates on all files were the same relative to the time. Two directories you should NOT check are /dev and /proc. Especially /dev because if you have the kernel module auto-loader compiled in, `lsattr` probing each device node will cause the drivers to attempt to load which may crash your server. You want to check all other directories. Once I found the files that were changed to immutable, I could change the file attributes with the `chattr` command. For more info on the particular rootkit that was on my system see, <http://www.crucialp.com/resources/tutorials/secure-server-securing/detect-clean-hacked-server-to-rootkit-tutorial.php>. This caused a bunch of problems, but the moral to the whole story is to keep your software up to date with the latest and greatest patches and don't take that old server for granted by not paying attention to the poor machine just because it's not the recent hardware in your farm. The rootkit took advantage of an SSH exploit which open the door for all kinds of fun for the hacker. So how did I fix this whole mess, well luckily, the hacker didn't take advantage of the data partition on the machine, so all of the user data was intact. I was able to copy the user data to another machine, format the server and installed RHEL 4 AS. Now I can do the right thing for the server by taking advantage of the `update` software, and/or `yum` to keep the box's vulnerabilities to a minimum. Ohh it also gives me access to the firewall software which is now on the server. Life is good again and my server isn't feeling vulnerable and being taken advantage of by someone who really doesn't love it Ahhhhhhh, doesn't that look good!!!! Other than a little re-installation, I've been working on a portlet that I've had in the back of my mind for a couple of months. I'm able to use Maven2 to do the compilation, build, and packaging of the application. This is the first project I've used Maven2 on. I've become so used to using Ant on every project that I almost feel like a two timer with Maven2 (the new and improved girl friend). I also got to push some Hibernate 3.1 code into the works. I also ran into this cool project for writing Gnome applications in C#. The platform is an open source .NET environment for Linux, Solaris, OS X, and Windows, called Mono.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:47

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Big Bear Shootout #1

Saturday, May 20th: I headed up to the mountains a day early because I needed to get my registration squared away. As normal, I procrastinated with my registration and waited till the last minute, so I was a day late for the online registration. I arrived in Arrowhead around 1pm, got myself situated at the cabin and headed to La Montana Restaurant where registration would start at 3pm. At La Montana, it seemed to be the calm before the storm. Everything was nice and relaxed and only one or two racer ahead of me for registration. Thus, I filled out my registration information paid my coin, received my BIB, GU, and mini energy bar, to solidify my place at the start. From La Montana, I geared up and decided to head up to the start and ride some of the course to see what was in store for me tomorrow. Putting all thoughts of the race out of my mind, I headed 2.5 miles up to the start and continued through the course. I couldn't help but think, what a great day in the mountains. It wasn't too hot or cold. Actually a little cool in the shade but heading up the side of the mountain took care of that right away. Today was really relaxing and I was trying to take in the beauty of the mountains. The back side, over towards Angelus Oaks was still covered in snow and just looked spectacular. I can't believe I ever head down to the 91 and 15 freeways. What am I thinking? I rode and as I was closing in on 10 miles, I thought I should probably turn around and not overdue it for tomorrow would probably take a good bit of my energy. So, I headed back and called it a day. From La Montana back to the cabin in Arrowhead for more R&R. Sunday, May 21 (Race Day): Ahhhhhhhhh! Waking up to pine trees, nothing like it in the world. After I got myself some breakfast and coffee, I got my gear together and headed back to Big Bear. Arriving with an hour to spare, I had plenty of time to get myself together, put my number plate on, and head to the start. Being that it had been some time since my last Big Bear race, I wasn't quite sure how I'd do with the altitude and the climbing that's part of these BB courses. Although, I don't really have big expectations, except not breaking anything, including myself, finish and have fun. I still wanted to put in a good effort. With that said, I tried to stay relaxed, and climb my way to the start slowly (being that I wasn't in any real hurry to start). At the start, I downed some GU, drank some Cytomax and move my way towards the start. Before I knew it, we were off. Man it's already beginning. As usual, I'm trying to control my nerves, heart rate, and breathing. The first part of the course was a good bit of climbing. I felt fairly well, with the exception of my heart rate. I kept looking down at my heart rate monitor and it was pegged at 190. It never seemed to drop below 180. Come on! Damn these guys are gone and I'm pushing it to the limit. I think I was maintaining my position some where in the top 10 for the climb, then my downside kicked in, literally. Once the course started heading down, eight or nine guys pass me. What the? Man I really have to find some downhill speed! Around a corner, and there goes my Hot/Cold water bottle. Damn! I like that thing. Worried that more guys will catch me, I let the bottle go and continue the race. These guys are eating me up. After the first initial downhill, we climb, we climb, and we climb. My legs are feeling ok today, I just wish I was a little higher in the rankings, and didn't let those guys pass me like that, but I'll have to deal with it. From the course map, it stated that the race was 16 miles. I tell you, I'm looking down at my computer and it's stating we're at 17 miles already and I know there are still miles ahead to the finish. Urgh! I've got nothing left. It's just too much to try and catch these guys on the up hills. Especially when I'm having issues just staying with them on the climbs, trying to catch them after I get hammered on the down hills, just isn't happening. Well another one bits the dust! I gave it my best shot. We finish at 19.27 miles. Out of 26 racers, I ended up 16th. I've really got to work on that downhill speed and get a little more power in the climbs. I know easier said than done. But it's worth a try and gives me some thing to work on. I mean how fun would it be if I went out and won every race. I mean where's the fun in that? All in all, I must say that every race, no matter how I do, I always learn something. Something about me, about the courses, about the lines people take, and how fit I really am. So, I leave Big Bear looking forward to the next time and accomplishing my goals for the race: Finish and don't break anything. Till next time! Happy Trails! Big Bear StatsGPS Data for the race (Ride Big Bear with me, I could have used you)

Posted by Brad Rippe at 16:28

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Thursday, May 4, 2006

Blogger.com SUCKS!

Blogger.com simply SUCKS! I've been using blogger.com for over a year now and haven't had a problem till recently. I've been posting my blog entries no problem. Then all of a sudden I get an automated email telling me that Blogger.com has determined that my Blog is a spam blog. WHAT? My blog has been up for over a year and now all of a sudden it's a spam blog. Blogger.com fails to inform before they remove all of your content that your blog is going to be nuked! In the email, there's no mention on who, what or how to dispute this claim. So, I decided to email everyone with a blogger.com email address and this got me absolutely nothing. No response. The only message I received from blogger, was that they were removing my blog with all my entries and not to respond to the message because it was an automated message. The only bright side is that I can use Google cache to retrieve most of the content. What a pain! So I guess here is my first entry on my site. If you want to read more on Blogger.com and how the support and service sucks, check out google.com.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 15:07

Friday, November 11. 2005

Venturing into the wild blue yonder!!!

PHPSo this is how I feel right now! I've been struggling with PHP a little trying to handle a few different tasks for Ride Engineering while getting a complete handle on the language. Since I've been spending some time in the J2EE space, venturing off into a different environment is rather refreshing. It's like learning how to ride a motorcycle again. I did some work on the site and since I'd been working on my masters, I'd kind of put the site on the back burner. So, now it's time to get up to speed again on PHP and MySQL. I've been reading some of the Odi's PHP Best Practices and found it rather helpful. So if your hammering out PHP code, give it a look. So here are a few of the small tid bits that I've picked up tonight: The @ operator suppresses any error messages when it precedes an expression. Normally, when a built-in function encounters an error, PHP sends text directly to the browser. Sometimes this is just warning text. If you want to suppress any error or warning messages, place @ directly before the name of the function. You may also place @ before an expression if you anticipate an error condition, such as division by zero. Error messages may also be suppressed for all functions in a script with the error_reporting directive. I've also been reading Web Database Applications with PHP and MySQL by Hugh Williams and David Lane. The book helped bring me up to speed on Templates and other components in PEAR (PHP Extensions and Application Repository). The past few weeks have been eventful. While spending last weekend in Solvang on a bike for six hours, I was able to recharge a little to get some bugs out (of me). This week I've been hell bent on learning Spring and clearing some of the bugs in my code after upgrading to the latest version of Uportal at work. Seems I've been lazy and haven't been keeping up with some of the newer jars that have since deprecated methods and in some cases removed methods from libraries. So, this past week I've been updating that faulty code. Mainly JDOM code that needed to be updated since I used a pre-1.0 version to deploy the uP app initially and added some stuff to the contrib jar that does include the ResultSetBuilder which isn't in the 1.0 release. Thus, I had to rebuild the jar and redeploy the app. No biggy! Any hoot, another thing I've been messing with is Round Cube, AJAX mail client. Oh before I forget, I need this page for tomorrow, disabling output escaping for XSL

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:36

Wednesday, October 5, 2005

Balance

So this past weekend (Sept 25) I got to hang out with a couple hundred mountain bikers at the 24 hour race in Idyllwild. It was fun, difficult, demanding, stressful, and successful all in the same breath. Amazing to watch people sit on a bike for 24 hours or somewhere around 24 hours to see the determination and strength that people display. What an inspirational sight to see! Truly impressive! While I only competed in the 5 man 200+ age group, it was an experience to see the other riders out on the course. Although there is competitiveness, there is also a great amount of support for one another. On my fourth lap, around 7/8am, I headed out to the staging tent with all the highest hopes of turning in my fastest lap of the race, however, while eating my breakfast right before getting on the bike, I failed to realize that the body needs more time than 10 minutes to process food. Ignoring all signs of fatigue, I jump on my bike and headed up the first 2 miles climb, still with all the optimism that I initially had, I thought I could overcome my feelings of hunger and fatigue. By the time I hit the top of the climb and passed through the meadow, I could feel my body complaining about the punishment that I was putting it through and by the time I hit the next climb, my body was shutting down. I wound up walking up the rest of the climbs from that point on (this was not fun). By the time I got back to camp I could feel my racing was over. I was tired, dirty, hot, cold, and hungry. It was apparent that I'd had enough racing for one day. So that brings me to my latest entry, Balance. Since graduating, I've been trying to spend some time learning new things, I've been messing with Spring, Hibernate, Python, and PHP. In addition, I've been trying to do more social events (imagine that social events for a computer geek) and maintain somewhat physically fit. At any rate, my point is that I think there needs to be a Balance between all aspects of in my life. I quickly learned on that final lap of the race that I was just on the bike too damn much. I also feel the same with the computer at times. I'm trying to learn and satisfy my customers by sitting at the computer all day and then going home at night and continuing the process (this definitely causes some mental fatigue). I've often found myself walking up each climb, hoping that the finish line isn't far off. Unlike the 24 hour race, the computer just doesn't have a finish line. As soon as I finish the first 12 mile stretch, someone or something adds another 128 miles to course. Even though this is a different kind of track than the one I rode in Idyllwild, the idea is the same. It has to be tackled in small digestible portions. You know, "Divide and conquer". It can't be completed in one 24 hour sitting. Now I know what you're thinking, "It doesn't take rocket scientist to figure this out". Well your right, but my point is that computers can be the sole focus of us geeks. We tend to stare into the box and before you know it, the whole day has passed. You can't just sit in front of the box and expect to be creative, productive, and innovative (Well maybe you can, but I CAN'T). All of the development can't be mental, there has to be some physicality and emotion to the whole process. I mean how can you create something really worth while if you don't feel something for the project and experience something fresh and exciting. I think that's why I started mountain biking to begin with. Growing up in South Florida, besides the beach and the Keys, there wasn't much scenery. At least not like South California. Here (so cal) the weather is completely conducive to being outside, no bugs like So.Fla., and you can actually stand being outside in the heat, with trees and mountains. I've been checking Kathy's blog on Thinking Young, Keeping Sharp Edges, and the Devil's Advocate. WOW! Great stuff. So my point here is that too much of a good thing is NO GOOD! So the next time you're staring into the box and feeling tired, hungry and out of mental strength, TAKE A BREAK! You're probably walking up each climb and watching everyone else ride by you. (I'll add some additional technical information later. I just thought I had to get that off my chest after struggling up some of those climbs). Enjoy!

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:35

Tuesday, September 13. 2005

JavaOne - Entry 3

Hard to believe it's already September and I'm still entering JavaOne posts. I've finally finished my thesis and am waiting for it's return from the printers @ Cal State. Now that I have that out of the way I can focus on other things. I've been trying to get up on the Spring Framework and Hibernate. I've been writing some simple applications that utilize both. It's hard to believe at one time we used to write code like: `Connection connection = null; try { String driverName = "com.somecompany.somepackage.sql.SQLDriver"; String mydatabase = serverName + ":" + portNumber; String url = "jdbc:SQLConnect://" + mydatabase; Class.forName(driverName); // Create a connection to the database connection = DriverManager.getConnection(url, username, password); } catch (ClassNotFoundException e) { } catch (SQLException e) { }`With Spring and Hibernate SQL code with try/catch blocks are a thing of the past. Even the connection setup is removed from the code. But what really got me started with Hibernate, I'd have to give this to my two year old nephew. After the conference I had purchased "Hibernate In Action" by Christian Bauer and Gavin King. The book was laying around the house on the coffee table, before I made time to pick it up. My nephew asked "What is that" I told him "Hibernate Jacob, that's Hibernate". To make a long story short, the little guy's been bending my ear about "Hibernate". So I figured if it's that important to him, I've got to check it out. So I finally did and have been trying to incorporate it into my projects that need DB access ever since. So, thanks Jacob for keeping me true to my word about learning Hibernate. At any hoot, here's the post from JavaOne 2005: The day started with Amazon Web Services (AWS): Feeling Innovation & Enterprise, which discussed topics like accessing AWS via a REST API (Representational State Transfer), and SOAP API. There are some examples on the amazon site for those that want to hook into Amazon's products and tools for building E-Commerce sites. Additional code samples can be found at <http://www.awszone.com>. Further services can be found at <http://www.scoutpal.com>. The difference basically between the two are: REST provides a convenient, ad hoc, easy to ramp up method of accessing services. The SOAP API is standardized and a strongly typed API. Thus, the notion is that it will take longer to understand and get the ball rolling with SOAP than with REST. The next session was on Asynchronous Javascript and XML (AJAX) which seems to be quite the popular topic at JavaOne. I've seen a few sessions on the topic. There's a sample in the Java Blue Prints Catalog utilizing JSF and AJAX. The samples provided a good description of what was done along with some nice Sequence Diagrams to give you a clear picture of the whole process. The example uses: Java Server Faces Servlet 2.3 Java Server Pages 1.2 AJAX is not confined to Java solely, since it uses Javascript and XML, the process which generates the XML to be read can be any technology, PHP, ASP, whatever. Javascript makes asynchronous calls to a process which in turn generates XML to be processed. Javascript sets up a callback function which is executed once the initial call is completed. This callback function includes the code to parse the xml and take action based on the xml that is returned. This is all done without reloading the page as it were in the old days. AJAX gain popularity after Google came out with google suggest and then google maps. Then next session escapes me... Direct-to-DOM Rendering. I have notes for JSF Renderer writes directly to the DOM. Provides rich interactivity without Javascript. For more info see the ICE soft site. And finally end the post with Jason Hunter's session on XQuery. For those whom have never attended a session by Jason, he's quite technical and humorous at the same time. I usually leave his sessions feeling satisfied and while not being overloaded with information. Since it's already 3AM and I need sleep, I'll sum the XQuery session up with a bulleted list: XQuery MarkLogic; eXist XQuery Tag Library XQueryRunner MarkLogic Developer I'll pick up here next time. So what's the point of staying up late and writing random notes anyway. While when I started the blog, it wasn't really with the intention of knocking anyone off their socks with it. The idea was simple, to force myself to WRITE. No matter how incoherent the ideas may or may not be. As motivation I'm using the JavaOne conference to get the biggest bang for the buck. 1) the technical information was invaluable in and of itself. 2) the motivation and topics which are allowing me to blog and hopefully develop skills that I didn't have before. Thus at some point I'd like to write a little more and by utilizing my blog, I hope to get those creative juices flowing again. 24 Hours of Adrenalin For now I have some sleeping to do and preparation for another 24 hour race. It seems this year I'm not in school so I figured what a better time to participate. Usually, I'm taking classes, teaching classes and don't have the time to do it. Well lately I've been doing some road riding and getting on the mountain bike, a friend called and said they needed one more guy for a five man team, so I thought what the hell. I might as well do it. Somehow I know I'm going to be rethinking this decision once I'm in the middle of the trail at 3AM at which point I'm sure I'll be wet, cool and tired. Now that I've had the opportunity to think about it, blogging at 3/4AM isn't that bad after all. At any rate, hopefully the team does well. I don't put much pressure on the races, I just want to have fun and finish. Placement is an added bonus if it's there... if not, as long as everyone had a good time and there are only minor injuries (the usual cuts and scraps) I'm down with it. Till next time... Enjoy whatever it is you do...

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:27

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

JavaOne - Entry 2

Ok... Firefox is pissing me off. I'm trying to writing my notes on JavaOne and the damn thing keeps crashing. Ok to be honest it's my version of Adobe Acrobat that is crashing the browser. At any rate, I'll try to post this next bit of info before it crashes again.

EJB 3.0 (JSR 220) There are a lot of changes with 3.0. Mainly the use of EJB has become easier with the use of Annotations. So here is my bulleted list of new and exciting features.

- Container will handle dependency injection through annotations on fields or methods
- Some of the annotated injections - @EJB, @Resource
- This simplification (EJB 3.0) has several main aspects:
 - Simplification of the interface definition requirements for enterprise beans: elimination requirements for the specification of home and component interfaces in the EJB 3.0 programming model.
 - Simplification of the contractual requirements between the bean provider and the container: elimination of the requirements for the specification of the javax.ejb.EnterpriseBean interfaces.
 - Simplification of APIs for access to the bean's environment: definition of a dependency injection facility and simpler look-up APIs.
 - Introduction of Java metadata annotations to be used as an alternative to deployment descriptors (Note: Descriptors override Annotations).
 - Simplification of object persistence by the definition of a light-weight object/relational mapping facility based on the direct use of Java classes rather than persistent components.
 - Transactions can be declared @ the class or method level
 - The TransactionManagement annotation specifies the transaction management demarcation type of a session bean or message-driven bean. If the TransactionManagement annotation is not specified for a session bean or message-driven bean, the bean is assumed to have container managed transaction demarcation.
 - @Target(TYPE)
 - @Retention(RUNTIME)

```
public @interface TransactionManagement {TransactionManagementType value() default TransactionManagementType.CONTAINER;}
The enum TransactionManagementType is used to specify whether container-managed or bean-managed transaction management is used.
public enum TransactionManagementType {CONTAINER, BEAN}
Fo mo info check the EJB 3.0 Specs: EJB 3.0 Simplified API Java Persistence API EJB Core Contracts and Requirements 1.5 Tips & Techniques Annotations - (JSR-175: A Metadata Facility for the JavaTM Programming Language)
@deprecated @override @user-defined ENUMERATIONS can have methods.
Simple Example:
public class EnumerationExample {enum AppServers {JBOSS, WEBLOGIC, WEBSPHERE, RESIN; public static void display() {AppServers appServers[] = AppServers.values(); for(AppServers a: appServers) System.out.println(a); }}
public static void main(String[] args) {AppServers.display();}
}
Varargs - Wow, I know this has been out for a while but I've been stuck in Java 1.4.2.
Creating Varargs in Java 1.5 Tiger
Covariant return and parameter types
Using and Programming Generics in J2SE 5.0 - there was some interesting discussion on Generics and Wildcards, unfortunately, my memory isn't as good as it once was, so I've added this link with some information on wildcards towards the bottom.
There are three types of wildcards:
"? extends Type": Denotes a family of subtypes of type Type. This is the most useful wildcard
"? super Type": Denotes a family of supertypes of type Type
"?": Denotes the set of all types or any
JSR 14: Adding Generics to the Java Programming Language
The last bit of information I got from JavaOne on this day was the name of a UML modeling tool, called "Enterprise Architect" (Academic Pricing). A friend I'd just met said he's been using it and it seemed to work out rather nicely for him. I haven't had the opportunity to try it yet, but I'm planning on getting a copy in the next week or two.
Years prior I'd been using Togethersoft's Control Center to do all my UML modeling, what a great tool that was. The company was small and very helpful and the tool was great at reverse engineering and the UI was intuitive. Unfortunately, Borland bought Togethersoft, hence, my free academic license was crushed and I haven't spent much time looking at it. However, I believe Borland still sells the product.
While doing my masters, we were forced to use Rational Rose, which I'm sure is a great product. However, I couldn't get my arms around the tool. It seemed bulky and not very user-friendly compared to Togethersoft's Control Center. So, if you looking for a UML Modeling tool+, and are able to get a copy of what was Togethersoft's Control Center, enjoy! I highly recommend it. As for myself, I'm going to check into the Enterprise Architect.
Off the topic and as far as my blogging is concerned, I'd told myself that once school is done I would commit to writing more, more articles, more tutorials, more, more... So this is my attempt to write and get the ball rolling in the right direction. I figure if I start writing more often then when it's time for another article or tutorial, my muscles will be warm. So for me this is kind of my training program for writing. With that said and Lance about to win 7, I shall save the rest for another day, cause I don't want to burn up in the flats... BTW, I've also been checking Kathy Sierra's Blog, impressive topics and points, if you don't want to just read about technology (JSR Blah Blah).-b
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Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:15

Monday, June 27, 2005

JavaOne - Entry 1

I must admit, since I've started this Blog I haven't been very active in maintaining it. I've just been preoccupied I guess. Therefore, with school out of the way, I'll try to be more committed to my Blog. As you know this past week JavaOne celebrated 10 years of Java technology. Much of the platform seems to have grown up. I remember writing my first applet with the not so desirable UI and thinking this is the coolest thing since sliced bread, wheat of course. At any rate, if I had to sum this year's JavaOne up in a word, I would have to say Annotations. EJBs and WebServices seem to have matured with the help of annotations. So here's my notes...Monday, June 27

General Information
Plans for 5.0 (Tiger) to go to 6.0 (Mustang) and then to 7.0 (Dolphin). The Future JAX-RPC moved to JAX-WS focusing on Interoperability
The platform will focus on easier deployment, XML support for JDBC, and inclusion of a Javascript engine, Rhino. Graphical support for MS Longhorn, DirectX, and OpenGL
More Open Platform - Open Sourced Java BEA
Plans to certify Apache Beehive, Struts, Spring, and JSF for Weblogic 9.0
Next Generation Web Services
JAX-RPC moving to JAX-WS
Annotations used for ease of deployment
Removal of XML descriptors
Annotations remove stubs and ties
W3C MTOM/XOP
Asynchronous API - two flavors (polling or callback)
Callback Service Dispatch/Provider Bindings
SOAP 1.2
JAX-WS 2.0 in Mustang
Now HTTP Server API is provided
Server Support added to Java SE Platform (no need to embed a servlet container)
Check out Annotations with web services and JAXB
The rest will have to wait till later, I need sleep and to grab a flight in the morning.

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:10