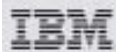


Together strong with Alloy



Software Group



Welcome to the podcast on the subject of Alloy. Marcel Ritschard, SAP Business Developer and Tony Wehrstein, IBM Technical Sales Specialist for Lotus were interviewed by Claudio Grollimund.

Claudio Grollimund: „Mr Wehrstein, Mr Ritschard, could you provide us with some information about yourselves and your functions?“

Marcel Ritschard: „My name is Marcel Ritschard, I work for SAP Switzerland in the Business Development team where I am responsible for the entire SAP NetWeaver technology platform and for information management. Alloy also falls within my field of responsibility.“

Tony Wehrstein: „My name is Tony Wehrstein and I work for the Lotus Brand as a Technical Sales Specialist, where I am responsible for the implementation of SAP, Lotus Notes and in particular also for the product Alloy.“

Claudio Grollimund: „IBM Lotus and SAP are jointly developing the Alloy software solution. What is special about this product?“

Tony Wehrstein: „From the IBM point of view, what is special about Alloy is that we have created an architecture that can be expanded, and does not place any special demands of any kind on the basic technology. This means that we use functionalities that were already available in Notes mail and databases, and already existing business modules from the Business Intelligence interface will be included in SAP as well. Both these systems can be linked together via a very simple interface.“

Marcel Ritschard: „This means that SAP must approach a new user group, namely business users. Until now, these users have only had limited access to specific information, which they needed to make decisions. They had to interrupt their work and leave their tried and tested working environment in order to obtain additional information via the SAP client. With the new system, they view the information in their current, familiar environment and also work there with it offline.“

Claudio Grollimund: „Should we view Alloy as a platform or as a business solution?“

Marcel Ritschard: „Neither nor – it is the integration of two worlds. In principle, the best from the two areas will be brought together: the SAP business processes including the client, and the front-end from IBM.“

Claudio Grollimund: „What possibilities does Alloy offer users?“

Marcel Ritschard: „Various processes were implemented for version 1.0, the first I would like to mention being the reporting system. A business user, who from time to time needs to access data in the SAP Business Warehouse, can very easily take out

a subscription, so that the data is made available to him offline in his Lotus client – at the exact time he needs it. A second improvement is the travel administration. If a user books a trip, makes a calendar entry or submits a travel request, he can do this from within his familiar environment, where these activities have to be carried out in any case. No additional manual entries in the SAP system are necessary. The third improvement is absence reporting. If an employee enters an absence in the calendar, a workflow is started, and the decision maker who needs to approve the workflow can make the decision from within his trusted environment.“

Tony Wehrstein: „The fourth module – as was already implied in the last point – consists of the workflow decisions. We have the incredible opportunity to delegate the workflow decisions, which until now were contained in the SAP BI module, to the Notes users. We can therefore model existing SAP processes in such a way that decisions will be forwarded to the mail system of the responsible person – remote and offline. The person makes decisions in the Notes system according to his/her competence in SAP and feeds these decisions back into the SAP system.“

Claudio Grollmund: „Which prerequisites apply to Alloy, and what previous knowledge is required of users?“

Tony Wehrstein: „No particular previous knowledge is required. When a user utilizes his mail system as normal and opens an appropriate module or a mail, the Alloy client reacts automatically in the page navigation. The system makes a highly intuitive navigation possible, which does not require any particular previous knowledge. The part which was so complicated for business users – the SAP education – now ceases to apply.“

Claudio Grollmund: „Alloy has only recently been introduced. Are there any first reactions from customers?“

Tony Wehrstein: „We can take for example the Beta Partner program and quote the users. We worked together with two large companies, Coca-Cola and Colgate. After just a few weeks we received very positive reactions. Coca-Cola informed us at CEO level that, from the company's point of view, there are precisely two strategic partners in this context, SAP and IBM, who offer Coca-Cola precisely the right support for their business processes. For Colgate the installation of the system was fantastic, as they could customize an existing order process which affected every employee in the company and through which the goods delivery to the employee had to be confirmed via a workflow. Colgate was able to streamline this workflow, and thereby record significant gains in time and savings in salary costs. At the same time, delays in outstanding payments are avoided. So much for first experiences. Both companies are very anxious to continue with the collaboration and are establishing themselves as driving forces for further developments.“

Claudio Grollmund: „Which further developments are planned for Alloy?“

Marcel Ritschard: „There are in principle two areas. On the technical side, it lends itself to enabling access via Blackberry within the workflow sector. If the decision maker is out of the office, there is no need to switch on a PC first. The process can be carried out directly from a mobile unit. On the other hand, we can also envisage additional scenarios in the area of business processes.“

Tony Wehrstein: „Currently, various aspects of the BI module are under consideration. For example customizing within the sales process could be undertaken, and where possible customer management as well, i.e. customer master file management in the delivery system. At the moment, there is no fixed roadmap as we want to align further development with the requirements of the customers. Because of the flexible architecture, we are in a position to approach our customers with a broad palette of options.“



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