



JORAM Users Day

The first JORAM Users' Day has been held last June 17th in Paris. This event was the first attempt within the ObjectWeb community to have direct exchanges between users and designers/developers of an ObjectWeb component. As this meeting was held in Paris most of our foreign JORAM users have not been able to attend. We do apologize for this and we will set up e-communication channels in the near future to extend the scope of exchanges to the whole community.

The JORAM users' community is growing very fast and involves ISVs, integrators and end-users. The evaluation/experimentation period of the JORAM technology is now often completed for many of the current users. A new phase is now under way, where the JORAM component is embedded in operational solutions that are being deployed. The JORAM mailing list shows evidences of this process. Therefore it was the right time to gather people concerned with JORAM in order to share their experience about JORAM deployment and to identify the key issues to be addressed to strengthen the success of this open source product.

The overall objective of the meeting was threefold:

- to report on the credibility of the JORAM solution,
- to raise questions and answers about the durability and evolution of this open source product, and
- to identify how it is possible to increase the synergy within the community beyond the current JORAM forum.

A list of attendees is available below.

The following presentations made at the meeting are available on-line:

- Joram Users Day (by Roland Balter: Scalagent Distributed Technologies)
- ObjectWeb (by Jean-Pierre Laisné: Chairman of ObjectWeb)
- JMSGroups: Towards JMS-Compliant Group Communication (Arnas Kupsys: EPFL)
- *Additional presentations will be published on the Web side when they are available*

In a first stage, Jean-Pierre Laisné, Chairman of ObjectWeb, gave a brief introduction of ObjectWeb goals and current status, and Roland Balter (Scalagent Distributed Technologies) briefly introduced the JORAM component and presented the goal of the meeting: to set up straightforward exchanges between members of the JORAM community (users and developers).

Then participants presented their usages of JORAM, how the evaluation was conducted, and the architectural choices they made. This unique opportunity for the users to share their experiences was considered as a major input of the meeting that should be sustained in the future through a dedicated forum within the JORAM community.

Finally a question and answer session was opened about user expectations and how they might be fulfilled. Issues raised by the participants were both technical (e.g. high availability, performances, administration, documentation, etc.) and strategical (e.g. product road map, support, references, etc.). The latter is a key issue as many users are looking for arguments to defend an open source approach against proprietary products, usually more elaborate but also

less open and very expensive (especially for distributed configurations). At the time being, answers to these questions are limited by the resources available in the open source mode (i.e. “best effort” approach). This first level of support can be extended in two ways:

- by the professional support provided by companies such as the one proposed by Scalagent,
- by broader contributions from users. On this particular point, the participants raised the issue of the best way to contribute to JORAM, besides bug repair and submitting new pieces of code which they do not feel particularly comfortable with. We agreed that contributions could take many other forms, such as:
 - ▶ exhibition of use cases,
 - ▶ performance studies,
 - ▶ pieces of documentation and tutorials,
 - ▶ answers to new comers on the mailing list, etc.

Conclusion

There was a general agreement, first to consider this type of meeting as very useful, and second to pursue the exchanges between the members of the JORAM community. In a first stage it is proposed to use the existing JORAM mailing list to make proposals about the way to structure exchanges within the community in order to address the key issues identified about JORAM usage and thus to improve the product scope and quality. A dedicated communication channel will be set up later on as necessary. It is also suggested to have another meeting late 2004 (or may be early 2005, for example at the First ObjectWeb International Conference) to address specific issues raised in the meantime.

To conclude the JORAM team would like to thank attendees for their support and their contributions to the success of the JORAM initiative.