Minutes from OASIS eb SOA Technical Committee
Face to Face Meeting
November 18, 19 2004
Maclean, VA

Attendees:
Ron Schuldt, Lockheed Martin
Sally St. Amand, Individual Member
Matt Mackenzie, Adobe Systems
Katsuhiro Morita, ECOM
Ed Chase, Adobe Systems
Tim Mathews, LMI
Duane Nickull, Adobe Systems

Excused Absences:
Kathryn Breninger, Boeing
Joseph Chuisano, Booz Allen
Sally Fuger, AIAG
Dan Pattyn
Peter Brown, EU Parliament

The meeting was convened on schedule Thursday November 18 at 9:00 AM.

The group did not approve the initial agenda and started a discussion about agenda item #5 concerning the charter, scope and purpose of the TC. It was agreed that this conversation should take precedence due to its importance to the TC's direction.

It was agreed that the group needs to define a reference model for SOA before any specializations of SOA, such as web services or vertical work for electronic business. The TC also agreed that the current charter, constraining the work of the group to electronic business SOA was too restrictive for a number of reasons:

1. Due to the work undertaken since the inception of the TC with respect to the SOA patterns approach, the TC realized that the patterns for electronic business are basically the same as the patterns for other generalized information exchanges (example Government, health, …).

2. The TC has learned over the last 6 months that the development of a specialized SOA for electronic business is not likely going to be successful without consensus on what service oriented architecture is.

3. While it may be necessary to define a service oriented architecture specifically for electronic business, until a SOA reference model is established, it would not be prudent to spend time developing the more specialized electronic business SOA.

4. The TC members realize that there is a lot of SOA activity today and likely in the future. There is no consensus in the standards community about what SOA is and no reference model for SOA. This realization is somewhat perplexing since there are reference models for other architectures such as the OSI stack and the Zachman Reference model for enterprise architecture. If SOA is architecture, as the name implies, it must be definable as a concrete architecture or an architectural reference model to distinguish SOA from other architectures. If it cannot be defined, then it is not architecture.

5. The TC members agreed that it makes sense to work on defining a SOA reference model and started work on such immediately. They also agree to stop working on the electronic business SOA.

The TC members defined some basic elements of SOA and came to consensus that SOA is definable as a reference model. The TC members agreed that the SOA reference model is a pattern. They also agreed on pursuing a course of action to write a standard reference model for SOA.

The decision to pursue defining an SOA reference model is inconsistent with the current charter of the group. The group must therefore investigate what steps are required to change its' charter, name and scope. If such is not possible, the TC is considering disbanding the TC and forming a new TC under a new name and charter.

The TC members finished a draft of a new charter and proposed the name "OASIS SOA TC".

The concrete actions to be taken after the face to face are to hold discussions with OASIS and a conference call discussion with other members of the TC to determine the best course to take with regard to pursing the definition of an SOA Reference model. The minutes from this meeting, along with a revised draft charter

Notes about an SOA reference model (for information purposes only):

A reference model isn't architecture for a single system, but a model for designing a range of architectures and for the analysis and comparison of those architectures.

The SOA reference model, as envisioned by the TC, is a framework for understanding significant relationships among the entities in a service oriented environment, and for the development of consistent standards or specifications supporting that environment. The SOA reference model is based on a small number of unifying concepts and may be used as a basis for education and explaining standards to a non-specialist.

ITA Definition of Reference Model: A reference architecture model describes a system in terms of the interconnection of basic functional elements and the interfaces between them.

It clarifies where protocols must be defined and identifies groupings of functionality. It does *not* imply a physical implementation.[1]

It is likely that if a reference model is developed to define SOA, then more specialized SOA architectures can be built using the reference model as the blueprint, including industry vertical efforts and efforts specific to technology families (example – web services for government, an SOA convergence group for the automotive industry). The new TC may wish to facilitate this type of activity via sub committees of the TC once the high level reference model is done as well as publish their reference model to allow this work to take place independently.

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[1] http://www.ewita.com/earlywork/itarefr.htm