Petri Mähönen
Klaus Pohl
Thierry Priol (Eds.)

LNCS 5377

Towards a Service-Based Internet

First European Conference, ServiceWave 2008
Madrid, Spain, December 2008
Proceedings

Springer

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The inContext Pervasive Collaboration Services Architecture*

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Abstract. Traditional collaborative work environments are often proprietary systems. However, the demands of todays e-worker are such that they use their own tools and services and collaborate across company boundaries making highly integrated solutions less feasible. Service oriented computing provides an obvious solution here, in providing mechanisms to loosely integrate many tools and services. In this paper, we present the inContext PCSA (Pervasive Collaboration Services Architecture), which is a reference architecture for building context aware collaborative systems that are based on service oriented techniques.

1 Introduction

Collaborative systems are tools supporting collaborative work, typical examples are document management systems or customer information systems where different staff of the same organisation can access information and contribute to information in order to jointly bring forward the aim of the organistion. Many of the existing collaborative systems are not integrated with each other, so for example workflow and document management are not connected, or the communications systems are entirely separate from the other two. This means that information either needs to be transferred manually (e.g. logging call activities in a workflow system), or is simply not available where and when it is required. Clearly this calls for an infrastructure that allows for integration of the different activities. The other major disadvantage is that systems are usually used within a single organization, while nowadays collaborative work often spans institutional boundaries calling for platforms that operate across these boundaries. A further disadvantage of existing systems is that they are not context aware, that is the user's context is not automatically available to support the given activities.

* This work is supported by inContext (Interaction and Context Based Technologies for Collaborative Teams) project: IST IST-2006-034718.

P. Mähönen, K. Pohl, and T. Priol (Eds.): ServiceWave 2008, LNCS 5377, pp. 134–146, 2008.
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