

Technology Leaders Release New Specification to Simplify IT Management

Common Goal to Provide Standard for Describing System Information in XML Formats

Redmond, WA – July 31, 2006 – BEA, BMC Software, Cisco, Dell, EMC, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft and Sun today announced they have published a draft of a new specification that defines a consistent way to express how computer networks, applications, servers and other IT resources are described -- or modeled – in extensible markup language (XML) so businesses can more easily manage the services which are built on these resources.

As a result of joint collaboration, the open, industry-wide specification defines a common language for expressing information about IT resources and services. Called the Service Modeling Language (SML), the specification enables a hierarchy of IT resource models to be created from reusable building blocks, rather than requiring custom descriptions of every service - reducing costs and system complexity for customers. The group plans to submit the draft specification to an industry standards organization later this year.

SML addresses a growing industry need as a result of the numerous ways to represent the same IT resource. Besides being inefficient, the use of different formats leads to two problems. First, because the tools and management applications use different formats, they don't speak the same language. Therefore, the information must be translated, which can lead to technical details being lost or misinterpreted. Second, the use of different formats may require IT architects to use written descriptions or sketches to convey information about resources. Such descriptions must then be translated into a form that tools and management applications can consume, which is a manual, error-prone process.

SML has two unique properties that make it well-suited for modeling IT resources and services: support for rich constraints and alignment with XML message exchange architectures. SML allows developers to build modeling information for applications, devices and services that can be used during all stages of the application or service lifecycle including configuration, problem, change, and release management. They are also useful for tactical processes such as service level, availability and capacity management. The SML specification will provide simplicity, integration and compatibility throughout this lifecycle for all components of an IT environment.

This common modeling language is an important step in simplifying IT management in multi-vendor environments, providing a way for information to be shared across diverse tools and applications. Constructing a complete picture of the IT environment out of a series of reusable building blocks, rather than requiring a fully custom description of every service, is key. It reduces both the cost and complexity associated with delivering the levels of service and responsiveness businesses need from IT today while increasing a business' IT agility: its ability to adapt its IT in time to meet changing needs.

In addition to the publication of the SML specifications, the companies also announced their intent to explore development of a library of core models to describe generic resources such as network elements, operating systems, storage devices, desktops, server systems, web servers, a directory service and more. With an agreed standard library of definition for this core set of resources and services, every vendor would be able to establish the generic nature of, and relationship between, every component comprising a specific IT service without prior knowledge of the objects that make up that service.

Quote Sheet:

Quote from BEA:

"BEA is excited to be a contributor to this joint effort to define a common modeling language for IT services that could provide the necessary interoperability to simplify the management of IT services that are enabled by a host of underlying and complex enterprise IT assets. Employing a standards-based approach is consistent with our view that common specifications and collaborative efforts such as these can speed the delivery of important innovation and new technology to the market place."

- Zulah Eckert, Sr. Principal Technologist, Office of the CTO, BEA Systems, Inc.

Quote from BMC Software:

"As IT environments continue to grow in complexity, this SML collaboration provides significant benefit to customers across all of our organizations and is a unified effort to advance the industry as a whole. BMC continues to lead customers closer to their Business Service Management (BSM) goals by developing innovative IT management solutions and participating in efforts, such as this, that increase efficiency and simplify management across all IT environments."

- Tom Bishop, Chief Technology Officer, BMC Software

Quote from Cisco:

"The network as a platform connects and enables all components of the IT infrastructure. A common language helps heterogeneous management standards converge, allowing customers to manage IT assets interconnected across a distributed network. Cisco views SML as a significant step forward for model-based management and as an enabler of next generation network services in a Web Services environment."

- Nino Vidovic, CTO of Cisco's Network Management Technology Group

Quote from Dell:

"As the industry-standards leader, Dell is pleased to actively participate in the definition of SML. Customers prefer single-click systems management across their enterprise. SML helps enable the merger of CIM-based hardware instrumentation with OS and application-based instrumentation. With these implementations, customers will be able to manage a broad variety of systems and software from a single console."

- Winston Bumpus, Director, Systems Management Architecture and Standards, Dell, Inc.

Quote from EMC:

"EMC is participating in the SML working group to help accelerate and elevate this work to the level of acceptance and adoption by a leading technical standards body. EMC believes that model-based management solutions represent the new paradigm to successfully manage the highly complex, multi-domain IT infrastructures emerging in today's enterprises. As many EMC products are developed in accordance with industry standards such as the Common Information Model (CIM) and Storage Management Initiative-Specification (SMI-S), the multi-vendor SML effort is reflective of EMC's own strategy to ease heterogeneous product interoperability and management in customer environments."

- Jeff Nick, Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, EMC Corporation

Quote from HP:

"The development of SML is an important milestone in HP's effort to help customers transition to next-generation, service-based data centers. HP plans to use SML to provide direct customer benefits through enhancements to its comprehensive management portfolio, including unified infrastructure management and automation as well as application, service-level and business process management."

- Greg Astfalk, chief scientist, Office of Strategy and Technology, HP

Quote from IBM:

"This is an important step in IBM's effort to collaborate with other industry leaders to bring open frameworks into IT Management solutions on behalf of our customers. As a leader in open standards-based software, we intend to embrace SML in IBM server, Tivoli and Rational portfolios to extend modeling and self-managing capabilities within multi-vendor IT environments."

- Ric Telford, vice president of Autonomic Computing, IBM.

Quote from Intel:

"We have been actively working with other industry leaders to further expand management services in a service-oriented industry. The SML specification is an important step to drive significant, cross-platform business modeling improvements for IT professionals and their business platforms."

- Robert B. Crooke, Intel vice president and general manager of the Business Client Group

Quote from Microsoft:

"We are delighted to offer the work initiated by Microsoft on the System Definition Model (SDM) to create this joint specification with our partners. SDM has been a key element of our Dynamic Systems Initiative (DSI) and we'll continue our DSI work using SML. The SDM will be renamed to SML, and the supporting infrastructure will be referred to as the SML platform, in support of our full implementation of this specification in Windows, System Center, Visual Studio and eventually all Microsoft product offerings. This is a great day for our customers operating in heterogeneous environments, with this effort facilitating deep integration across heterogeneous environments and tools - based on a common modeling language."

- Kirill Tatarinov, Corporate Vice President, Windows and Enterprise Management Division at Microsoft

Quote from Sun:

"As SML will provide an industry-agreed foundation for model-based management, it holds the promise for rich heterogeneous interoperability and composability up and down the stack, which translates to customer choice. Leveraging the adoption of industry-standard WS-Management protocols will further accelerate availability of this technology to the market. Sun views open industry standards as fundamental enablers of heterogeneous IT systems and we're pleased to join forces to bring SML to an industry standards body, following which Sun will appropriately use SML technology within its product portfolio."

- Bill Smith, director of business alliances at Sun Microsystems