Service-oriented architecture (SOA) has been a transformational technology used by enterprises to drive business advantages including agility, reduced cost, improved time to market and competitive advantage. This article highlights how standards are important for SOA solutions enhancing customer results and enabling interoperability.

Overview

Significant progress has been made both on technology and architecture standards. Technology standards focused on middleware products enable interoperability and portability while SOA architecture standards provide guidance to customers as they design and deploy SOA solutions with industry validated, vendor neutral methodologies, taxonomies and terminology.

As companies embrace SOA to create flexible, reusable assets for enabling end to end business solutions the need for SOA standards has become even more evident. There are four very important SOA architecture standards from The Open Group that provide the basis for business to create their SOA solutions. They are:

1. The SOA Reference Architecture
2. Open Service Integration Maturity Model (OSIMM)
3. SOA Governance
4. SOA Ontology

The SOA Reference Architecture

The Open Group SOA Reference Architecture (SOA RA) standard provides guidelines and options for making architectural, design, and implementation decisions in the architecture of service oriented solutions, including the architecture of cloud solutions. The goal of the SOA Reference Architecture standard is to provide a blueprint for creating and evaluating architecture. Additionally, it provides insights, patterns and the building blocks for integrating fundamental elements of an SOA into a solution or enterprise architecture.
Open Service Integration Maturity Model

The Open Group Service Integration Maturity Model (OSIMM) standard (and International Standard) gives organizations a method to assess their use of services and develop a roadmap for achieving their business goals with SOA. Adoption scenarios for SOA tend to vary considerably, especially when organizations lack a clear roadmap; the vision for how to proceed on their path to SOA adoption. The SOA journey does not start and end with a single project. As an increasing number of organizations continue to incorporate the use of service orientation as the foundation of their IT strategy, it will become increasingly important for them to assess their current state against several dimensions (from the business down to infrastructure) and identify ways to maximize business benefits from their SOA journey.

SOA Governance

The SOA Governance Framework has been standardized by The Open Group as a result of collaboration with the industry on IBM’s SOA governance method. It defines governance to be a means establishing and enforcing how people and solutions work together to achieve organizational objectives. Governance helps to ensure that organizations build the right services, in the right way, at the right time, and then manage and reuse those services effectively. SOA governance does this by overseeing the processes of proactively identifying, assessing, building and managing high-value business services and solutions — those that provide the greatest return on investment. This means creating service reuse and providing agility in the ability to manage the business and IT.

Table 1. Get the specifications and related material

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Related topics

- "IBM Advantage for SOA Reference Architecture" (developerWorks, Jan 2012) describes how the SOA reference architecture has been developed and used by IBM to help customers increase business flexibility as well as IT flexibility.
- Learn more about IBM's SOA solutions.

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