



WSMX Deliverable
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**OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF
WSMX**

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Abstract

This deliverable is intended to be a high-level overview document of the research carried out by the Web Services Execution Environment (WSMX) working group. WSMX is an execution environment which enables discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and interoperation of the Semantic Web Services (SWS). The development process for WSMX includes establishing a conceptual model, defining its execution semantics, developing the architecture of the system, designing the software and building a working implementation of the system. Through our research on WSMX, we aim to provide guidelines and justification for an architecture for the SWS systems. In our deliverables we present how SWS architecture should look like, we define its execution semantics, mediation, discovery and invocation mechanisms, and any other aspects that are needed in any SWS related systems. Work carried out by the WSMX working group, apart from its research focus also provides a reference implementation of the Web Services Modeling Ontology (WSMO)[18].

The mission and ultimate goal of the working group is to define SWS architecture and build a fully fledged enterprise application based on the conceptual model of WSMO.

Apart from the cornerstone SWS functionalities that should be available with any execution environment for the SWS, for example discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and interoperation, the research team is also addressing some more specific enterprise systems functionalities while developing the WSMX system (although they remain out of scope of WSMO, as WSMO is only concerned with the external behavior of the system). Some of these additional functionalities, which are going to be available with the later versions of the WSMX: (1) a plugin mechanism to handle any distributed components that have been developed since the earlier versions of WSMX were designed, (2) an internal workflow engine capable of executing formal descriptions of the behavior of system components and (3) a resource manager enabling persistence of any arbitrary data (WSMO and non-WSMO related) produced by components during run-time of the WSMX server.

As well as developing the system itself, the research group will also address all the key aspects of enterprise software. Thus the updated releases of the system will take account of aspects like reliability, scalability, security, etc. These will become an integral part of the WSMX server.

In this document, we briefly overview the research carried out by the WSMX working group, discuss the expected functionality of the WSMX system as a whole and describe the functionality provided by some of its required components. We present the current status of the development, and we demonstrate specific WSMX deliverables produced by the WSMX working group.



1 Introduction

In order to support distributed heterogeneous applications built by different vendors, Web Services specifications have been developed. Existing Web Services cornerstone technologies such as UDDI [2], WSDL [3] and SOAP [13] provide the basic functionality for discovering (UDDI), describing interfaces (WSDL) and exchanging messages (SOAP) in heterogeneous, autonomous and distributed systems. In practical terms, existing Web Services support operations which are limited to independent calls over a network, hard wired collaborations or predefined supply chains. Web Services specifications do not provide any mechanism to specify how to include any additional semantic information which would enable processing them without any human interaction.

The approach to systems integration based on semantically enhanced Web Services is nowadays achievable through SWS. The Web Services Modelling Ontology (WSMO) initiative¹ is one of the several research efforts currently underway around the world working to develop a conceptual model, language and execution environment for SWS. Enhancing existing Web Services standards with semantics markup standardized through the WSMO initiative promotes already existing Web Services standards for semantic-enabled integration.

The Web Services Execution Environment (WSMX)² is one of the WSMO initiatives aiming at providing an execution environment for discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and interoperation of the SWS. The aim of research on WSMX is to provide guidelines and justification for an architecture for the Semantic Web Service (SWS) systems. WSMX is based on the conceptual model provided by Web Services Modelling Ontology (WSMO) [18] which describes all aspects related to SWS. WSMX is also a reference implementation for WSMO being a vehicle for driving new projects and partnerships. The goal is to provide both a testbed for WSMO and to demonstrate the viability of using WSMO as a means of achieving dynamic interoperation of SWS. The development process for WSMX includes defining its conceptual model (which has been currently completely aligned with concepts provided by WSMO ontology), modeling its execution semantics (we already considering including a dynamic execution semantic engine capable of interpreting any formal definition of system behavior provided by third parties) and collaborating on the design of the system architecture. The WSMX working group also defines components interfaces (this aspect of the work will also be subject to change in the future as we already foresee scenarios where providers of the components would like to provide their own interfaces for their own components and still to be able to connect them into the WSMX core), designs particular components and provides their implementation.

This document provides an overview of WSMX in terms of scope, functional objectives, development approach and deliverables in relationship with WSMO.

1.1 Scope of WSMX Development

WSMX is the reference implementation of WSMO, thus its final scope will be in line with WSMO. The initial version of WSMX has been based on a refined and minimal set of WSMO concepts, while subsequent versions will take into consideration the complete conceptual model provided by WSMO. Already for the initial version of WSMX, a complete architecture including discovery, mediation, selection and invocation components has been designed including also all the supporting components enabling exchange of messages

¹Web Services Modelling Ontology working group: <http://www.wsmo.org/>

²Web Services Execution Environment working group: <http://www.wsmx.org/>



between mock-up service requesters and providers. At this stage of WSMX development, the implementation of these components has been simple, but with each subsequent implementation new and more complex aspects are going to be addressed. WSMX initial functionality allows achieving a user-specified goal by invoking Web Service described with the semantic markup. The first version of WSMX has been available since June 2004 at the sourceforge portal³.

Subsequent versions of WSMX have incorporated the ongoing research of the SWS community, in particular the WSMO working group and the WSML⁴ working group, those augmenting and empowering WSMX to provide full SWS support.

1.2 Development Approach

WSMX follows the best practice of staged component-based software development. The *Initial phase* was focused on constructing a rigid architecture for Web Service execution using decoupled, independent components. Once the basic WSMX framework was in place, *subsequent phases* are focusing on refining the individual components, improving the whole framework and providing new aspects. The rationale for this staged approach is to provide component-based software that is both maintainable and extensible. It is important to emphasise that because of this component based approach, changes can be implemented gradually over time.

1.3 Document Overview

Section 2 of this deliverable describes the objectives of WSMX in terms of the main functionality it should provide. Section 3 outlines the development approach for WSMX. Section 4 describes WSMX functionality delivered through its initial development phase in contrast with the main functionality objectives. Section 5 describes the deliverables to be produced by the WSMX working group and explains how they relate to each other. Section 6 compares WSMX to other similar systems. Section 7 concludes the document.

2 Expected WSMX Functionality

WSMX in its full potential will offer complete support for SWS. Through our research on WSMX we aim to provide guidelines and justification for an architecture for the SWS systems. WSMX deliverables describe what the SWS architecture should look like, and define its execution semantics, mediation, discovery and invocation mechanisms, and any other aspects compulsory in any SWS related systems. The ultimate goal of the working group is to define SWS architecture and build a full fledged enterprise application based on the conceptual model of WSMO. The expected functionality of WSMX can be described in terms of aggregated functionality of all its components.

At this stage, the following main components has already been envisaged for WSMX:

³WSMX at sourceforge: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/wsmx>

⁴Web Services Modelling Language working group www.wsmo.org/wsml



Core Component The Core Component is the central component of the system, and all the other components are going to be connected to it. All interactions between components will be coordinated through core component. The business logic of the system, the events engine, the internal workflow engine, the distributed components loading etc. will all be subcomponents of the Core Component. While at this stage we still consider the Core Component to be a central module for the system, in the future to ensure reliability of WSMX, the clustering mechanism for distributed Core Components might be also developed. For resources intensive operations instead of having only one instance of Core Component, many instances could be instantiated on several machines to create a WSMX cluster.

Resource Manager The Resource Manager is responsible for management of repositories to store definitions of any WSMO (Web Services, goals, ontologies and mediators) and non-WSMO related objects for WSMX. Depending on the scope of information stored in the underlying registries, we distinguish registries to be local and global. Information stored in the local registry is relevant for domain-specific operations (e.g. most of the system run time information will be available only to the local instance of WSMX) whereas the global registry could be shared across several domains (e.g. registries of SWS descriptions). While both stored data and accessibility to this data might differ considerably between registries, the Resource Manager remain the only entry point for them (it is not possible to access any of registries directly, but only through Resource Manager).

Web Services Repository deals with semantic description of Web Services, such as their capabilities (pre-conditions, post-conditions, assumptions and effects), interfaces (choreography and orchestration) and non-functional properties, both general and Web Service specific. All information stored in the Web Services Repository is related to case scenarios in which this information is to be used, such as discovery of services or monitoring of services.

Goals repository deals with semantic description of general goals. A WSMO Goal in most cases expresses the "wish" that a user wants to achieve. Some of the goals may be reusable and provided as templates and therefore should be published using the repository. Non-reusable or frequently updated goals should be stored at the service requester side or other locations. The goal repository can thus contain predefined goals constructed by domain experts as well as user-specific goals. A tool to construct/refine goals will be created for this purpose.

Ontology repository deals with ontologies to be stored in the registry describing the semantics of particular domains. Any components might wish to consult an ontology, but in most of the cases the ontologies will be used by mediator related components to overcome data and process heterogeneity problems. We recognize the requirement for a visualization tool and a management mechanism for ontologies, that should be provided by WSMX. Ontologies stored by WSMX are expressed in terms of WSMML, but we consider also the case that the syntactical adaptation from any ontology syntax is possible, before storing them.

Mediator repository deals with mediators to be stored in the registry. WSMO mediators have become a standard proposal covering various approaches for data and process mediation. While mediators in WSMO are still underspecified, we are already considering storing them in a repository for possible use of the data and process mediation components.

Data repository During run time of the system, lots of system specific data is produced. Also, components might generate data, which should be persistent.



Data repository allows us to store any system data and any component-specific data required for correct system execution.

Service Discovery The main purpose of Service Discovery is to provide functionality on matching of usable SWS with the goals. When matching SWS, a number of them could be selected which are capable of satisfying criteria specified by a goal. A number of SWS could be returned from this step.

Service Selection Selection of the Web Service might happen in WSMX and for that purpose a selection component is used. Selection can also take place outside of WSMX after the service requester is presented with the set of potential Web Services satisfying his goal. When selecting Web Services, one, possibly "best" or "optimal" variant of a service should be returned from a set of satisfying matching criteria. To select an optimal service, different techniques can be applied, ranging from simple selection criteria ("always the first") to more sophisticated techniques, such as multi-criteria selection of variants also involving interactions with a service requester. Different variants of services could be described by different values of parameters (non-functional properties specific to web services), such as financial properties, reliability, security, etc.

Data and Process Mediator Mediation is needed when two entities that cannot communicate directly need to interact. The reason why they cannot communicate is that they are using different syntax or semantics of data they are dealing with and/or processes for the same operation might mismatch. WSMX offers mediation of data communicated and processes used to be understandable and useful for the selected Web Services. Data mediation is based on paradigms of ontology management, ontology mapping and aligning in particular.

Communication Manager WSMX will offer invocation of selected services, obeying their interfaces, that is choreography and orchestration patterns. Communication Manager consists of two subcomponents: invoker and receiver. WSMX is an intermediary system sitting between service requester and provider, so communication in both directions is supported by these two subcomponents. In general, invocation of services could be based on any underlying protocol of service providers (e.g. SOAP, proprietary protocols, etc.) and for this purpose adapter framework is designed. It would be the responsibility of an adapter to implement interactions with a particular service provider using communication protocols different than SOAP.

Choreography The choreography of a Web Service defines its communication pattern, that is, the way a requester can interact with it. The requestor of the service has its own communication pattern and only if the two of them match precisely, can a direct communication between the requestor and the provider of a service take place. Since the client's communication pattern is in general different from the one used by the Web Service, the two of them will not be able to communicate directly, even if they are able to understand the same data formats. The role of the Choreography Engine is to mediate between the the requester's and the provider's communication patterns. This means providing the necessary means for a runtime analysis of two given choreography instances and using Mediators to compensate for the possible mismatches that may appear, for instance, generating dummy acknowledgement messages, grouping several messages into a single one, changing their order or even removing some of the messages in order to facilitate the communication between the two parties.



WSMT Web Service Modeling Toolkit (WSMT) is a framework for the rapid deployment of graphical administrative tools, which can be used with WSMX.

Reasoner Although development of a reasoner is not part of the WSMX development process, a WSML-compliant reasoner will be an important element of the whole WSMX framework. Reasoner will provide reasoning services for the mapping process of mediation, as well as functionality relating to validation of a possible composition of services, or determination if a composed services in a process is executable in a given context. Also, this component will be used for finding capabilities that exactly match the requester's goal, as well as capabilities subsuming this goal.

Apart from the cornerstone SWS functionalities that should be available with any execution environment for the SWS, such as discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and interoperation, some more specific enterprise systems functionalities are being addressed while we are developing the WSMX system. Some of these additional functionalities, which are going to be available with the later WSMX system implementations include (1) a plugin mechanism to handle any distributed components that have been developed since the earlier versions of WSMX were designed, (2) an internal workflow engine capable of executing formal descriptions of the behavior of system components and (3) a resource manager enabling persistence of any arbitrary data (WSMO and non-WSMO related) produced by components during run-time of the WSMX server. As well as developing the system itself, the research group will also address all the key aspects of enterprise software. Thus the updated releases of the system will take account of aspects like reliability, scalability, security, etc. These will become an integral part of the WSMX server.

3 WSMX Functionality Currently Being Addressed

We deliberately limited the initial functionality of WSMX by providing only the basic components needed to run end-to-end communication. It should be clearly noted that later versions of WSMX will address the complete set of the functionality required to execute SWS.

Our goal for the initial version has been to get a working framework. This framework is designed in such a way that extending and improving functionality later is possible: the strong component decoupling will allow them to be replaced or extended to achieve richer functionality. The focus in the initial phase has been on designing and implementing a flexible architecture.

Core Component A central component of the system has been provided with the first release. We have adopted a multi-threaded approach for enabling components connectivity. JMX technology has been used for components management. The execution semantics has been hardcoded into this component.

Resource Manager The repository of available SWS and of available goals is stored locally. There is a *discovery* component, but its functionality is limited to searching in the internal WSMX repository (Resource Manager remains localized). The user has to manually fill this repository with available SWS. Over time the development of Resource Manager and its repositories has been



moved from rigid JDBC⁵ technologies with MySQL⁶ database as the underlying repository, through EJB⁷ framework towards a more lightweight framework based on Hibernate and Spring⁸.

Service Discovery The goal-capability matching has a simple implementation: a match is sought between the post-conditions and effects of the goal and the post-conditions and effects of some capability. This match is a logical equality; this means that capabilities subsuming the goal, or capabilities subsumed by the goal will not be returned. There is already a simple key-word matching discovery implemented.

In WSMO Standard a goal specifies the objectives that a client may have when he consults a web service. A capability describes a relation between a certain state that has to exist, and a certain state that can be achieved by a web service. Now, if a user states his goal, the *goal-capability matching* component in the execution environment should use a logical reasoner to search for all SWS having a capability that satisfies this goal.

The reasoner should be able to find capabilities that exactly match this goal, as well as capabilities subsuming this goal (and possibly capabilities subsumed by this goal, maybe even to suggest close matches. However, since this is a logically difficult task, in the initial version of WSMX we do have this *goal-capability matching* component, but it is implemented in a simple way.

Service Selection In the initial version, the algorithm for selection is achieved by simply picking the first matching web service. However, user preferences and expectations as well as non-functional properties of services should be involved in the selection process. We also consider another scenario where service is selected outside the WSMX server by the service requester and the selected Web Service is already given to the system.

Data and Process Mediator Mediation is not done by using some external mediator (as in WSMO), but by specifying mapping rules between ontologies. Mediation is achieved, if possible, by applying these mapping rules.

In WSMO Standard, mediation is performed by some external mediator. To overcome differences in ontologies used by different SWS, different mediators can be used. In the initial implementation, WSMX mediation is performed by a *mediation* component, that uses predefined mapping rules to mediate between two ontologies.

Communication Manager So far, simple message exchange predefined patterns are the only interaction styles supported.

Choreography Choreography does not exist in the initial version of WSMX, only an initial set of interfaces has been defined.

WSMT WSMT does not exist in the initial version of WSMX, however tools supporting mapping processes or a WSMO editor do exist.

⁵Java Database Connectivity: <http://jcp.org/en/jsr/detail?id=054>

⁶MySQL database: <http://www.mysql.com/>

⁷Enterprise Java Beans: <http://www.jcp.org/aboutJava/communityprocess/edr/jsr220/>

⁸Spring framework: <http://www.springframework.org/>



4 WSMX Deliverables

As the development of WSMX is described in several deliverables that are strongly inter-related, we now briefly explain the different deliverables:

WSMX Mission Statement [8]. The Mission Statement deliverable clearly specifies the mission of the WSMX working group - to create an execution environment for the dynamic discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and inter-operation of SWS.

WSMX System Functionality Scope [20]. This deliverable aims to provide an overview of expected functionality the system is going to provide with each subsequent release.

Web Service Execution Environment - Conceptual Model [5]. The conceptual model defines all concepts used in WSMX. This conceptual model is based on WSMO; if necessary, it will be extended by introducing several concepts.

WSMX Execution Semantics [19]. The WSMX Execution Semantics deliverable defines the operational behavior of WSMX. This is a formal specification, describing exactly how the system behaves. The execution semantics ensures a common understanding among developers of what the system should do and how it should behave in all possible situations. The execution semantics also makes sure that different implementations of an execution environment for WSMO behave the same way to the outside world (if they follow the same execution semantics). Thirdly, the formal nature of the execution semantics enables checking (and proofing) certain properties of the system.

WSMX Architecture and System Design [21]. This deliverable presents the architecture of WSMX, this being the basis for the implementation. The deliverable explains the architectural decisions that were made, the design of the system, and describes the various components.

WSMO Discovery [9]. The WSMO Discovery deliverable describes how discovery is dealt within WSMO. Different techniques for web service discovery are discussed including mediation support needed for different approaches to web service discovery. In detail, logic-based discovery of web services is discussed.

WSMX Data Mediation [14]. The WSMX Data Mediation deliverable explains how mediation is dealt within WSMX. This deliverable describes several aspects related to WSMX mediation, for instance how to define mapping rules, how a reasoner can do mediation following those mapping rules, and it introduces a tool that helps users to write their own mapping rules.

Processes Mediation in WSMX [4]. This deliverable tackles the process mediation problem, describing what process mediation means in the context of WSMX, and proposing a process mediation architecture.

WSMX Grounding [7]. This document describes how WSMX handles the translation to and from WSMX to other data representations at the boundary of the environment.

WSMX Documentation [1]. WSMX Documentation provides the description of a step-by-step WSMX installation and gives examples of its usage.



WSMX Use Cases [6]. The Use Cases deliverable exemplifies several usage scenarios of WSMX. Three possible use cases are identified, namely a Business-to-Consumer (B2C), a Business-to-Business (B2B) and an Application-to-Application (A2A) scenario. This showcase how WSMX can be utilized for such real-life tasks.

Web Service Modeling Toolkit (WSMT) [10]. The purpose of this document is to outline the Web Services Modeling Toolkit (WSMT). WSMT is a framework for the rapid deployment of graphical administrative tools, which can be used with WSMO, WSML and WSMX.

WSML Editor [11]. This deliverable describes the WSML Editor plugin for the Web Service Modeling Toolkit. The WSML Editor is a graphical tool for editing Ontologies, Goals, Mediators and Web Services described in the WSML family of languages.

WSMX Monitor [12]. This document outlines the WSMX Monitor plugin for the Web Service Modeling Toolkit. The WSMX Monitor is a graphical tool for monitoring the state of each of the WSMX components within the WSMX system, along with the system itself.

5 Related Systems

Implementations based on SWS concepts are nowadays the subject of intensive research. Apart from WSMX as the reference implementation of WSMO, other implementations based on SWS concepts also exist such as IRS[15], OWL-S[16] or METEOR-S[17]. It is the intention of WSMX to be interoperable with such systems where possible.

The main components of IRS (Internet Reasoning Server) are the IRS Server, the IRS Publisher and the IRS Client. The IRS server holds descriptions of SWS. IRS Publisher links Web services to their semantic descriptions within the IRS server and generates a wrapper which allows a web service to be invoked. An IRS user asks through the IRS Client for a task to be achieved, and accordingly the IRS server selects and invokes an appropriate Web service. Recently, IRS-III provides infrastructure for creating WSMO-based SWS, building upon the previous implementation of IRS.

A set of OWL-S tools exists rather than a complete execution environment based on OWL-S concepts. For example, OWL-S Editors allow the maintaining of OWL-S service descriptions, OWL-S Matcher provides an algorithm for different degrees of matching for individual elements of OWL-S, OWL-S Axis plugin advises service providers on how to provide service description using OWL Services, etc.

The main components of METEOR-S are Abstract Process Designer, Semantic Publication and Discovery Engine, Constraint Analyzer, and Execution Environment. Abstract Process Designer allows a user to create the control flow of the process using BPEL constructs. Semantic Publication and Discovery Engine provide semantic matching based on subsumption and property matching. Constraint Analyzer dynamically selects services from candidate services, which are returned by the discovery engine. Execution environment performs actual late binding of services returned by the constraint analyzer and converts abstract BPEL to executable BPEL.



6 Conclusion

In conclusion, we are designing and building an execution environment for the dynamic discovery, selection, mediation, invocation and interoperation of SWS. Through our research on WSMX we aim to provide a guideline and justification for an architecture for SWS systems. We present how SWS architecture should look like, we define its execution semantics, and any aspect we perceive compulsory in any SWS related systems. In the initial stage we focus on delivering a component-based architecture, ensuring a solid foundation for later extension. We have designed all the components based on the WSMO conceptual model. It is our intention to extend these components to fully support WSMO and to provide a fully-fledged enterprise system for execution of the SWS.

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