# Who Ya' Gonna Call?

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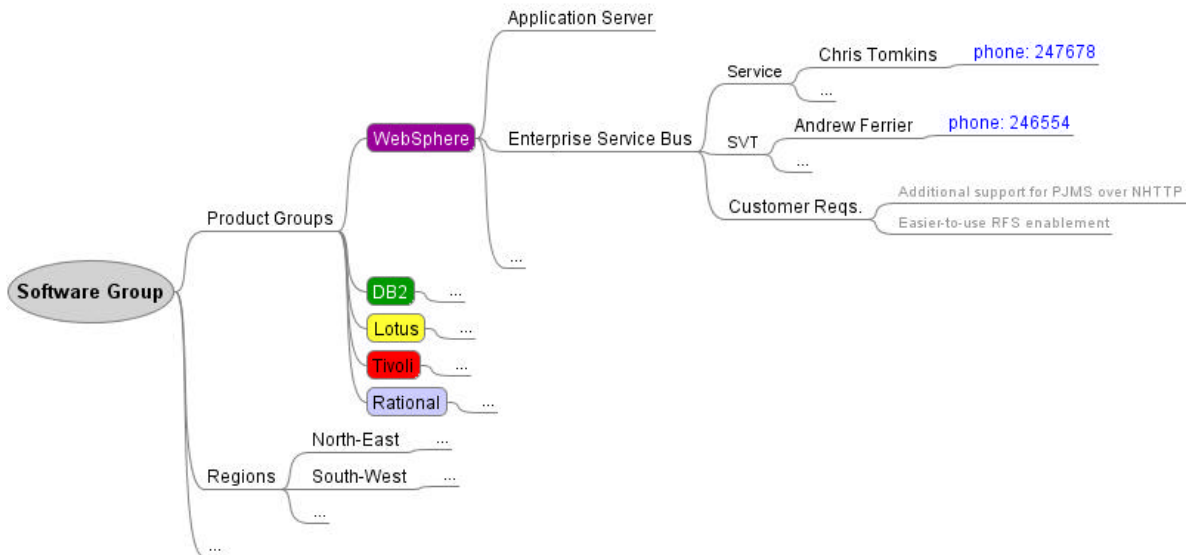WebSphere ESB

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## Abstract

One of the biggest problems in Software Group is finding the right information or person to talk to, due to the vast quantity of information available, the large number of people involved, the complexity of our clients' business problems, and the dynamic nature of all of the above. Navigating existing information sources such as teamrooms, intranet sites, and personal networks, is both time-consuming and inefficient because they are often not linked.

We propose using a wiki-based mind-map, extended with dynamic data from other information sources, as well as role-based filtering, to bring these sources together and help to mitigate this problem.

These techniques could also be useful for numerous other problem areas.

We propose creating an online mind-map to help navigate through the 'big-picture' of Software Group. An extract from it might look like this:



A mind-map such as the above can easily be created, and exposed online, using software such as Freemind.

However, existing mind-map technology is insufficient as it is single-user and won't scale: we propose three additions:

• Modifying the mind-map using wiki-style interaction (it can be edited by anyone).
• Incorporating dynamic data from information sources such as Bluepages, source-control systems, defect databases, customer problems, sales resources, customer requirements, etc., into the mind map, allowing it to stay current and therefore useful.
• Adding the notion of 'roles' to the mind-map, allowing a user to display only the information relevant to their current role (for example, salespersons might choose not to see detailed development data).

## Wiki-style Editing

The mind-map would be exposed via the intranet, and using AJAX, DHTML, and other related technologies, be editable and navigable in-place. History and user data would be retained in a similar manner to wikis.

## Dynamic Data

We would extend the mind-map editor to allow the use of dynamic data, obtained from other sources.

One possible implementation of this might be to enable the mind-map to query any web service with a WSDL interface defined by the mind-map tool. This web service would return a tree of a data representing the nodes to be placed in the mind-map. This web service could be provided by anything, but typically we would see software such as **WebSphere ESB** being used to transform back-end services into this web service front-end for use by the mind-map. An expiry date would also be part of the interface, so the mind-map would know when it should refresh the data.

This dynamic data fetching would allow the mind-map to stay current more easily. Some of the leaf nodes on page 1 are examples of this, such as the blue telephone numbers (from Bluepages) and the customer requirements (from a Lotus Notes database).

## Roles

From the example on page 1, one might assume that the section of the mind-map labelled 'Regions' would not be of interest to a software developer.

Conversely, the section labelled 'Rational' might not be of interest to a tech. sales IBMer only interested in WebSphere.

Both of these sections would be tagged (e.g. 'sales' in the first instance, 'rational' in the second). A user of the mind-map would specify a list of roles which they were operating in, and only the appropriate sections of the mind-map would be displayed. This would greatly reduce the volume of irrelevant information displayed (hidden areas could be manually displayed if necessary).

The concepts of roles could be extended to provide authentication and access control if necessary. In this case, users would be granted access by an administrator rather than declaring their own roles.

## Summary

We believe a mind-map available to Software Group, combined with our proposed enhancements, would go a long way towards increasing efficiency. These extensions are also general-purpose, however – we believe they would be useful for tracking many other types of information as well. We are looking to promote and develop this idea.

## Further Information

Please feel free to contact one of us for more information:

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- Freemind – http://freemind.sourceforge.net/
- Mind maps – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map
- WebSphere ESB – http://www.ibm.com/software/integration/wsesb