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Workshop: How to Sell MDA

David Pilfold, Domain Solutions Ltd, <http://www.ooagenerator.com>

Abstract

The Object Management Group's (OMG's) Model Driven Architecture (MDA) approach to software project delivery is based on producing analysis models that separate the *problem* from the *implementation technology*. For example separation of the analysis of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), which attempts to integrate all departmental functions across a company, from the technology e.g. J2EE or .NET platforms etc.

MDA promises many benefits in terms of raising the abstraction level of system description and future-proofing systems against changes in technology and also delivering customisable projects and off-the-shelf architectures. However, MDA usage is still in its infancy and has a long way to go before it becomes widely accepted, this is shown by a lack of mainstream MDA projects. As MDA is a huge paradigm shift in terms of how software projects are realised it is essential to create a defined transition from the early adopters to mainstream customer use. This workshop addressed these issues of how to sell MDA.

The workshop firstly discussed the characteristics of markets (early adopters, cost-cutters etc.) and identified which market types (finance, government etc) would be potential users of MDA. The consensus on this was that MDA applies to many market types. Secondly, the workshop discussed what needed to be realised before MDA could be widely accepted; MDA itself needs a better profile description and supporting software tools and standards need to be defined. The remainder of the workshop focussed on identifying the MDA stakeholders and the messages to use (and not use) in selling to these stakeholders.

The MDA stakeholders were identified as business managers, to developers and testers and also standards bodies, research and education institutes and tools vendors. Workshop members believe that the MDA sales approach and message has to be tailored to sell the benefits at different levels. These benefits range from the return on investment that can be expected to the removal of tedious coding work.

In summary it will be hard for MDA to cross the chasm from early adoption to mainstream until it is better defined and supported. A targeted sales message and mechanism to deliver it should make this leap achievable.