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VORDEL CENTRALIZED POLICY MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE: KEY TO EFFECTIVE SOA

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Abstract

Policy management is quickly becoming a core need when considering the implementation of operational and effective SOA implementations. However, many people don't consider policy management until it's too late, and difficult to retrofit. Indeed, the use and management of policies provide the central control mechanism that provides clear value when considering the return on investment of SOA. Policies are as important to SOA as Services themselves, and they should be managed throughout their lifecycles as such.

Policy management requires operational lifecycle support, like any other development effort. Such management includes the migration through development, testing, staging, and finally the operations of the policy in the production environment. Moreover, policy management requires other facilities, including centralized logging of all critical metrics gathered during the policy operations, allowing the managers of the SOA implementation to gather key data points used to enhance operational efficiencies.

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The Value of Policy-Driven SOA

The notion of policy management is a core need when considering the implementation of an operational, effective, and efficient SOA implementation, and is critical during all phases of architectural planning and implementation. The larger issues with policy management is that many people don't consider it until it's too late, and it is difficult to retrofit within the existing architecture. Indeed, the use and management of policies is the central control mechanism that provides clear value when considering the return on investment of SOA.

Policy management requires operational lifecycle support, like any other development effort. This support includes the migration through development, testing, staging, and, finally, the operations of the policy in the production environment. Other facilities are necessary as well, including centralized logging of all critical metrics gathered during the policy operations, allowing the people who manage the SOA infrastructure to gather key data points they can use to enhance operational efficiencies.

It is also important to include the persistence and discovery of the policies within structured and unstructured repositories, including LDAP, XML Databases, SQL Databases, and XML Policy Files. Moreover, the ability to leave a clear audit trail supporting internal auditing policies, or compliance with regulations around the use of policies.

Centralized Policies are Critical for SOA

The creation, replication, and enforcement of policies are critical to the success of SOA. Inclusive to this need is the ability to manage these policies centrally, and through a complete lifecycle, inclusive of design, development, and deployment. Therefore, it is important to consider policies as an asset to manage within the SOA, not a mere control mechanism that limits service access.

However, all policy management solutions are not created equal, and in order to provide the features needed there are several key features that should be considered, including:

- **Centralization of policy management** – the ability for the policy management system to manage the policies locally, including development, testing, and deployment, and then the distribution of the policies to link XML gateways and firewalls. The notion is that policies are as important to SOA as Services themselves, and they should be managed throughout their lifecycles as such.
- **Strategy for policy discovery and persistence** – the ability for the policy management system to store information about the policies under management, including location of the core policy, and distribution of those policies out to gateways and firewalls. These policies should be under version control, and managed throughout their lifecycle. Beyond persistence, these policies should be discoverable, meaning they should reside in a directory within structured and unstructured repositories, including LDAP, XML, databases, and files. The use of discovery services provides those interested in leveraging the policy asset to locate, understand, and implement the policy in support of the SOA implementation.

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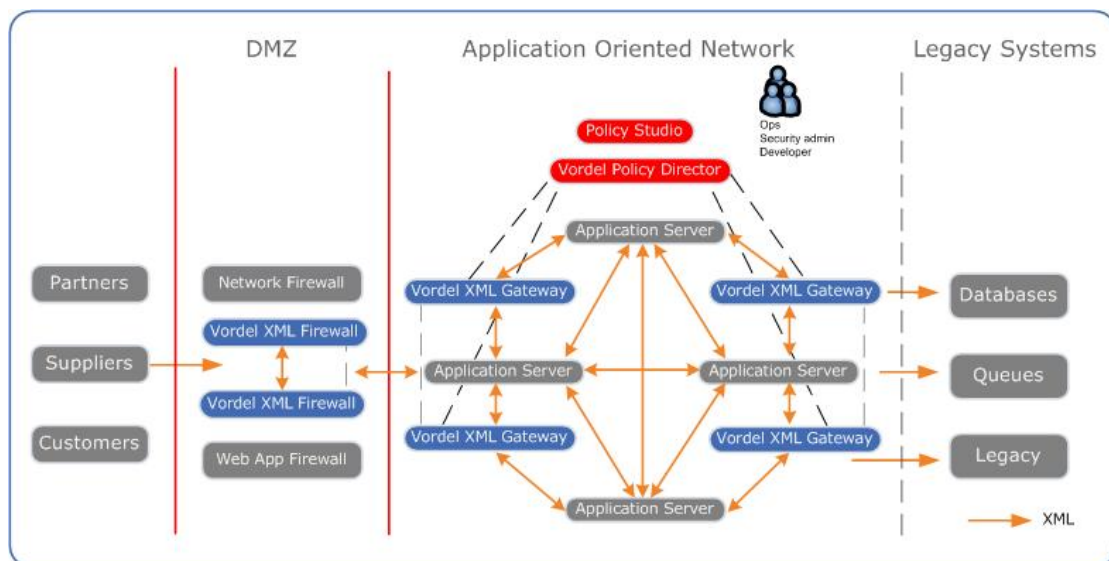
- **Quick distribution to assets hosting the policies** – the ability of the policy management system to quickly distribute information out to all gateways and firewalls where the policies are to enter a runtime state. Thus, the policies are staged at a central location, and then distributed out to the remote sites for execution. This provides the SOA with the ability to create and support a distributed policy management environment, and thus better support scalability and performance, which for all practical purposes is a single logical instance of policies.
- **Statistics gathering and analysis** –the ability to monitor the execution of the policies, and information flowing through the gateways and firewalls, and gather key statistics and metrics during execution.” Using this information, the administrator and policy developer can determine the health of the SOA implementation, including policy performance, security, information flow performance, and key indicators as to any tuning that needs to be done as part of operations. Moreover, using this information, both administrators and architects can determine key trends, such as the saturation of a gateway and firewall, and adjust for those trends going forward. Also, visibility as to how services are used, which clients use them, traffic load, and response times.

Vordel Policy Director

The *Vordel Policy Director* provides key policy management capabilities in support of SOA, including the ability to distribute policies to other Vordel products, such as the Vordel XML Gateway, and the Vordel XML firewall, as in the figure below. This product provides a complete development and deployment environment through *Vordel Policy Studio*, inclusive of design, development, and deployment to remote gateways and firewalls.

In addition, Vordel Policy Director provides complete policy storage and discovery services, supporting quick location and access to policies in support of SOA. Key statistics, as gathered around the execution of policies, provide the administrators with the ability to refine policies to make them more efficient, and monitor other critical aspects of the SOA implementation.

Vordel Policy Director: Central Management of Policies



Source: Vordel

Other Vordel Products

Other products from Vordel in the Vordel 5 suite include:

- **Vordel XML Firewall** - Threat protection for XML applications from malicious attack and unauthorized access.
- **Vordel XML Gateway** - Provides XML offload with data transformation, routing and acceleration.
- **Vordel Reporter** - Provides full visibility reporting on Web Service usage.
- **Vordel SOAPbox** - Provides testing for XML Applications.

Vordel Policy Director Features

Vordel Policy Director

Overview:

Vordel Policy Director is a distributed policy management system that employs a centralized control mechanism, which provides a complete set of core policy management features that enables those who build and manage SOA implementations to define, create, and deploy policies in a highly scalable and reliable distributed environment. In addition, Vordel Policy Director supports key features such as statistics gathering and analysis, policy distribution to remote gateways and firewalls, and core policy storage and discovery facilities.

Features:

- **Lifecycle Policy Management.** Simplify migration through development, testing, staging and into production.
- **Centralized Logging.** Centralized storage of all metrics for subsequent analysis.
- **Policy Storage Flexibility.** LDAP, Relational and XML Databases or file systems.
- **Fast Replication of XML Networking Infrastructure.** Facilitate rapid extension of policies with new gateways and firewalls.
- **Audit Trail of Policies.** Archived audit trail of all policy-related transactions.
- **Provisioning of new XML Gateways and distribution of policies.**

Value Propositions:

- Complete centralized policy management systems supporting policy development, deployment, and administration.
- The ability to enforce regulatory compliance using policies within SOA.
- Increase ROI on existing infrastructure.
- Reduce development and support costs around policies.
- Accelerate time to market of core SOA.



The ZapThink Take

Clearly, policy management is critical to SOA. Policies provide key gating mechanisms in support of access to services, and the ability to manage policies through a lifecycle is as important as managing services and processes. Moreover, policy management systems must be both distributed and reliable. Thus, the use of a centralized policy management facility that supports distribution and management provides huge value.

Unfortunately, the value of policies and policy management systems, in the context of SOA, are largely misunderstood by many people who are implementing SOA. Thus, in many instances, policies must be retrofitted at the backend of the project, when they really need to be a part of the overall SOA from the beginning. The return on investment from the use of this kind of technology is huge when you consider the savings in security risk, operational efficiencies, and the value of control and management of the SOA.

However, to effectively leverage a policy management system, those who implement SOA need to understand the policy development and deployment lifecycles, or the processes required to build effective policies. Considering that fact, tools such as *Vordel Policy Director*, when married with *Vordel Policy Studio*, with the *Vordel XML Gateway* and *XML Firewall* products to execute the policies, can be quite effective.

Profile: Vordel	October 2007
Funding:	Elderstreet, Intel Capital, Powerscourt Capital Technology Fund, Hatton Investments
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Employees:	25
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Related Research

- *Layer 7 Technologies* ZapNote (ZTZN-1182)
- *Reactivity* ZapNote (ZTZN-1180)
- *Conformative Systems* ZapNote (ZTZN-1171)
- *DataPower* ZapNote (ZTZN-1159)
- *Forum Systems* ZapNote (ZTZN-1170)
- *Sarvega* ZapNote (ZTZN-1165)



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ZapThink helps its customers in three ways: by helping companies understand IT products and services in the context of Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) and the vision of Service Orientation, by providing guidance into emerging best practices for Web Services and SOA adoption, and by bringing together all our audiences into a network that provides business value and expertise to each member of the network.

ZapThink provides market intelligence to IT vendors and professional services firms that offer XML and Web Services-based products and services in order to help them understand their competitive landscape, plan their product roadmaps, and communicate their value proposition to their customers within the context of Service Orientation.

ZapThink provides guidance and expertise to professional services firms to help them grow and innovate their services as well as promote their capabilities to end-users and vendors looking to grow their businesses.

ZapThink also provides implementation intelligence to IT users who are seeking guidance and clarity into the best practices for planning and implementing SOA, including how to assemble the available products and services into a coherent plan.

ZapThink's senior analysts are widely regarded as the "go to analysts" for Web Services, and SOA, and Enterprise Web 2.0 by vendors, end-users, and the press. Respected for their candid, insightful opinions, they are in great demand as speakers, and have presented at conferences and industry events around the world. They are among the most quoted industry analysts in the IT industry, and their recent book, *Service Orient or Be Doomed!*, is the leading book on the business concept of Service Orientation.

ZapThink was founded in October 2000 and is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. Its customers include Global 1000 firms and government organizations, as well as many emerging businesses. Its analysts have worked at such firms as IDC, marchFIRST, and ChannelWave, and have sat on the working group committees for standards bodies such as RosettaNet, UDDI, and ebXML.

Call, email, or visit the ZapThink Web site to learn more about how ZapThink can help you to better understand how SOA will impact your business or organization.

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