

Modeling and Execution of Web Service in Internet using Enhydra workflow platform

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Abstract: *This paper aims to present java open source XPDL workflow products for Web services - Enhydra Java Workflow Editor (JaWE) which is a graphical Java workflow process editor and Enhydra Shark workflow engine which is an extendable workflow engine framework. The both products support XPDL as their native file format. XPDL provide a formal model for expressing executable processes that addresses all aspects of enterprise business processes. This paper examines the potential, essence and functional possibilities of Enhydra JaWE to create, manage and review workflow process definitions and Enhydra Shark to execute these processes at runtime.*

Key words: *Information systems; Web service; WfMC; Process Definition; XPDL; LDAP; CORBA*

INTRODUCTION

Enhydra workflow platform is an Open Source WfMC and OMG compliant Java workflow solution consisting of an editor for XPDL and a powerful and flexible Java XPDL workflow execution engine. Enhydra JaWE is a tool for Process Definition modeling. This product allows the user to create, manage and review workflow process definitions. Enhydra Shark is an extendable workflow engine framework. The potential of this product is to execute the workflow process definitions at runtime. Both products include a standard implementation completely based on WfMC specifications supporting XPDL (XML Process Definition Language) as their native workflow process definition format. XPDL is conceived of as a graph-structured language with additional concepts to handle blocks. Scoping issues are relevant at the package and process levels. Enhydra workflow platform is used for Integration of Web Services in Internet [1], [2]. In the paper is proposed decision for Web Services in the Web Information Systems – in particular Index for Citations as Web Service. The main goals of the paper are: to examine the potential, essence and functional possibilities of Enhydra JaWE and Enhydra Shark; to present graphical representation (model) and the execution of the Web service Index for Citations.

ENHYDRA JaWE (JAVA WORKFLOW EDITOR)

Enhydra JaWE (Java Workflow Editor) is an open source graphical Java workflow system. Using a visual tool, this product allows the user to create, manage and review workflow process definitions. As its native file format JaWE support XPDL (XML Process Definition Language) and also LDAP connections [3].

JaWE accomplished three main goals:

- Graphical representation of process definition
- Export of process definitions to XPDL
- Import of any valid XPDL and its graphical representation

The workflow process definition interface defines a common interchange format, which supports the transfer of workflow process definitions between different products. A workflow process definition, generated by JaWE, is capable of interpretation in different workflow run-time products. The principles of Process Definition Interchange are based on Meta-Model framework. The Meta-Model identifies commonly used entities within a process definition, their relationships and attributes. A variety of attributes describe the characteristics of this limited set of entities. Using this Meta-Model, JaWE can transfer models using a XPDL as a common exchange format. Beside this interchange, JaWE is also used for internal representation of process definitions. The whole concept is shown on Figure 1.

Below is presented a short list of the entities:

- Workflow Process Definition
- Workflow Process Activity
- Transition Information
- Workflow Participant Declaration
- Workflow Application Declaration
- Workflow Relevant Data
- System & Environmental Data.
- Resource Repository or Organizational Model
- Data Types and Expressions

All of these entities are maintained by JaWE, except "System & Environmental Data".

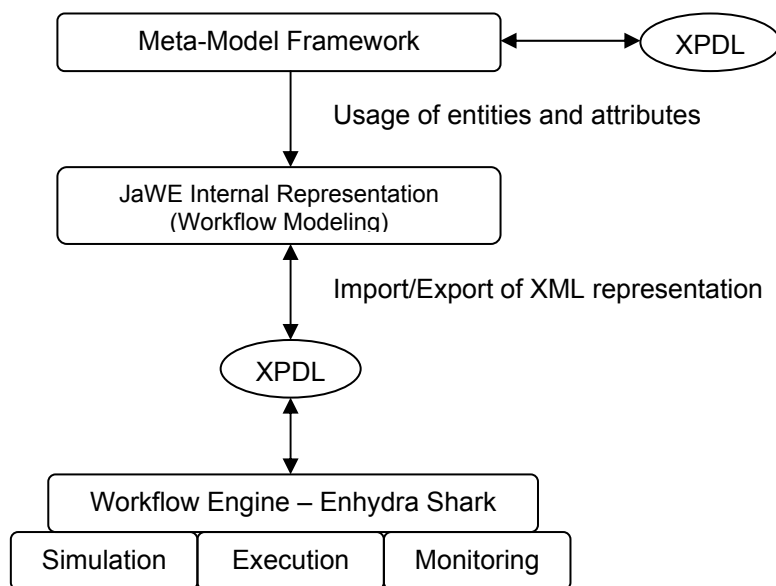


Figure 1. Concept of the Process Definition Interchange based on Enhydra platform

JaWE divides itself into two logical parts: Package Level and Process Level. As will be explained in detail below, the Package level manages entities and attributes within the Package, while Process level manages entities and attributes within Workflow Process Definition.

1. Package level

At the Package level, the user is allowed to choose among several XPD L views such as graphical, text, and xpd l view which represent the XPD L as it will be saved into file. Graphical view of package level is divided into some parts. Left side of the main window shows Package Hierarchy Tree. Right side of the main window displays workflow processes defined in package which is selected on the hierarchy tree. Processes are presented only symbolic with not many information about process and with no graphical layout of process elements (activities and transitions). All details about process are provided in 'Property' menu item from context menu of a selected process.

On the Figure 2 below are shown several workflow processes of Web service Index for Citations which are defined within one package. The main process is named "Citation process" which includes three sub-processes into itself. The package acts as a container for grouping together a number of individual process definitions and associated entity data, which is applicable to all the contained process definitions.

2. Process level

The second part of JaWE is Process level. This part of JaWE is used for graphical representation of process definition and for defining attributes of entities on that level. In the visible working area, the user inserts visible objects and adjusts them. The first thing drawn must be a participant, after which the user may insert other elements such as Activities and Transitions.

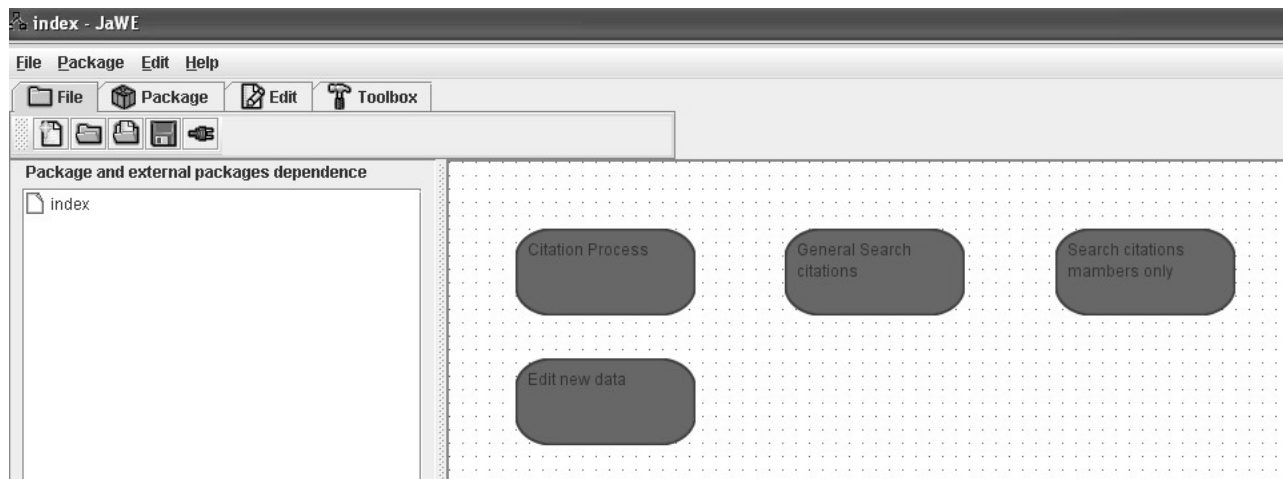


Figure 2. Package level of workflow process

In JaWE are defined four kinds of Activities as follows:

- Generic Activity
- Sub-Flow Activity
- Block Activity
- Route Activity

The link between two activities is established by transitions. Transitions are more than just link between activities. They describe possible transitions between activities and the conditions that enable or disable them during workflow execution. JaWE has three types of transition - simple, self-routed and circular. Simple transition is link between two activities, represented graphically with one straight line. Self-routed transition is link between two activities which is graphically 'broken' in three parts, and circular transition is transition from activity to itself, and is graphically represented as a circle with an arrow.

On the Figure 3 below is shown a part of the graphical representation (model) of Web service for citations includes participants, activities and transitions.

ENHYDRA SHARK

Enhydra Shark is workflow engine completely based on WfMC and OMG specifications [4].

Shark Admin application is Java swing application meant to be used by administrator to manage Shark engine. There are two kind of admin application, the first one is using shark directly as a library, and the other one communicates with shark deployed as a CORBA service using shark's CORBA wrapper interface. It can be used to handle shark's external repository containing XPDLs (to upload new XPDL files or delete existing ones), to load some XPDL file into shark, unload it, update it, to instantiate and monitor shark's processes, to perform mappings among participant definitions and real users, and among application definitions and Tool agents. It also contains a built-in work list handler application that can be used for performing work items, or for reassigning work items from one user to another.

Figure 4 represents process monitor where the main process of Web service Index

for Citations is executed. The process monitor is divided into four major parts. The package-process definition-process instances tree enables to select a running instance of a package's process definition. When the user selects the process instance, other parts graphical data correspond to this process instance. He can see the main properties of the instance (the name, and the current state), the graphical diagram of the process instance with activities that are currently running being marked, to perform different operations on that process instance using the buttons at the bottom.

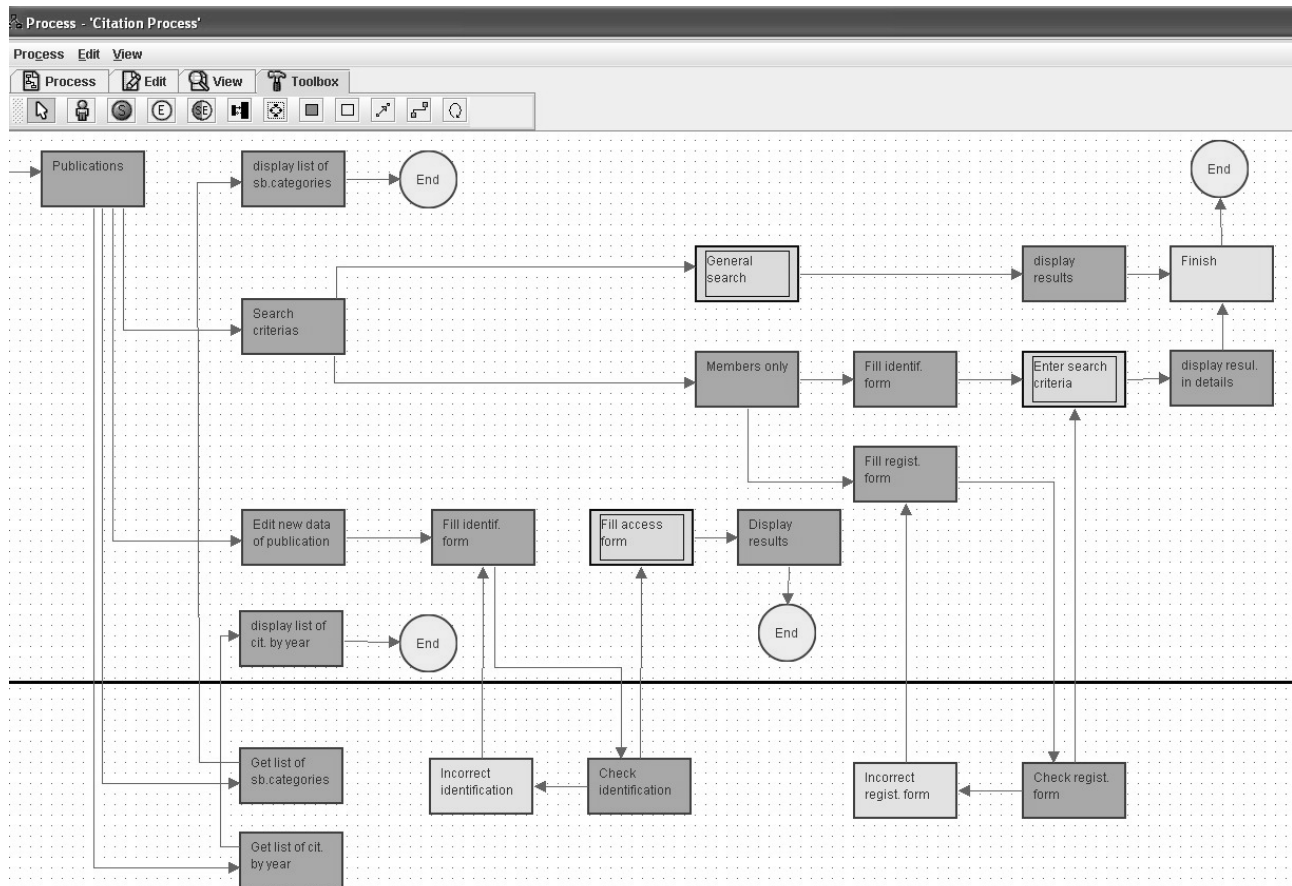


Figure 3. Process level

The operations which can be performed are:

- start the process
- suspend the process
- resume the process
- terminate the process
- abort the process
- view the process history
- see the description of the process
- see and edit the process variables, and that way the user can manage the process flow if needed
- enter activity management dialog. The dialog displays the list of process activities, and when the user selects one of them, its current state is displayed in the text box.

From this dialog, the user can perform additional operations on single activities:

- suspend activity
- resume activity
- terminate activity abort activity - process becomes 'stucked'
- manually start an activity

- delete all finished processes
- delete selected process
- perform a check for activity deadlines for all processes
- perform a check for limits of all processes and activities

The user management console page is divided into three parts. Functionalities:

- Accounts – the administrator can manage the users of the shark server by defining the new ones, deleting the existing ones or changing their properties.
- Logged - displays the list of currently logged users.
- Mapping - enables the administrator to map the package and package's processes participants to the real shark users.

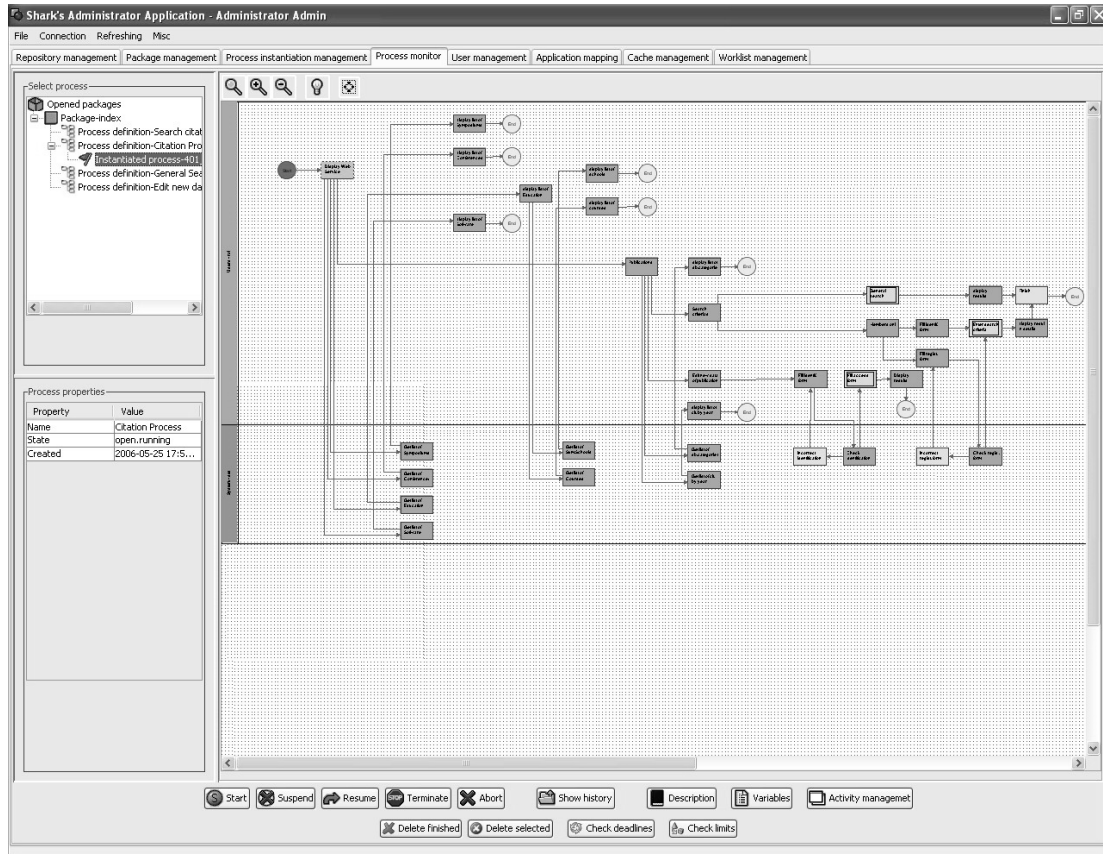


Figure 4. Enhydra Shark process monitor

Enhydra Shark allows mapping a package and package's processes applications to the real applications handled by a tool agent. Currently, six tool agents come with the Shark distribution. To map application definition to tool agent application, the user has to go to the application mapping section of admin application, and press the "add" button. The dialog will arise, and one has to select the application definition at the left side of dialog, and the tool agent on the right side of the dialog.

Then the user should enter some mapping parameters for tool agent. When a mapping of the application definition to the tool agent is done, shark will try to connect to the proper tool agent and ask him to execute its application, and will retrieve the results of execution. Here is the brief description of parameters that the user can enter when mapping of the application is performed:

- User name and password - not required for tool agents distributed with Shark. Some other tool agents can use it when calling applications that require login procedure.

- Application name - the name of application that should be started by tool agent (i.e. for JavaClassToolAgent that would be the full name of the class, for RuntimeApplicationToolAgent it would be the name of executable file that should be in the path of the machine where tool agent resides. For JavaScriptToolAgent this can be either the name of the java script file, or the java script itself, depending on Application mode attribute.), for SOAPToolAgent it is the location of WEB service and for MailToolAgent it is a class of MailMessageHandler called to actually send/receive mails.

- Application mode - various tool agents use this attribute for different purposes. The RuntimeApplicationToolAgent uses mode 0 to indicate that it should not finish execution until the system application is finished (otherwise it will start system application and return finished status -> activity does not wait for system application to finish, but process proceeds to the next activity), and JavaScriptToolAgent uses mode 0 to indicate that it should search for java script file.

Enhydra Shark project delivers a workflow server with a difference. It is an extendible workflow engine framework including a standard implementation completely based on WfMC specifications using XPDL (without any proprietary extensions) as its native workflow process definition format and the WfMC "ToolAgents" API for serverside execution of system activities. Every single component (persistence layer, transaction manager, scripting engines, process repository,...) can be used with its standard implementation or extended/replaced by project specific modules. This way Enhydra Shark can be used as a simple "Java library" in servlet or swing applications or running in a J2EE container supporting a session beans API, Corba ORB or accessed as a web service.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

The essence and functional possibilities on Enhydra JaWE and Enhydra Shark were presented in this paper. Special features of modeling and execution on Web Services and their application in the Web Information Systems are outline. Proposed is a decision for Web Service - Index for Citations in the Web Information Systems. Software components of the products are described. The products are platform and software independent. As a future work is the problem for optimization of Index for Citation as Web Service in Internet.

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