23. Januar 2007

Developing with Teams: Jazz and Eclipse

On my second day at OOP 2007 in Munich I had the great experience to join a talk with Eric Gamma from IBM. He is one of the big celebrities in the Eclipse community and he showed us the next generation development environment for teams.

At the beginning Erich Gamma noted, that it´s all about teamplay like in a good jazz band. Every player knows how and when to tune in. Until now, we have seen some great Java IDEs like Eclipse, Netbeans or IntelliJ Idea, but when it comes down to collaboration and productivity, every team has to set up its own toolchain.

The project called 'Jazz' is a collaborative team server with an Eclipse-based client, tied together loosely through soap interfaces. Everything is connected together and gives opportunities which we haven´t seen until now. Please don´t get me wrong: Everyone is talking about continuous builds, agile software development and instant messaging. The problem is that there are no coherent tools that support the whole planning and development process for a team. Usually there is a CVS, a separate IDE, a bug tracking system, an instant messaging system and so on. But they all don´t work together and all have different databases. You will always lose some information, slow down your development and lose money.

The Jazz project puts all these pieces together and fits them in a nicely designed user interface that supports the expandable process.

Erich Gamma showed us his vision how a development team should be supported by a software to get things done in a shorter amount of time and with better quality.

I think that a large part of the audience didn´t understand, that this kind of development tools will be standard in the years 2009+ and will revolutionize software development with teams. Projects like SourceForge or Mantis seem to be outdated right now. Please give us some funky Jazz...

Unfortunately there was no concrete release date for Jazz and I didn´t figure out the licensing model. Time will show. In the meanwhile I want you to visit the homepage of JetBrains. They have a similar product in their portfolio. Perhaps you get an impression from the screencast.

Update by Ulf Kister:

One definitely noteworthy aspect is that – if released under some kind of open source license – this toolkit will open the eclipse scene towards a completely new market segment.

Think of a customer relationship management which enables it's users to collaborate on whatever kind of request in realtime. Think of a support team quickly interacting to improve user experience and response time. Think of a large scale enterprise rigorously protecting their trusted internal network against external acess, setting up an instance of jazz inside their demilitarized zone to allow for distributed development with outsourced teams. Think of ...

Whatever you think of: You could just code it.

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