

Report to the JA-SIG Board

uPortal Load Testing

uPortal Project Manager Ken Weiner and IBS's Adam Rybicki continued load testing at the Sun iForce facility in Menlo Park through Thursday, September 13.

All testing was done using the Apache-Tomcat server. To achieve higher volumes, much of the time was spent increasing hardware and software configurations, and improving performance of the Web servers. Although they achieved higher rates, the limitation appears not to be the uPortal software, but either internal bus limitations or network capacity—the central processor utilization of both the load generation computers and the Web server computers is typically less than 50% when response time increases.

Sun engineers were returning from the Labor Day break and provided assistance in improving performance. The iPlant application server was not tested both because of the limitation of time and expertise in configuring the software for optimum performance.

Ken and Adam still find one situation where there is communications with Web sites on tabs that are not being rendered. The problem is not evident when caching is used and appears intermittently enough that Ken and Peter are still seeking the source.

Ken is recommending returning to the iForce center at the end of October before a November expansion brings a number of large companies waiting for the enhanced facilities.

Ken and Adam are preparing an interim report on testing. Carl Jacobson has suggested making this report available even though iPlant Application Server testing has not yet been accomplished. (If so, there will be a publisher's note saying the document will be extended when data from that testing is available).

Implementation of uPortal

Friday Carl Jacobson began asking colleges and universities who had indicated interest in uPortal on the JA-SIG listservs if they were "committed" to an implementation of uPortal. A copy of the list of those who had responded positively is attached. (This was copied from Carl's whiteboard. Web addresses and location were added). The list will be updated as more responses come in from his query.

Ken Weiner confirmed an November release of uPortal 2.0. That date came from developer discussions at the La Jolla conference. The framework itself is complete; Ken has several administrative functions that are being added. (These would not impact performance; load testing data will still be valid).

Carl has suggested the emphasis move from enhancing uPortal itself to channel and content development, especially channels that are unique to higher education. He is trying to both identify current uPortal channel development efforts and channels that would benefit higher education.

Standards

On June 28th Epicentric described a forthcoming "Web Services User Interface" standard. A first draft was published July 17th on the www.WSUI.org site Epicentric initiated. In an interview for the August 17th issue of InfoWorld, Epicentric CEO Ed Anuff said IBM was working with the group. There is no reference to WSUI on the IBM Website. He also said a specification would be presented to a standards body in September.

I have communicated JA-SIGs interest in the specification to Epicentric's Chad Williams. Chad said they were still trying to organize participants and "would be back in touch." So far we have had no communication from Epicentric.

At the end of Ken and Justin's meeting with Epicentric at the Corporate Portals Conference September 6, I asked the status of WSUI. Although the Epicentric representatives knew about the initial specification, none had any more information.

I have noticed one firm—infiNet—is both implementing uPortal with a client and providing bill presentment and payment services. I will be checking to see if they do this as a Web services using the IFX standard from the financial services industry. If so, this would benefit the business offices as well as make the IT task less burdensome.

Destin Conference

UBC's Richard Spencer and his committee has outlined the Winter conference, issued a call for papers, begun communications with those invited to make a presentation, and discussed track organization. Planning for this conference will be difficult. The forthcoming availability of uPortal 2.0 with its XSLT-based architecture and the IBS training sessions may encourage a different type of attendee. Attendance may be down. Yesterday Continental Airlines predicted a sustained 20% drop in airline passengers because of the fear of travel.

The conference committee will have a difficult time estimating the number and type of attendees.

Colleges and Universities Committed to Implement JA-SIG uPortal

College or University	Web Page Address	Location	Initial Operational Capability
1 Athabasca University	www.AthabascaU.ca	Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3, Canada	
2 British Columbia, University of	www.UBC.ca	Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z4, Canada	
3 California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo	www.Calpoly.edu	San Luis Obispo, California 93407, USA	
4 Columbia University	www.Columbia.edu	New York, New York 10027, USA	
5 Delaware, University of	www.UDel.edu	Newark, Delaware 19716, USA	
6 Hawaii, University of	www.Hawaii.edu	Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA	
7 Illinois State University	www.IISU.edu	Normal, Illinois 61790, USA	
8 Iowa State University	www.IaState.edu	Ames, Iowa 50011, USA	
9 Kansas, University of Medical Center	www.KUMC.edu	Kansas City, Kansas 66160, USA	
10 Laurentian University	www.Laurentian.edu	Sudbury, Ontario P3E 2C6, Canada	
11 Memorial University of Newfoundland	www.MUN.ca	St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5S7, Canada	
12 New Mexico, University of	www.UNM.edu	Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131 USA	
13 Nottingham, University of	www.Nottingham.AC.uk	Nottingham NG7 2RD, United Kingdom	
14 Princeton University	www.Princeton.edu	Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA	
15 Rutgers The State University of New Jersey	www.Rutgers.edu	New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901, USA	
16 Villanova	www.Villanova.edu	Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085, USA	
17 Yale University	www.Yale.edu	New Haven, Connecticut 06520, USA	

Based solely on responses given by those who had previously indicated interest through participation in the JA-SIG listservs. The scope of implementation at a specific college or university is not known.