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## **IBM WebSphere grows to include better Business Event Processing**

By Jack Vaughan, Editor-in-Chief

Architects will have an ever broader set of middleware types to apply as they deal with more complex and greater transaction volumes. That is one take away from a recent IBM event at which the company sought to assert leadership in a field it is calling "Business Event Processing," or "BEP."

At the BEP Summit in Boston, IBM software managers drew a roadmap for future Business Event Processing initiatives. The company pointed to a number of recent acquisitions it has made, and suggested its portfolio is positioned to succeed in an arena that has gone by different names – such as Extreme- or Complex-Event Processing or the Low-Latency or Real-Time Enterprise - in recent years.

Several of IBM's point-tool company purchases have turned into enhancements to its WebSphere product line, but the InfoSphere DB2 line has also changed to meet the Business Event Processing mandate. IBM's Tivoli systems management group is also fashioning monitoring solutions, built in part on technology purchased along with network management software maker Micromuse, around Business Event Processing.

Event detection, capture, correlation and pattern recognition can all be a part of Business Event Processing. IBM suggests their form of Business Event Processing increases the agility of a service-oriented architecture, letting architects transfer information among different services and applications using events in a decoupled fashion.

"Business Event Processing is not a market per se," said Tony Baer, an analyst at Ovum. "It is instead an implementation pattern. Just as SOA is, in fact, an implementation pattern"

In coming months, IBM will promote a low-latency messaging system known as WebSphere Front Office for Financial Markets, an early access program for its high-speed InfoSphere Streams DB, and a CICS Transaction Server support pack that hooks in to monitor WebSphere Business Events. The company will also roll out WebSphere Business Events V6.1. 2 and WebSphere Business Events eXtreme Scale V6.2.

Business Event Processing: You know it when you see it  
Business Event Processing is about "volumes and speed," according to Steve Mills, senior vice president and group executive for the IBM Software Group. Transactions, of course are par for the course in the enterprise; with Business Event Processing, the transactions are different, he indicated. "The stress levels are high," Mills said.

While admitting that the financial sector remains the main home for extreme processing software today, Mills said he saw its use spreading further.

One user of WebSphere Business Events suggests such software can enable new classes of applications. Tom Brady, CTO at Active Care Networks, used WebSphere

Business Events tools to create a unique scheduling system that seeks to bring more efficiency to the administration of drugs to patients.

"ActiveCare Network is an integrated clinical network," said Brady. "We reach out to existing health care providers to find down time and excess capacity."

"Our goal," he said, "is really to have higher quality and confidence" in prescription drug administration. To reach that goal, ActiveCare Network has created a virtual network of over 10,000 locations, looking to find off-hours in clinic and pharmacist schedules when drugs can be more cheaply administered.

Brady admitted his first thought was that the task was conceptually similar to a simple online restaurant reservation system. But a study of the health care industry led him to change his mind.

"When we started doing this, I had that 'Oh My God' moment," he said. "There are a lot of rules. There are a lot of things that have to occur in order for a drug to be administered appropriately."

The IBM software helped in orchestrating such transactions, he said. "You have to ensure you are doing all the protocols and collecting all the pertinent information," Brady said.

#### Evolution of transaction processing

Several of IBM's many company purchases have been meant to pave the road to speedy, complex processing:

- \* WebSphere Front Office for Financial Markets is built on technology acquired along with InfoDyne in April of this year to support high-speed data feeds to provide ultra quick messaging;

- \* WebSphere Business Events software supports event processing and business applications such as algorithmic trading based in part on technology acquired via AptSoft in January of this year;

- \* InfoSphere Streams brings an in-memory database acquired via the 2007 purchase of Solid Information Technology.

While this evolution of transaction processing is familiar to IBM, it is far from alone in the market.

Among others, competitor Oracle has moved increasingly to broaden its portfolio for extreme and complex transaction processing applications. Just this week Oracle said it is integrating the Tuxedo transaction monitor (acquired along with BEA) with other in-memory data grid offerings to create what it is marketing as an Application Grid.

Tibco, long a force in complex processing in financial services, is expected to outline its future Business Processing initiatives later this month.

[Includes reporting by Rich Seeley.]