

ZAPTHINK ZAPNOTE™

WEBLAYERS *ACHIEVING THE BENEFITS OF SOA THROUGH GOVERNANCE*

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Abstract

Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) represents an emerging approach to organizing and accessing IT resources that enables businesses to create flexible and agile systems that reuse the resources traditionally locked in IT silos across the organization. Achieving these goals of reorganization and reuse, however, require more than architecture and technology change. Companies must also rework how both their business and IT organizations govern the production and use of such Services.

To fill this need, a new class of SOA governance products have recently entered the market. Among these, WebLayers stands out as the only vendor who offers a product built from the ground up to address the governance and compliance issues companies face as they build and implement Services within their SOA initiatives.

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Governance: Essential for SOA

The technology changes that are necessary as companies implement Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) are actually the easy part of such an initiative. Far more difficult are the human changes necessary to ensure that companies actually realize the business benefits that SOA promises. Of all those human change management issues companies face, the most important is *IT governance*.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines governance as “the persons (or committees or departments etc.) who make up a body for the purpose of administering something.” IT governance in particular describes how people entrusted with the authority over some aspect of the business will consider IT in their supervision, monitoring, control and direction of that business entity. How the various lines of business apply IT will have an impact on whether the company will be able to attain the vision, mission or strategic goals that the management of the company has set for it. IT governance specifies who has the rights to make decisions regarding IT, what decisions they can make, and an accountability framework that encourages the IT usage behavior corporate management seeks to exhibit. IT governance is not about making specific IT decisions (management does that), but rather determines which individuals and roles with the company systematically make and contribute to those decisions.

IT governance involves four basic capabilities:

- The ability for an organization to define IT-focused business practices, technical standards and repeatable processes for accomplishing organizational goals
- A governing body that provides compliance tools to those individuals responsible for complying with IT requirements and policies
- Tracking, monitoring, and enforcement capabilities that enable the organization’s management to ensure compliance or take action should the company not be in compliance with the stated requirements and policies.
- Making all activities within the enterprise available for analysis and active involvement in the evolution of policies as well as conformance processes.

SOA in particular requires proper governance because SOA mandates a connection between business requirements and IT capabilities through the power of abstraction, loose coupling, and composition. In order to make the business goals a reality, however, companies require governance to make sure they build and compose the *right* Services in the *right* way. Providing these capabilities for SOA initiatives is particularly critical for the success of those initiatives. Without such governance capabilities, any SOA initiative will likely succumb to the “silo effect,” where different groups within IT handle issues of management in separate ways, thus preventing the organization from effectively building reusable Services or implementing any cross-departmental policy or security requirements.

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WebLayers: Software for SOA Governance

Cambridge, Massachusetts-based WebLayers delivers enterprise software for the governance of XML, Web Services and SOA implementations. Prior to the launch of their product, WebLayers spent three years building a solid foundation for their software, and formally launched their company in the spring of 2005. WebLayers' customers include Fortune 500 companies and government agencies who use their software to define their enterprise policies, detect, analyze, and ensure conformance with those policies, and to govern their SOA implementations. The US Department of Defense has selected WebLayers Center for the governance of its Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES) initiative. Customers use WebLayers governance software to effectively enforce business, technical and architectural principles, policies and best practices of SOA at any point in the Service lifecycle.

WebLayers' enterprise-level product is the *WebLayers Center*, which is a software platform that provides governance as well as policy and regulatory conformance for XML, Web Services and SOA implementations. WebLayers designed WebLayers Center to address the risks associated with the proliferation of XML and Web Services in the enterprise and to allow companies to achieve the business benefits of SOA, including the reduction of integration costs and the increase of Service reuse.

WebLayers Center provides the following capabilities:

- Governance Policies – advanced policy definition, configuration and management for the project, division, domain and enterprise levels within the organization
- Auditing and Conformance – WebLayers Center uses a set of *checkpoints*, which are enforcement and analysis points that plug into design, development, deployment and operation processes to ensure compliance of any XML, Web Services or SOA artifacts with enterprise policies. WebLayers checkpoints provide compliance and auditing into any third party development and operations applications such as workflow approval systems, code versioning systems, IDEs, Service runtime management systems, registries and repositories.
- Active Enforcement – WebLayers Center also provides a management interface for IT stakeholders (architects, project managers and IT executives), giving them the ability to visualize and direct their enterprise SOA development and conformance efforts.

WebLayers Center enables developers, architects, and managers to align their work with enterprise policies in a transparent and cost-effective manner. It's highly unlikely that an SOA initiative will be successful without the proper governance, and WebLayers offers essential tools for ensuring the necessary governance best practices in the organization.

The ZapThink Take

SOA represents a new approach to organizing and accessing IT resources that promises dramatic improvements in agility – but only when companies implement and run SOA properly. Paying lip service to some of the elements of SOA (for example, building Services) without following the more challenging best practices of governance will result in inefficient, siloed IT little changed from IT organizations today. Following proper governance and conformance practices is essential to moving away from this siloed mentality to a true Service-Oriented approach to IT.

There are several vendors that offer SOA governance capabilities, but WebLayers distinguishes itself from the pack in several important ways. First, WebLayers' focus is on the SOA design to deployment cycle, providing governance and conformance for architects, developers and system engineers to maximize the benefits and cost savings from the SOA implementation. Second, WebLayers built WebLayers Center from the ground up as a

governance application, while other SOA governance vendors have repurposed registries or asset management repositories to serve as governance tools. And third, WebLayers remained in stealth for over two years honing their product, so that when they finally launched WebLayers Center, it came out of the gate as a reasonably mature, enterprise-level product.

WebLayers Products

WebLayers Center

Overview:

WebLayers Center offers the following capabilities:

- Policy automation, customization, and integration with external data sources
- Organization of policies by domains and libraries
- Configuration of checkpoints such as proxies, detectors, and UDDI gatekeepers for conformance verification of service publications and payload content
- UDDI registry governance capabilities
- End-user compliance analysis interface
- Compliance exception request and management capabilities
- Enterprise compliance reports for policies, projects, services, and UDDI publications
- Impact analysis of compliance, exception, events and policies on the current SOA implementation
- Project sharing and collaboration among developers, architects and managers
- An industry best practices policy library
- Integration with the development lifecycle and other SOA infrastructure components

Value Proposition:

WebLayers Center enables companies to:

- Achieve control of XML, Web Services and SOA throughout the enterprise
- Establish SOA in a distributed development and deployment environment
- Reduce the risk of security breaches
- Ensure regulatory compliance
- Create and manage enterprise policies
- Accelerate the design and deployment of Web Services
- Assess project impact on security, interoperability, performance, and portability
- Ensure that new and ongoing Web Service deployments conform to enterprise policies

Profile: WebLayers	March 2005
Funding:	Cedar Fund, Veritas Venture Partners
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Related Research

- *SOA Governance* White Paper (WP-0134)
- *Infravio* ZapNote (ZTZN-1157)
- *Reactivity* ZapNote (ZTZN-0134)



About ZapThink, LLC

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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 XML, Web Services, and SOA 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.

ZapThink was founded in October 2000 and is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. 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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