Chapter 7 - Web Service Composition and E-Business Collaboration

Motivation

- Complex web services
  - Need to interact with business partners through web services
  - May combine/utilize existing web services
- Web services composition
  - Ability to create new web services out of existing (web service) components
  - Requirements similar to BPM, Workflow Management
    - separate function from composition logic, ...
- Composition can be iterated
  - Composition result is again a web service
  - Can be used as a building block for further composition steps
  - Middleware for web service composition
Web Services Composition Middleware

- Main elements
  - composition model and language
    - composed WS is expressed by a composition schema (script)
  - development environment
    - graphical end user tools
  - run-time environment
    - composition “engine”
- Composition vs. coordination middleware
  - composition: focus is on implementation of operations in a web service
    - internal, private
    - for automation of the execution of a composite web service
  - coordination: focus is on conversation protocols
    - public, standardized protocols
    - external coordination for verifying compliance

Web Services vs. WFMS

- Limitations of conventional composition middleware (e.g., WFMS)
  - Significant effort to integrate existing applications
    - application-specific adapters, wrappers
    - no standard model for component description, interoperability
  - Limited success of composition model standardization
    - WfMC standard is not widely implemented
- Opportunities for Web Services
  - Web Services seem to be adequate components
    - well-defined interfaces, described using WSDL
    - standardized invocation (SOAP)
  - Significant efforts in standardizing WS composition languages
  - Reuse of existing WS “infrastructure” (directory, service selection, …)
    - WS composition tools are less expensive to develop
Business Processes and Web Services

- Business Process Execution Language for Web Services (BPEL4WS)
  - XML-based language for specifying business process behavior based on web services
  - Describe business processes that both provide and consume web services
    - Steps (activities)
      - Implemented as an interaction with a web service
      - Information flow into/out of the process
    - Externalized as web service

- Complemented by
  - WS Coordination specification
    - Allows to web services involved in a process to share information that “links” them together
      - Shared coordination context
  - WS AtomicTransaction, WS BusinessActivity specifications
    - Allows to monitor the success/failure of each coordinated activity
      - Reliably cancel the business process, involves compensating activities

- Standardization through OASIS

BPEL4WS

- BPEL can support specification of both, composition schemas and coordination protocols
  - can be used in both composition and coordination middleware

- Two types of processes
  - executable process (-> composition)
    - defines implementation logic for a composite web service
    - portable between BPEL-conformant environments
  - abstract process (-> coordination)
    - service-centric perspective on coordination protocols
    - describe message exchange between partners

- Business process defines
  - potential execution order of operations (web services)
  - data shared between the web services
  - correlation information
  - partners involved in business process and interfaces they need to implement
  - joint exception handling for collection of web services
BPEL Component Model

- Components are web services described using WSDL
  - abstract WSDL interfaces are referenced in BPEL scripts
  - no reference to bindings, endpoints, or services
- Basic activities in BPEL represent components, correspond to WSDL operations
  - **Invoke**
    - Issue an asynchronous request, or
    - Synchronously invoke a request/reply operation of a web service provided by a partner
  - **Receive**
    - Wait for a message to be received from a partner
    - Specifies partner from which message is to be received, as well as
      - The port and operation provided by the process
      - Used by the partner to pass the message
  - **Reply**
    - Synchronous response to a request corresponding to a receive activity
    - Combination of Receive/Reply corresponds to request-response operation in WSDL

Example

Customer

- make reservation

Travel Agent

- receive itinerary
  - request ticket
  - receive tickets
  - deliver tickets

Airline

- receive request
  - send tickets
Service Selection: Partner Links

- Partner link (BPEL process definition)
  - identifies the web services mutually used by the partner or process
  - e.g., agent process interacts with customer, airline
  - references a partner link type
  - defines role taken by the process itself (myRole) and role that has to be accepted by the partner (partnerRole)
- Partner link names are used in all service interactions to identify partners
- see activities for invoking/providing services

```
<process name="ticketOrder">
  <partnerLinks>
    <partnerLink name="customer" partnerLinkType="agentLink" myRole="agentService"/>
    <partnerLink name="airline" partnerLinkType="buyerLink" myRole="ticketRequester" partnerRole="ticketService"/>
  </partnerLinks>
</process>
```

- Partner link type (WSDL extension)
  - defines roles played by partners in a conversational relationship
  - web service interfaces that need to be implemented to assume a role
  - Assignment of endpoints for partners
    - at deployment time
    - dynamically at run time

**Partner link type definition**

```
<partnerLinkType name="buyerLink">
  <role name="ticketRequester">
    <portType name="itineraryPT"/>
  </role>
  <role name="ticketService">
    <portType name="ticketOrderPT"/>
  </role>
</partnerLinkType>
```
Orchestration Model - Structured Activities

- **Sequence**
  - Enclosed activities are carried out in listed order
- **If-else (i.e., switch)**
  - Selects one of several activities based on selection criteria
- **Repetitive Activities**
  - While, RepeatUntil,
    - repeatedly carry out enclosed activities while/until specified condition is true
  - ForEach
    - serial: enclosed activity (scope) is carried out repeatedly, based on counter, optional completion condition
    - parallel: (effective copies of) enclosed activity (scope) executed n+1 times in parallel, based on start/end counter values
- **Pick**
  - Specifies a set of activities with associated events (e.g., receipt of message)
    - messages can be received from the same or different partners
    - activity is completed when one of the events occurs

Structured Activities (cont.)

- **Flow activity**: defines sets of activities plus (optional) control flow
  - all activities can (potentially) execute in parallel
    - flow activity completes when all directly nested concurrent activities complete
    - implicit fork/join behavior
  - activities can be "wired together" via control links
    - link has one source activity, and one target activity
    - transition conditions
      - evaluated after source activity completes
      - determines the link status to be either true or false
      - links status also set to false, if source activity is determined not to be executed (e.g., if-else)
    - join conditions
      - can refer to status of incoming links of a target activity (e.g., AND, OR)
      - are evaluated only after the status of all incoming links is known
      - false join condition results in a join failure
    - dead path elimination
      - failure may be suppressed, status "false" is propagated to outgoing links

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Process life-cycle

- **Start activities**
  - receive, pick - createInstance attribute
    - creates a new process instance, if it doesn't exist already
  - Example:
    ```xml
    <receive partner="customer",
    portType="itineraryPT",
    operation="sendItinerary",
    variable="itinerary"
    createInstance="yes"/>
    ```
  - each process must have at least one start activity as an initial activity

- **Process termination**
  - process-level activity completes successfully
  - fault "arrives" at the process level (handled or not)
  - terminate activity is invoked

Data Types and Data Transfer

- **Variables** can be used to define data containers
  - WSDL messages received from or sent to partners
  - Messages that are persisted by the process
  - XML data defining the process state
  - Constitute the "business context" of the process
  - Access to variables can be serialized to some extent

```
11  <variables>
12    <variable name="itinerary" messageType="itineraryMessage"/>
13    <variable name="tickets" messageType="ticketsMessage"/>
14  </variables>
```

- **Variable assignment**
  - Receiving a message (or a reply of an invoke activity) implicitly assigns value
  - Alternative: assign activity (another simple activity)
    - Copies fields from containers into other containers
Correlation

- Message needs to be delivered not only to the correct port, but to the correct instance of the business process providing the port
  - conversation routing
- Correlation Set
  - one or more properties used for correlating messages
  - example
    ```xml
    <correlationSets>
    <correlationSet name="Booking" properties="orderNumber"/>
    ...
    </correlationSets>
    ```
  - correlation properties are like "late-bound constants"
    - binding happens through specially marked message send/receive activities
    - value must not change after the binding happens
- Often, more than one correlation set is used for an entire process
  - example: orderNumber -> invoiceNumber
  - correlated message exchanges may nest, overlap
  - same message may carry multiple correlation sets

Properties

- Property
  - Globally defined types
  - Primarily used to correlate a message with a specific process instance
    - E.g., order number
    - Usually included in the message
    - Often the same property is used in different messages
  - Can be defined in BPEL as a separate entity:
    ```xml
    <property name="orderNumber" type="xsd:int"/>
    ```
- Property alias
  - Allows to point to a dedicated field of the message that represents the property
    - Usually different for each message type
    - Can be used in expression and assignments to easily use properties
    ```xml
    <propertyAlias propertyName="orderNumber" messageType="ticketsMessage" part="orderInfo" query="/orderID"/>
    ```
Scope

- Defines the behavior context of an activity (primary activity)
  - simple or structured (group of activities)
- Can provide the following for a (regular) activity
  - (Local) data variables
  - Correlation Sets
  - Event handler(s)
  - Fault handler(s)
  - Termination handler
  - Compensation handler
    - Scope acts as a compensation sphere
- Scopes can be arbitrarily nested

Fault Handlers and Termination Handler

- Fault handlers catch and deal with faults occurring in active scope
  - Can catch internal faults (throw activity), WS fault messages
  - All active work in the scope is stopped!
    - Results in invocation of termination handlers for active enclosed scopes
    - After fault handler completes successfully, processing continues outside the scope
    - Processing of the scope is still considered to have ended abnormally
- Termination handler allows to define scope-specific termination behavior
  - Invoked if an active scope needs to be terminated
    - Example: perform cleanup work, notify business partner, cancel activity
  - For nested scope: TH for inner scope is invoked before the TH of the outer
Compensation Handlers

- Compensation handlers reverse the work of a successfully completed scope
  - Compensation handler is "installed" after successful completion of the scope
  - Can be defined for each scope
  - Compensation activity can be any activity
  - Compensation handlers live in a snapshot world
    - When invoked, they see a snapshot of the variables at scope completion time
    - Cannot update "live" data variables
    - Can only affect external entities
    - Input/output parameters for compensation handler are future direction

- Compensate activity
  - Invokes compensation handler for named scope
  - Can be invoked only from the fault handler or compensation handler of the immediately enclosing scope

Fault-Termination-Compensation - Example

sequence

receive itinerary

scope

reserve hotel
reserve flight
reserve vehicle

comp. handler

cancel vehicle

terminate

can. hotel

terminate

gross hotel

notify hotel

send notif.

terminate

debit credit card

notify customer
Default Compensation and Fault Handlers

- Default compensation handler
  - Invokes compensation handlers of immediately enclosed scopes in the reverse order of the completion of the scopes
  - Is used if a (enclosing) scope does not explicitly define a compensation handler
  - Can also be invoked explicitly
    - Useful if comp. action = “compensate enclosed scope in reverse order” + “additional activities”
- Default fault handler
  - Invokes compensation handlers of immediately enclosed scopes in the reverse order of the completion of the scopes
  - Rethrows the exception

BPEL – Abstract Processes

- Abstract Process = Role-specific view of a protocol
  - only public information
  - no private, implementation-specific aspects
    - branching conditions, activity realization, ...
  - not executable
  - can be used by a conversation controller to ensure business protocol compliance
- Properties of BPEL abstract processes
  - handle only protocol-relevant data
  - message properties
  - variables
    - do not need to be fully initialized
    - variables for inbound or outbound messages may be omitted from invoke, receive, reply, if the intent is to just constrain the sequence of activities
  - opaque assignments
    - can correspond to creating a unique value for correlation properties
    - hide private behavior for providing the values
Implementing Business Protocols

- **Suggested path**
  - protocol specification as a starting point
  - derive role-specific views of the protocol
    - includes all the message exchanges that involve a certain role
  - define abstract process for role-specific view
    - model interactions using receive, invoke, reply
    - represent additional public information, such as branching situations, parallelism
  - turn abstract process into an **executable process** to implement it

![Purchase Order Request](image1)
- **Purchase Order Request**
- **Receipt Acknowledgement**
- **Purchase Order Acceptance**
- **Receipt Acknowledgement**

![RosettaNet](image2)
- **RosettaNet**
- **Goal**: Develop standard e-commerce interfaces to align the processes between IT supply chain partners
  - consortium founded in 1998
  - "vertical" coordination protocols
  - more than 3000 documented production implementations by 2004

- **Main standardization areas**
  - (Public) Business processes
    - coordination protocols for trading partners
    - Partner Interface Processes (PIPs)
      - business documents, vocabulary, choreography of message exchanges
  - Data format
    - establishment of a common vocabulary
      - business directory
      - technical dictionary
  - Message services
    - RosettaNet Implementation Framework
      - reliable, secure execution of the protocol specifications
      - transfer, routing, packaging of encrypted and authenticated messages between business partners
RosettaNet Trading Partner Implementation

[Source: RosettaNet Implementation Framework Core Specification]

PIP Definitions

- Standardized PIP definitions are arranged into clusters, further broken down into segments
- Clusters:
  1. RosettaNet Support
     - administrative functionality
  2. Partner Product and Service Review
     - collect, maintain, distribute product or service information
     - account setup, product info subscription, ...
  3. Product Information
     - distribute, update product information
     - query technical product info, ...
  4. Order Management
     - request quote, request purchase order, query order status, ...
  5. Inventory Management
     - distribute inventory report, ...
  6. Marketing Information Management
     - exchange of marketing information
  7. Service and Support
     - request warranty claim, ...
  8. Manufacturing
     - "virtual manufacturing"
     - notify of manufacturing work order, ...
Partner Interface Process (PIP) Specifications

- Describes how to implement a collaborative coordination protocol
  - technical dictionary describes components that are exchanged
  - message guideline document
    - business actions, business signals (ack receipt of action message)
- Major PIP specification sections
  - Business Operational View (aka Action Layer)
    - flow of business interactions, based on
      - partner roles
      - partner role interactions
  - Functional Service View (aka Transaction Layer)
    - derived from the business operational view
    - business transactions between entities in the form of message exchanges
      - coordination protocols
      - message control information
        - time limits for acknowledgements
        - security requirements
  - Implementation Framework View (aka Service Layer)
    - based on functional service and business operational views
    - defines communication protocol and message format requirements
      - e.g., SSL, encryption, XML DTDs for messages,...

Business Operational View - Example

- Business Process Diagram for PIP3A4: Request Purchase Order

[Diagram showing business process with activity: internal activities of trading partners, document: message exchanges between trading partners]

[source: PIP3A4 V2.2 specification]
Functional Service View – Example

- Business Transaction Dialog Specification for PIP3A4: Request Purchase Order

![Diagram of Business Transaction Dialog Specification](source: PIP3A4 V2.2 specification)

RosettaNet Implementation Framework

- Defines
  - Business Message
    - packaging payload (incl. attachments), headers, ...
    - uses MIME, S/MIME
  - Protocol Stack
    - transport-independent
    - reliable messaging
    - support for HTTP, SMTP, ...
  - Security Mechanism
    - based on encryption, digital signatures
    - supports authentication, authorization, encryption, non-repudiation
- Designed before the time of SOAP
  - May likely be replaced by SOAP-based web service infrastructure in the future

![Diagram of RosettaNet Implementation Framework](source: RosettaNet Implementation Framework Core Specification)
Implementing RosettaNet PIPs

- Involves mapping PIP to WSDL, BPEL
  - types in message definitions -> types in WSDL
    - DTDs to XML Schema
  - message definitions -> WSDL message definitions
  - PIP actions -> operations in WSDL
  - PIP partner roles -> BPEL partners
  - PIP choreography: follow the "suggested path" on previous chart

- Additional aspects
  - realize time-outs, etc. using BPEL events and fault handlers
  - additional requirements regarding security need to be resolved
    - WS-Security support, not integrated in BPEL

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ebXML

- Supported by UN/CEFACT, OASIS
- Vision
  - single global electronic marketplace
  - based on exchange of XML messages
- ebXML architecture covers:
  - definition of business processes and their associated messages and content
  - registry and discovery of business process sequences with related message exchanges
  - definition of company profiles
  - definition of trading partner agreements
  - uniform message transport layer
- ebXML advantages
  - goes beyond generic protocols and specifications
    - e.g., ebXML registry is much more detailed than UDDI
  - captures the logic behind e-commerce exchanges
    - e.g., business arrangements
  - specifies how e-commerce exchanges should be specified, documented, conducted
Collaboration with ebXML

Example

![Diagram of ebXML collaboration]

(source: ebXML Technical Architecture Specification)

Technical Architecture

![Diagram of technical architecture]

(source: ebXML Technical Architecture Specification)
How Do These Standards Relate?

Summary

- **Web service composition**
  - means to implement web service by reusing/combining existing services
  - can be supported by WS composition middleware
    - borrowing concepts from WFMS
- **BPEL**
  - de-facto and de-jure (OASIS) web service composition standard
  - allows definition of composition and coordination aspects
    - abstract vs. executable processes
  - main concepts
    - basic activities for web service operations
    - structured activities for defining service composition, control flow
    - blackboard approach for data flow based on variables
    - service selection based on partner link types, partner links, endpoints
    - elaborate model for transactions and exception handling
      - fault handler, termination handler, compensation handler
- **More BPEL extensions are on the way**
  - people WF (BPEL4People, WS-HumanTask), Java/SQL snippets (BPELj, BPEL/SQL)