MeetupAtlanta2010

New Social/Widget/Gadget based Portal Project? - BOF / MeetUp - ApacheCON Atlanta 2010

We would like to brainstorm with interested members of the community and related projects like Shindig, Wookie, Roller, Jackrabbit and others,

about a new OpenSocial/Widget/Gadget based Portal (*portalike*) Project not based on or tied to the Java Portlet specification.

What features should it provide and who would like to participate?

Schedule

This meetup is scheduled for Wednesday evening November 3rd from approximately 20:00 to 22:00 in room 4.

See for latest information about exact time and place and for other Meetups at the ApacheCON *here*.

Topics

Although the incubator SocialSite project turns out to be dormant (defunct), the Wookie (W3C Widgets) and Shindig (OpenSocial/Gadgets) container projects flourish.

Outside Apache several (open source) projects are developing custom portalike Social and Web-2.0 based solutions using Widgets and Gadgets.

But each within their own "silo" of different goals, communities (if at all), back-end solutions and licenses.

Maybe these goals and efforts can be combined or get focus through a new community driven project at Apache Portals?

We're interested in hearing your opinions and brainstorm about possible common goals and needs:

- What features are you dearly missing in existing/other projects or solutions?
- Proper (multi) site and content management integration?
- Enterprise Social network/graph features?
- Generalized client-side widget/gadget communication/coordination/eventing engine?
- Multi-app/mashup composition of widgets/gadgets?
- "context aware" or "embedded" widgets/gadgets?
- Generalized Search engine integration?
- Is there still need to support/integrate "old-style" Java Portlets, or can (should) we leave that behind?
- etc.

(anyone with more topics/ideas to discuss: please add above)

Attendees

Please add your name here if you plan to attend.

1. Ate Douma
2. Woonsan Ko
3. Ard Schrijvers
4. Ross Gardler
5. <Your name here>

Expressed interest and Follow up

Members of the following projects already expressed their interest in this topic and would like to participate in the discussion, now or later:

- OGCE Gadget Container
- Project COIN, SURFNET

Note: both these projects are using or planning to use an Apache compatible license.

And at the First European OpenSocial event in Utrecht, The Netherlands we're trying to arrange a next meetup to further discuss this.

Members of Apache Portals, Shindig, and Wookie, and from the OpenSocial Foundation and the COIN project (hosting the event), already chimed in to be present there.

Meetup Notes (Ate)

Present at the meetup:

- Hadrian Zbarcea (PMC Chair Apache Camel)
- Ross Gardler (OSS Watch UK, Mentor and Champion Apache Wookie)

- Sander van der Waal (OSS Watch UK)
- Ard Schijvers (PMC Apache Jackrabbit)
- Woonsan Ko (PMC Apache Portals)
- Ate Douma (PMC Apache Portals & Apache Wicket, Mentor Apache Wookie)

Between us it was very clear that the interest for a Social/Widget/Gadget Portal project is serious, although the goals and needs are not all the same, which I think actually is a good thing.

We were a bit surprised however no one from Apache Shindig seemed to be present at the ApacheCON. It would be good to get them involved in this if possible.

We brainstormed a bit about key features we expect from a Social/Widget/Gadget Portal:

- extensible management console from and for OSGI Environments and Services using Gadgets
- support for context based UI/dashboard (driven by the portal)
- support for context based filtering and selection of information (by widget/gadgets)
- support for context based ACLs
- context awareness within the Widget/Gadget container
- Widget/Gadget coordination and communication
- mashup like assembling widgets/gadgets into a "coordinated" application

Context awareness seems to be a critical aspect.

Context might be based on user profile, url/page, or for instance dynamically provided by other widgets/gadgets.

A social network/graph might be needed or at least useful for many use-cases, while irrelevant or even undesired for others.

This also triggered the discussion if possibly Apache Wookie (W3C Widgets) might be providing a more generic abstraction than Shindig (Gadgets).

Wookie provides extension features (beyond the W3C Widget spec.) to also deploy and manage OpenSocial Gadgets as well as Wave Gadgets as Wookie Widget.

This clearly needs further investigation and discussion.

Concerning the interest in OSGi: there are many projects at Apache which provide or use OSGi integration solutions, and we might be able to leverage a great deal of functionality from there.

The Apache Karaf project especially seems interesting.

A team member of the OGCE Gadget Container send a message to the opensocial-community list that they have the plan to move their project to Apache.

We looked at this Shindig based Portal and everybody was really interested to further investigate if and how this project might be brought into Apache, possibly as a new Apache Incubator project.

Another interesting project is the COIN project from SURFNET.

So far its unclear if/how/when/where they will open (source) this project, although they say something like that is their goal.

Hopefully we can get more information and discuss this further at the European OpenSocial Event, as well as compare and relate this to the OGCE Gadget Container project.

The primary committer for Apache Wookie, Scott Wilson, will also be present on the European OpenSocial Event as well as Sander van der Waal (OSS Watch) and myself (Ate Douma).

The discussion about this topic will certainly continue there.

The final conclusion of the meetup was that we need a concrete plan/proposal for a new project.

Either going through the Apache Incubator if (part of) one or both of the above mentioned projects would be willing to participate, or by starting something anew for instance in Apache Labs.

The coming weeks we'll work on drafting up a proposal for this and anyone interested in helping out please drop me a message.

And if you are interested maybe sign up for the European OpenSocial Event in Utrecht The Netherlands, December 6 & 7.