

Enterprise Content Management and Service Oriented Architecture

Visualize the following scenario: All enterprise content (wherever generated by whatever entity) goes into a single repository and users can receive different services (that they were receiving from different applications earlier, or are completely new services) from an integrated system with a standard front end. Service Oriented Architecture, Enterprise Application Integration, and Data Warehousing work to make this scenario a reality.

Data warehouses, unlike transactional databases, are designed to facilitate querying and analysis. They are separated from transactional databases so that the latter are not burdened with query/analysis processing requests. These kinds of requests tend to use the processing resources, slowing down transaction processing response times.

Enterprise Application Integration seeks to integrate the different applications to eliminate duplication of both content and processing operations.

This article explores how Service Oriented Architecture works.

The Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)

This style of architecture groups functionalities into specific service groups. The services are provided to manage business processes that support an organization's business.

The enterprise-wide system is structured as a collection of standard services that different applications used by employees, suppliers, and customers need. These different applications might even be working on different platforms and coded in different programming languages. Each service is designed to work with any application that calls it, and would not know which application would call it. Its role is to provide a defined service in a standard way to whatever application calls for it.

The pool of services can be configured to create new applications if needed. This kind of architecture adds flexibility and quicker deployment to content management systems.

Available services are listed in a service registry that can be looked up by applications for calling the service they need. The services would come with any attached security requirements appropriate to the service.

In an ideal system, one service or another would cater to every kind of information management need, and there would be a standard look and feel for the interface. Additionally, information management would be customizable to the requirements of the organization's business processes.

Internet Protocols and SOA

Internet Protocols work independent of platforms and programming languages and work on the service request and delivery model. For example, a user client might request a certain document and the server complies with the request by retrieving the document and sending it to the client.

This makes the web-services approach a good Service Oriented Architectural approach. You can make your existing applications web enabled to start building a SOA system.

All services are described in XML documents that are independent of platforms, and written in Web Services Description Language (WSDL). An XML schema enables communication among the services.

A web service is not the only technology that can be used by SOA. SOA is an architecture that can be implemented using different technologies.

Conclusion

Service Oriented Architecture makes it possible to convert even legacy applications into services that any application can call. By configuring the services to cater to all kinds of information management needs, and tailoring the information management to the requirements of the particular business, you get to use enterprise knowledge to gain real control over business processes. This is what Enterprise Content Management systems seek to achieve.

About the Author

Based on user experience, Ademero's flagship product, Content Central™, is a browser-based document management software, [document imaging software](#), and [enterprise content management software](#) that provides a convenient way to capture, retrieve, and manage documents and other content.

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