

IBM Podcast

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MATHENY: Welcome to this IBM podcast, introducing new solutions to supercharge your WebSphere investments. I'm Angelique Matheny with IBM.

Teams are consistently under pressure to deliver more applications, work more effectively, faster within a consistently decreasing timeframe. IBM, also in the business of delivering business critical software, understands that challenge, and to help our WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Business Process Modeler customers, has released new capabilities to help you supercharge your WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Business Process Modeler investment with IBM Rational.

In today's podcast, we'll cover key capabilities that you can adopt from Rational Software that will help you work smarter, faster and more connected despite today's distributed teams challenges. We will also introduce new capability delivered by IBM that will help you address some of your challenges with WebSphere Business Process Server.

And joining me for today's discussion is Adeel Omer, Rational go to market manager, and Mahendra Pingale, product

manager for Rational Automation Framework for WebSphere.
Hi, Adeel and Mahendra. Welcome to the podcast. Thanks for joining us.

PINGALE: Thanks, Angelique, for giving us this opportunity.

OMER: Glad to be here.

MATHENY: And, let's just start with this one, and feel free to jump in, either one of you, to answer this, and here's the question. Why is IBM Rational software uniquely positioned to help WebSphere customers?

OMER: So, I'll start, Angelique. So, WebSphere and Rational, obviously being part of IBM, there's a lot of collaboration between the two brands, between the teams within WebSphere and Rational, to make sure that we coordinate our efforts to provide WebSphere customers with exactly what they need to make the most out of their WebSphere investments.

Rational, as you know, is the brand that works with the whole application lifecycle, starting off with requirements management, getting into design and development. We have a lot of specific solutions that help you work with your service-oriented architecture or the design of your applications to run their best that they possibly can on

WebSphere.

We'll start off with taking your business process models that were used in WebSphere, move them into solution design, actual delivery of solutions that will be profiled for the best performance on WebSphere.

So starting off with the earlier part of the application lifecycle, we can really make sure that the solutions are being specifically customized and tailored to run the best that they possibly can on a WebSphere environment.

PINGALE: Right, Adeel. And Angelique, the other part of this is, if you think of the overall application lifecycle management or application lifecycle phases, a typical application starts from requirements stage and goes through, as Adeel said, design, coding and finally into the production phase.

But in this journey, you'll find that in the early parts of the phases, you have in the requirements and design and coding phases, you have more creativity. The designers and the programmers and the architects, they are the creative types. It's their job to bring in change from either what is today what is manual to something that is automated or bringing in new systems or new applications.

But then, after some time during coding, the application lifecycle moves into more of a rigor or repetitive processes that you need to write new code, you need to check it in, you need to test it. And as part of the testing, you again need to make some changes. So it goes through these different repetitive cycles and mechanics that demand better rigor, better processors.

And finally as this whole application goes into production, the administrators or the operations folks, they like things to be stable. You don't want things changing constantly and being innovative when your business is depending on an application running on your Web site. So those are things that are necessarily stable and unchanging.

So this change from being creative to being rigorous and stable, that can generate some conflict, and that conflict can cost businesses a huge amount. And in this critical DevOps space where things change from development into operations, Rational can bring in a lot of value to the businesses.

We have tools that help our customers manage this transition from creativity to rigor in terms of the build tools that we have, in terms of the test tools, as well as the deployment tools that help our customers in the operations phases. And specifically, the tool that we are going to later talk about

today, RFW, can help you increase your efficiencies and gain better control to your operations environment.

MATHENY: So, Adeel, how are Rational's design and development tools geared towards WebSphere customers?

OMER: Okay, Angelique.

So going back to the same thought that we were talking about, when it's time to get into design and development, a customer or business will largely want to implement a certain set of business needs. And those are represented...those could be represented in our premium software design tool, which is Rational Software Architect, which supports business process modeling. It supports BPM in 2.0.

Or, if we're talking about WebSphere customers who might be using Business Modeler, you have your business process models already laid out, and what Rational Software Architect will allow you to do is take those business models and do the relevant transformations and mappings from your business process models to your candidate SOA services.

So the implementation of a service-oriented architecture, which is something that a lot of our WebSphere customers do, becomes really simplified. You have enhanced traceability of which pieces of your software solution can be mapped to

certain pieces of your business design. So we have that mapping, obviously.

In addition to that, a lot of customers nowadays have to keep in mind the environment in which their software will be deployed. So when you're designing your software, you have to make sure that...does it have the complexity that we can handle, that our infrastructure can handle? Will this be deployed to the cloud? Will this be deployed to my internal IT infrastructure? And what are the capabilities of my IT infrastructure?

In that case, Rational Software Architect allows you to plan out the deployment of your software at a very early stage. You can import the existing state of your IT infrastructure, and then plan out where your application is going to get deployed.

So it allows you to import information from your Tivoli CCMDB systems to say, all right, here's the number of nodes that I have. Here's how many databases I have. And these are the connections that I need, and this is how my application is going to get deployed to various sites. What are the connections between those sites, et cetera?

So, those are all capabilities where you can specify what version of WebSphere Application Server you want running on

a certain node, and what are the limitations that you would like to impose when that software gets deployed to your WebSphere infrastructure.

Moving on from design over to development. For WebSphere Application Server customers, they're probably familiar with the concept of feature packs. You know, for those of you who might not know, feature packs are the way that WebSphere application server adds on capabilities to the base application server product.

And so, what we have is a kind of one-to-one mapping where WebSphere Application Server feature packs allow you to execute on a certain capability such as Web 2.0 applications or OSGI applications or XML, and then Rational Application Developer -- our premier IDE on the Rational side -- has the very same feature packs for the IDE which allow you to develop the applications that can then be hosted by the WebSphere Application Server feature pack.

So, for instance, if you're interested in service component architecture, there is a service component architecture feature pack for WebSphere. Similar to that, Rational Application Developer is going to have a service component architecture feature pack. So you use the Rational Application Developer to develop the SCA application, and then you deploy it to WebSphere Application Server.

And so this mapping allows customers to really use their WebSphere investments to its full potential, because you can't use any other development environment to develop for WebSphere more quickly or with higher quality.

MATHENY: Mahendra, I understand there's been an exciting announcement about IBM Rational proven RAFW enhancement that will not only support WebSphere Application Server, but also WebSphere Business Process Management Suite, WebSphere Virtual Enterprise and WAS feature packs. Can you please tell us a little about what critical pain points our WebSphere customers have in the operations space?

PINGALE: Absolutely, Angelique. Thanks for asking that question. First of all, the businesses today find themselves in a changing landscape with competing demand. And that is even truer on the IT side. On the one hand, you want to enable innovation and change at a faster pace and get better at serving your customers. On the other hand, you are forced to lower your costs, and there are increased amount of risk that you are facing.

And then, there are rising costs of operations and shrinking budget that are limiting your strategic investment so that you can satisfy your customers. And then, if you look specifically into the middleware environment, you will see

that these same challenges are manifested even there, too.

For example, you'll see that customers lack consistency and repeatability as they try to manage their middleware environment and have applications deployed to that middleware environment.

So customers come to depend on their middle infrastructure for the particular applications, it becomes more and more important that there is consistency in the way the infrastructure is built, the way it is maintained, and the way the applications are deployed to that infrastructure.

You can afford very little downtime to that. And, if you are handling critical system administration tasks manually, you are obviously exposed to the risks of human errors, slippages, employee attrition, people going on vacation or sick, and so on. And if you have your critical applications running on your middleware infrastructure, you simply cannot afford that.

And then, there is a technical limitation on the WebSphere side where WebSphere system administration facilities center around the cell level. You cannot simply manage WebSphere environments beyond a cell. So this lack of consistency and repeatability as well as the lack of ability to manage environments beyond the cell level, and costly automation

and configuration changes and deployment changes.

These are the challenges that the WebSphere customers we see are facing consistently, and these are the challenges, these are the pain points they are looking for solutions to. So RAFW helped them manage or help them overcome these pain points. And then, we can go into the details of what RFW does and what it is, how it helps these customer pain points.

MATHENY: And that was my next question, in fact, Mahendra. We've talked a lot about RAFW. How does it help WebSphere customers address these pain points? What is RAFW?

PINGALE: Right. So if you look at the RFW value proposition, RFW helps you increase your staff productivity for development as well as operations. So in the beginning, we talked about the DevOps niche or the DevOps critical [phase] in your application lifecycle.

So, RFW helps you increase your developers' productivity as well as helps you manage your operations and your environment more efficiently and effectively. It helps you improve the speed, consistency and accuracy of getting your applications deployed and delivered in time all the time and manage them effectively.

You can reduce your cost of IT governance and compliance by having accurate logs of everything that is going on in your environment. For example, who changed what, when, and how in your WebSphere deployment, and who deployed the specific applications and when it migrated, for example, from a test environment into the production environment, and so on.

It also helps you manage or improve your disaster recovery rate in it. RFW has the master configuration defined, and it manages that in a normalized data schema, and that schema can help you...it is a way to document your master configuration. And if a disaster strikes, as you recover from that disaster, you can retrieve that master configuration template and apply it very quickly to your new data center or to your new environment and get up and running without suffering from a long downtime.

So, in short, what is RFW? RFW is a customizable framework that actually helps automation of three critical parts of your WebSphere environments. And those three parts are configuration management, application deployment and product installation, are what we call as environment bail outs. So, as I said, once you have the master config defined, you can apply that and build your entire environment and multiple cells consistently and repetitive.

MATHENY: And our last question today: where can I find out more details?

PINGALE: Right, so most recently, at the end of October, we released Version 712 of RFW. And with that release, we added more capabilities into our support for WebSphere environments. Now we provide very broad and deep coverage for WebSphere middleware automation with about 750 user-specific actions for of course WebSphere Foundation, which comprises WAS, ND, feature packs, as well as virtual enterprise.

And we also have support now for the BPM suite, what you mentioned at the beginning, Angelique, namely WebSphere Process Server, Enterprise Service Bus and Service Registry and Depository. And we of course have support for WebSphere Portal, and with 712 we recently upgraded that support to a later version.

And with that, all these and more information is available on jazz.net, which is the Rational Application Lifecycle Web site for our collaborative development. You will find specific sections for RFW on that Web site. And we also have value estimators on how much return you can get from your investment in RFW available on ibm.com.

OMER: And Angelique, for those who might be

interested in finding out more about the design and development solutions, I think the best resource is the developerWorks wikis that we have for both Rational Software Architect and Rational Application Developer.

All you really have to do is Google Rational Software Architect wiki or Rational Application Developer Wiki, and those wikis contain videos, demos, articles. There's pointers to ROI calculators as well, and there's white papers. So, a lot of good technical information as well as some good overviews and product demos available on the wikis.

MATHENY: That is true, that's a lot of great resources. Thank you very much. Adeel, Mahendra, thank you so much for sharing your time today. We really appreciate it.

OMER: It's our pleasure.

PINGALE: Thank you.

MATHENY: That was Rational's Adeel Omer and Mahendra Pingale, introducing new solutions to supercharge your WebSphere investments. To share this podcast with your colleagues, or if you're interested in more podcasts like this one, check out the Rational Talks To You Podcast Page at www.ibm.com/rational/podcasts.

We'll post a link to the Rational Automation Framework for

WebSphere Value Estimator to help you get started today.
This has been an IBM podcast. I'm Angelique Matheny.
Thanks for listening. Keep tuning in as Rational Talks To
You.

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