

Modcomp Solutions

INFORMATION

BizTalk 2009 and SharePoint Integration

Overview

No matter what the size, an enterprise needs an IT infrastructure that allows its employees, business partners and end users to connect to line of business (LOB) applications. Almost any enterprise needs to effectively manage its business data (such as customer data) and to provide access for the users of that data in the most secure and cost effective way.

Designing an enterprise information system to address these business needs is a demanding task because:

- Data is often stored in a variety of Line of Business (LOB) systems.
- The LOB systems are often running on various platforms.
- Technology options to connect LOB systems and end users are sometimes limited and often expensive.
- Existing technologies are not flexible enough to meet the prospective business demands.

While there are many ways to work around these issues, a definitive solution is to use a middle-tier application based on service-oriented architecture (SOA), which exposes the interfaces and functionalities of the various LOB systems as a group of services. Because these services are loosely coupled with the programming languages, operating systems, and other development technologies used for the underlying LOB systems, they can interoperate locally or remotely. Moreover, these services can be consumed by other client applications to help securely present data to the end users depending on their access privileges. In this way a reusable integration layer or hub can be established.

However, this approach has its own challenges. Developing the code to access the LOB systems can be complex and time-consuming and often requires knowledge of the applications. Exposing interfaces and functionalities of a LOB system as a service requires LOB subject matter experts who can create services for the required business functionality. Another major challenge is the security of the data exposed as a service. This is because the underlying security model implemented by the LOB systems might not apply to the artefacts that are exposed as a service. Data security needs to be implemented both by the application that exposes the artefacts as a service as well as by the client application that will be consuming the service to display data to end users.

Using a service-oriented compliant integration server from an established software supplier overcomes many of these challenges especially if the software incorporates pre-written adapters for the LOB application. Microsoft's latest SOA compliant server is BizTalk 2009.

Business Case

A typical example of the situation faced by many of the small and medium sized enterprises we work with is that data is held in a LOB application such as SAP or Oracle and the organisation needs to deliver the information to its users in a simple and secure way.

The Solution: BizTalk 2009, BizTalk Adapters and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server

A solution to this challenge is to utilise BizTalk 2009 together with a BizTalk Adapter for the LOB application and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server to provide the client access. This combination provides a foundation to build an enterprise information system relatively quickly, easily, to provide secure and reliable access to the business data in the LOB system.

BizTalk Server 2009

BizTalk Server is a mature product on its sixth release. BizTalk Server 2009 provides a the platform for connecting disparate systems. The product includes over 25 multi-platform adapters and a robust messaging infrastructure. In addition to integration functionality, BizTalk also provides strong durable messaging, a rules engine, EDI connectivity, Business Activity Monitoring (BAM), RFID capabilities and IBM Host/Mainframe connectivity.

BizTalk Adapters

The BizTalk Adapters are a selection of adaptors that quickly provide integration with a range of LOB systems. The adapters are built using a common framework. The adapters are built on top of the Microsoft Windows Communication Foundation (WCF) Line of Business (LOB) Adapter SDK, and leverage the benefits of Windows® Communication Foundation (WCF). WCF, a component of .NET Framework 3.0 and later, is a programming model to build service-oriented applications that facilitates distributed computing and broad interoperability. WCF supports cross-vendor interoperability, including reliability, security, and transactions.



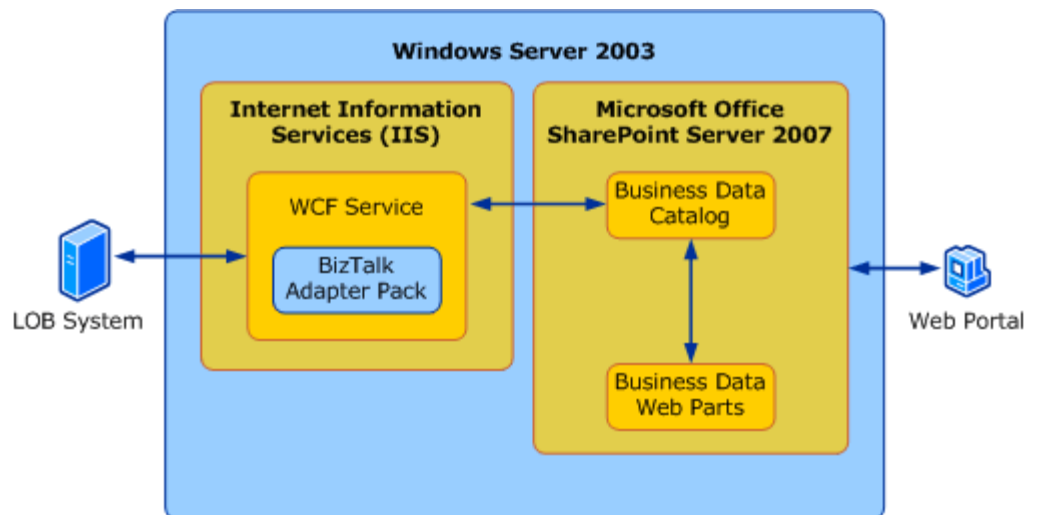
Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 is an industry leading enterprise application that simplifies how people find and share information across boundaries. It is built on top of Windows SharePoint Services, and tightly integrates with Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office SharePoint Server enables you to easily create, manage, and build your own SharePoint sites that can be accessed by different people in the organization. It helps the teams to stay connected and productive by having easy access to the documents, resources, and information needed to make important business decisions and accomplish tasks.

The Business Data Catalog feature in Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 can be used to easily integrate business data from back-end server applications, such as SAP or Siebel, within Office SharePoint Server 2007, without writing any code.

Implementation

The following diagram gives an overview of how LOB systems, BizTalk Adapter Pack, and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server work together:

By using a BizTalk adapter along with the Business Data Catalog feature in Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, you can quickly and easily display business data from LOB systems to your clients by using a SharePoint portal.



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