

## **7 ways customers and ISVs obtain value from the ISM Library (ex-OPAL)**

### **Management introduction**

IBM's ISM Library provides service management accelerators which extend and enhance IBM's Integrated Service Management offerings. In addition the Library and its catalog are open and include integrations created by third party Business Partners. In the future IBM is actively considering the inclusion of contributions from individuals.

This openness of approach is different to other vendors which tend to segregate between those functions and facilities provided by themselves and those coming from partners. IBM's intent with the ISM Library is to make it easier for users to explore, find and then deploy accelerators -- irrespective of the source. The key dynamic is to assist customers in obtaining value quickly. As the following analysis shows, there are many different ways in which customers (and ISVs) can reduce costs, speed up deployment, minimize risks and deliver a smarter infrastructure.

### **Growing needs**

Today's IT and its owning organizations face a growing need to connect disparate systems and assets, and to share management information. Without this integrated level of awareness and control organizations lack the insights with which to make informed decisions.

Unfortunately, at the same time, the system infrastructure that supports the business applications is becoming ever more diverse and sophisticated. Integrating the elements has become one of the toughest challenges that IT faces, at a time when business managers expect IT to be 'joined-up and working' for the sake of the business.

Integration is not easy. With the sheer range of technologies available, most IT organizations possess a diverse variety of elements that may need integrating – irrespective of whether you view this from an operations or a business delivery perspective. In addition, a diverse set of skills may be required to build the integrations and these skills may not be readily available. This is where IBM's ISM Library (previously known as OPAL) applies. It catalogs a wide variety of accelerators/integrations (over 1800 are listed already) which are

available for immediate use in addressing the ever growing need for connecting systems and infrastructure in manageable ways.

Many of these accelerators/integrations are free; others are chargeable. Across all of these is a continuous process where updates and improvements are included – all of which is available to ISM Library users. What is also striking is the range of benefits that these users are obtaining, as the following 7 brief illustrations show.

### **7 different ways to obtain benefits from the ISM Library**

In one financial services firm there is a need for 'five 9s' availability. To achieve this requires deep understanding of how all its IT elements in the organization fit and work together. For non-critical situations the ISM Library provides integration solutions but for 'five 9s' situations this organization takes existing accelerators and integrations, breaks them apart to understand the function and design and then rebuilds to the organization's own exacting standards. This provides two benefits: the first is that by basing these custom-built solutions on the experience of others, development time is significantly reduced. The second is that the deployed solution is 100% understood within the 'five 9s' context.

In a government department, where a third party is providing support, both have obtained significant assistance from the ISM Library. In this situation almost all applications and the infrastructure are unique. Yet, by introducing reporting accelerators and integrations, reporting across systems has been hugely facilitated. It is so much easier to take pre-canned reporting (from within the ISM Library), deliver this and then only amend it when users describe what it is that is not quite and what they want. This proves to be way faster than custom creating reports.

One of the most popular family of accelerators involves the Netcool Omnibus Integration Modules. These probes come pretty 'straight-out-of-the-box' with deep integration for SNMP built-in (and only a minimum of tweaking being necessary). Customers can deploy against a range of other vendors' equipment (CISCO, Juniper, Fujitsu, etc.). The savings in deployment time and richness of information are indubitable as more than one telco attests.

In 2010 the ISM Library added an RSS feed. For a large consumer products company this has proved invaluable. As new or updated accelerators and integrations are added to the ISM Library, this is

communicated to the relevant people. Rather than having to check on what is new or different, RSS delivers specific information to the appropriate people who then know earlier (and with less searching) what is available and can be used. In fact this customer opts only to see what is free on the RSS feed, which further keeps acquisition costs down.

From an ISV perspective the ISM Library provides multiple benefits. It offers a way to reach customers that would be hard to contact otherwise (indeed, several ISVs have reported that more than 65% of leads are generated from their listings in the ISM Library). But the beneficial effects go deeper, for both IBM and ISVs. There are ISVs that look at the ISM Library as a way to spot opportunities and then build products based on customer interest and feedback from the growing ISM Library community.. Conversely, using the analytics that are available to those that provide accelerators and integrations, it is possible to see how often accelerators and integrations are visited and downloaded. If there is minimal activity, then it is probably not worth maintaining or updating an accelerator or integration; if there is much activity, then investing in improvements may be worthwhile. Indeed, even customers can see what is popular and used.

### **Interface improvements**

Initially the ISM Library was like your local book library equivalent. It required that you visit and search for what you want or look to see what is available.

IBM continues to improve and extend the ISM Library's capabilities. Adding the RSS feed has been mentioned above. As important has been the addition of external search engine access. Before this only about 5-10% of visits came via hits delivered through external search engines; in 2010, with this capability added, almost 35% of visits come via externally-originated (from the ISM Library web site) searches.

In addition, new methods of interacting with the catalog were recently made available. With the Tivoli Application Interface (already enabled for the Tivoli Service Requirement Manager product) IBM's product software will be able to reach out to the ISM Library, find what is relevant, download it and then alert users about what is available so that they can then decide whether it is applicable (and this applies to both IBM and partner deliverables). Automating this extends the

reach of the ISM Library, while minimizing the time that users need to spend searching.

Indeed there is an irony in the above. Previously the ISM Library measured part of its success on the number of accelerators and integrations (over 1800 and still climbing, supplied by both IBM and ISVs) and part by the number of visitors and page views. With RSS, and when the Tivoli Application Interface is adopted by more products, both page views and visitors may reduce – because precise information is delivered with less personnel participation.

### **Management conclusion**

The ISM Library continues to progress. It delivers more accelerator and integrations plus information about the contents in ever more focused ways. More and more solutions are being added, by both IBM and by ISVs. It is open and, by not distinguishing between IBM and non-IBM sourcing, it focuses on assisting customers.

Simultaneously, as the examples above describe, it is also a source of best practices as well as swift implementations. As with public libraries it is a knowledge asset that should grow and grow.

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