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Send subscription requests to:
Mid-Range, 34 Riviera Drive,
Markham, Ontario,
Canada L3R 5M1

Web site: www.midrange.ca
Phone: 905-940-1814
Toll Free: 800-668-6470

Editor-in-Chief
Daniel Duffy

Managing Editor
Zdy Orlinski

Technical Editor
Richard Dolewski

Art Director
Vaughn Dragland

Contributors

David van Geilswyk
Dave Parry

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Laurel Hall

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A Word From Dan ...

Acrobuzz /'æc rō būz/ n. If you don't SOA are you SOL?



O.K. Acrobuzz isn't really a word. I made it up. It's the combination of "acronym" and "buzzword". As new acronyms and buzzwords come on to the scene I will explain / lampoon them as best I can. If you have any suggestions on acrobuzzes (acrobuzzi?) that I can attempt to de-mystify please send them to me at dduffy@midrange.ca Note: Please don't confuse acrobuzzi with nonce-words and neologisms. They are for another column.

S.O.A.

Service Oriented Architecture is the latest acrobuzz (acrobuzzard?) to get big air time.

Essentially the concept behind SOA is that henceforth software applications should be written in such a manner that they are re-usable in various facets of a business and in various business processes (and the re-engineering of same—which is really fun).

Duuuhhhhhhh! Isn't this self evident? Apparently not. Legions of overpaid consultants are making whacks of money promoting S.O.A. to companies that haven't even implemented basic business enhancing software modules such as purchasing, job order costing, or God forbid, an inventory module. But hey, why do those boring useful things with actual payback, when you can skip right over them and get a \$300,000 SOA Roadmap Report from a consulting (see also: "used to be an accounting") firm?

I'm not making this up...

According to Wikipedia (that incredible fountain of free form unverified net knowledge): "...SOAs *build applications out of software services. Services are intrinsically unassociated units of functionality, which have no calls to each other embedded in them.*" – **fascinating isn't it?**

But wait, it gets better... (read this—it's classic)

"Relative to typical practices of earlier attempts to promote software reuse via modularity of functions, or by use of predefined groups of functions known as classes, SOA's atomic-level objects are often 100 to 1,000 times larger, and are associated by an application designer or engineer using orchestration. In the process of orchestration, relatively large chunks of software functionality (services) are associated in a non-hierarchical arrangement (in contrast to a class hierarchy) by a software engineer, or process engineer, using a special software tool which contains an exhaustive list of all of the services, their characteristics, and a means to record the designer's choices which the designer can manage and the software system can consume and use at run-time." – kinda makes you want to go right out and get some doesn't it?

Did someone say "atomic" and "orchestration"? This doesn't sound like IT and business processes. This sounds like it should be reported to Homeland Security & CSIS!

Question:

Should a consultant do some SOA Roadmapping for you or just borrow your watch to tell you the time?

Answer:

Six of one, half dozen of the other. (Although with the second option at least you'll know the time).

Thank you for your time. No pun intended. No watch required. **M-R**

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