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Software Architects, System Integrators, and End Users to Benefit From Breakthrough User Proxy Extension to the Service-Oriented Architecture Model

SANTA MONICA, Calif. --(Business Wire)-- March 28, 2006 -- "User-oriented Architecture" Enables Dynamic Application Delivery and End-user Device Independence Through Novel Web Service

System integrators, software architects, and others responsible for designing and delivering state-of-the art business applications to enterprises now can achieve flexible application delivery and near-total end-user device independence using a new Web service called the "User Proxy," unveiled today by Santa Monica-based Webalo, Inc.

The User Proxy overcomes a major shortcoming in service-oriented architecture, or "SOA," which is to deliver a consistent user experience across dozens of cooperating -- to potentially thousands of available -- Web services, and to deliver the full business power of the application to the user, independent of an exploding number of possible end-user devices.

"The software industry, and the enterprises it serves, are in the midst of a massive transformation," said Ronald Schmelzer, Senior Analyst, ZapThink, LLC. "In recent years, IT has become so complex, yet so vital to the running of the enterprise, that human activities have been re-organized around systems, rather than the reverse, and business processes have become carved in code -- if not in stone." The result, said Schmelzer, is that the very systems that were designed to facilitate business have become the largest inhibitor to change and agility. "In today's environment of demand-driven business, markets of one, and the 'customer as CEO,' this is deadly."

Leveraging the emerging Service-Oriented Architecture software paradigm, applications that require human interaction and are task-oriented increasingly are being delivered over the Internet as "Web services" -- distributed applications available when and where needed in order to cooperate in supporting complex business processes. "Because of the significant levels of functionality and flexibility that this architectural approach to integration can deliver, SOA is rapidly emerging as the preferred architecture for modern software applications," says Schmelzer.

But there is a weakness in the SOA model in regards to the end user: "Notwithstanding the fact that the user may choose -- or be required -- to interact with business applications delivered through a wide variety of systems and mobile devices," Schmelzer said, "companies need to avoid the

chaos that could result from thousands of developers independently implementing their own view of the user and user interface. There's a missing link between users and (Web) Services, and organizations are just beginning to recognize it."

The User Proxy

Webalo -- whose founders predicted six years ago the emergence of a service-oriented software architecture paradigm, with its attendant benefits and concomitant problems -- has quietly and steadily been developing that missing link in anticipation, and has taken the wraps off of it today.

Called the "User Proxy," Webalo has invented a new type of Web service that acts as a stand-in for the user in "cyberspace," serves as the sole mediator between all Web services and an end user, and provides a consistent, full-featured proxy for all possible end-user interface devices. The concept of a "user as a Web service" is so significant, the company believes, that it has a broad U.S. patent pending.

At the heart of the User Proxy are three key capabilities.

First, the User Proxy allows the flesh-and-blood end user to have a continuous, "always on" presence in cyberspace. For many tasks or transactions, the User Proxy can accept information on behalf of an offline user and then, at a future time, interact with that user to enable some action to be taken. This "decoupling" can tremendously improve the flexibility and utility of many applications.

Second, the User Proxy serves as a single, common interface for all possible end-user devices. That is, rather than a software developer or system integrator attempting to anticipate available, desired, or required end-user devices, such as PDA, smart phones, notebook computers, workstations, or yet-to-be-invented devices (and writing unique and expensive, maintenance-hungry code for each one), the User Proxy allows the application to write to a "super device" and then, dynamically, in real time, reconciles both the formatting of the application's data, and the device interface protocols, to match the device that the end user is using at that moment. This means that system planners no longer need to accurately guess which end-user devices are absolutely necessary to support, programmers do not have to write a single line of device-specific code, and end users can "have it their way" in terms of device selection.

Third, the User Proxy provides a powerful, "dashboard-type" approach to the specification of the user interface itself, and how it should react to changing circumstances. Based upon several years of tests in both laboratory and field conditions with significant customer projects, the User Proxy has been shown to allow system integrators and software developers to implement significant service-oriented business applications, with adaptable, device-independent interfaces and flexible application delivery, in as little as one tenth the amount of time such projects take today. That is, expedited development that yields implementation schedules measured in hours versus days, or days

versus months.

According to Seth Bruder, Webalo's chief technology officer and co-founder, the existence of a User Proxy fundamentally transforms the service-oriented architecture into a true "user-oriented architecture" that reconciles SOA with the other paradigm shift occurring in software -- what some are calling "Web 2.0."

"IT analysts and programmers are focused on the architectural issues that will give them rapid deployment, dynamism, and flexibility, such as comprehensive suites of foundation services, well-understood interface standards, and ultimately composite applications," said Bruder. "But on the user side, an 'experiential' transformation is taking place that in essence makes users an increasing burden on SOA. Servicing an impatient, demanding user with precisely what he wants, when he wants it -- in the context of hundreds of mobile devices, wireless networks, user-driven development and content, and rich client technologies like Flash or AJAX -- simply exceeds the brief of people focused on achieving interoperability between mere programs. The User Proxy reconciles these profoundly different world views, and provides entire orders of magnitude more flexibility for both end users, and those in IT researching, developing, and deploying service-oriented applications."

Webalo's User Proxy Service

Customers of the User Proxy are systems integrators, IT departments, hosted service providers, and mobile operators. The User Proxy is delivered as a service, under a service agreement. This provides a rapid start, pay-as-you-go model, and removes maintenance and update worries from the customer. The service comes with a powerful suite of controls, including wizards for set-up, an extensible framework that permits an expanding repertoire of easy-to-use and vertically focused tools, and full, multi-tenant, multi-domain administration over the Web.

About Webalo

Webalo enables developers and system integrators to "put the user in charge" by dramatically simplifying and shortening the process of delivering high-functionality applications targeted specifically to individual user needs -- wherever the user happens to be, and on whatever device the user chooses. This is accomplished with an important, new capability called the User Proxy that provides the missing link between today's Web services or applications and the entire spectrum of end-user devices -- from desktops and laptops, to PDAs and cell phones.

The User Proxy, and the "User-oriented Architecture" it provides, is ideal for the rapid and high-functionality deployment of business intelligence information to mobile devices. For such high-value information, Webalo has created the Mobile Dashboard service (<http://w4bi.com>) -- an on-demand service based upon the User Proxy technology that enables companies to immediately re-target business intelligence to users' mobile devices. Later in

2006, this Webalo service will be expanded to other applications areas, enabling companies to transform a broad range of their existing applications for deployment to mobile users.

Webalo's User Proxy technology overcomes a major shortcoming in the emerging distributed software applications model -- commonly called Service-oriented Architecture (SOA) -- that is expected to dominate computing in the 21st Century, by providing a unique User Oriented Architecture that gives end users, and their preferred interface devices, a true, continuous presence in cyberspace -- transparently, and on equal terms with the applications and services running there. This simple concept has profound implications for all future system architectures -- in every software domain, institutional or personal.

Software vendors and system integrators are working with the Webalo UPS to enhance their coming generation of service oriented business applications. Webalo is privately held, and is located in Santa Monica, California. The company was founded in 2000. For further information, visit www.webalo.com.

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