Interoperating with .NET – Beyond Web Services

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Overview

- Full Disclosure
- Why Not Web Services?
- The Alternatives
- Demonstrations
Full Disclosure

- I’m the author of the Open Source IKVM.NET project. One of the solutions for integrating Java and .NET code.
Why Not Web Services?

- Networking overhead
  - Method call latency can be very significant for “chatty” interfaces.
- Not appropriate for client apps
- Deployment complexity
The Alternatives

- Unified Model
  - Compiling Java source on the CLR
  - Running Java Byte Code on the CLR
  - Running CIL on the Java Virtual Machine

- Proxy Based
  - Remoting
  - Hosting the JVM inside the CLR (or v.v.)
The Products

- Commercial
  - J-Integra for .NET (Ja.NET)
  - Codemesh JuggerNET
  - JNBridge
  - Microsoft Visual J#
  - Mainsoft Visual MainWin
  - Stryon iNET

- Open Source
  - Caffeine
  - IKVM.NET
  - IIOP.NET
Remoting

- Building on either Java RMI or .NET remoting, you can communicate between the JVM and CLR.

- Products
  - J-Integra for .NET (Ja.NET)
  - JNBridge
  - Caffeine
  - IIOP.NET
Compiling Java source on the CLR

- Since the CLR supports multiple language, you could, theoretically, recompile your Java sources on the CLR.
  - In practice it isn’t quite that easy. What about the Java libraries?

- Products
  - Microsoft Visual J#
    - Supports only JDK 1.1.4
    - Primarily intended as migration path for J++ users
Running Java Byte Code on the CLR

- Similar to the previous option. Instead of recompiling your Java sources, you convert Java Byte Code to CIL at runtime (or ahead of time).
  - Still need to find a way to have the Java libraries available.

- Products
  - IKVM.NET
    - Uses GNU Classpath to provide an implementation of the Java libraries.
Running CIL on the Java Virtual Machine

- Convert CIL to Java Byte Code (either at runtime or ahead of time).
  - What about the .NET Framework libraries?

- Products
  - Mainsoft Visual MainWin
    - Uses a modified version of (part of) the Mono implementation of .NET Framework libraries
  - Stryon iNET
    - Uses their own (partial) implementation of the .NET Framework libraries
Hosting the JVM inside the CLR

- Using JNI host the JVM inside the CLR process.
  - Requires proxies on both sides and method marshalling is expensive.

- Products
  - Codemesh JuggerNET
  - Caffeine
Demonstrations

- **Microsoft Visual J#**
  - Converting a J++ application

- **IKVM.NET**
  - Running Eclipse on .NET
  - Using a Java library from .NET
  - Using a .NET library from Java

- **Mainsoft Visual MainWin**
  - Running an ASP.NET site on Tomcat

- **Caffeine**
  - Using a Java library from .NET

- **JNBridge**
  - Using a Java library from .NET
Mapping Object Models

- Java and .NET object models are very similar, but there are some differences.

- Wrapping vs. Mapping
  - java.lang.Object
  - java.lang.String
  - java.lang.Throwable
  - arrays

- In a “proxy” model, it is easier (for the developer of the interop product) to simply let the user deal with these issues.

- In a “unified” model, code has to run as is. So the interop product needs to do more work to make the two object models interoperate.
Future

- I will continue to develop IKVM.NET into the premiere Java .NET interoperability tool 😊
- The Portable.NET project would like to add Java Byte Code support to their runtime, but at this point it is unknown whether this will ever happen.
- A Universal Virtual Machine?
Questions
Resources

- http://j-integra.intrinsyc.com/net/info/
- http://www.jnbridge.com/
- http://caffeine.berlios.de/site/index.html
- http://msdn.microsoft.com/vjsharp/
- http://www.mainsoft.com/
- http://www.ikvm.net/