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Webalo Makes e.Spreadsheets Wobble But Not Fall Down

News

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Actuate Corp is working with web services start-up Webalo Inc to make spreadsheets more mobile in business intelligence settings.

The two companies have integrated their respective e.Spreadsheet and user proxy technologies to deliver analysis-ready spreadsheets to mobile devices.

Webalo's patented user proxy web service allows companies to deploy their applications as web services. The technology reconciles application delivery, user interface and user interaction for a variety of user devices like laptops, handhelds and mobile phone.

Spreadsheets have not been designed for mobile access because of sticky data issues that do not allow for easy customization and presentation for the masses of BI users.

The release of Actuate's SmartSheet Security Option earlier this month (as part of its e.Spreadsheet 9 release) addressed the mass customization issue to produce what the company calls "data-driven excel workbooks". The technology works by executing a single query set against enterprise data sources to create a master catalogue from which multiple custom spreadsheets can be generated.

To broaden the presentation options, it has now tapped into Santa Monica, California-based Webalo's SOA-based technology to iron out spreadsheet data inconsistencies, allowing them to be securely sent to mobile devices like RIM Balckberry, Microsoft Windows Mobile, Palm Treo and other Java-enabled smart phones as a Mobile Dashboard.

The Dashboard is a delivered as a highly secure service that is hosted by IBM and includes security features like password protected data, encryption and authenticated data transmission. It also comes with its own secure (HTTPS) administrative console for the spreadsheet report configuration.

Users of Actuate 9 e.Spreadsheet stand to benefit most from this integration. Both companies have developed an online wizard that lets users access reports from Actuate's e.Spreadsheet server simply by asking a few questions. Data retrieved is automatically updated as it is transmitted to a Webalo Mobile Dashboard on user devices.

Actuate said that increased customer demand for BI mobility drove the integration. "Personalized, managed spreadsheets delivered to mobile devices is the next step in ensuring users have accurate, actionable information at their fingertips," said Nobby Akiha, senior vice president of marketing at South San Francisco-based Actuate.

Actuate is not alone in trying to make its BI technology more accessible to mobile users. Last month Cognos Inc unwrapped its Go! Mobile rich client that integrates Cognos 8 BI data into mobile and handheld devices. In the same month Information Builders also announced rendering and charting enhancements to its portable Active Reports software.

Actuate is offering e.Spreadsheet a free "try before you buy" trial of Webalo's technology.

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