Welcome to the new Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* newsletter. Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* at www.virtualims.com is an independently-operated vendor-neutral site run by and for the IMS user community.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* IMS presentation

The latest webinar from Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* was entitled, "IMS and Web 2.0", and was presented by Jenny Hung from IBM's IMS Development Division.

Jenny started by looking at what Web 2.0 is all about. She suggested that users could achieve growth, efficiency, and collaboration with Web 2.0. Web 2.0 offers the following benefits:

- Being more responsive to customers, with knowledge from subject experts you may or may not know

- Harnessing the knowledge of the wise, before they retire

- Enabling employees to be more productive, more knowledgeable, faster

- From a technology perspective Web 2.0 uses AJAX, Mashups, and Feeds predominantly

- Mashups rated by Gartner as Top 10 Strategic Technology for 2008.

Jenny Hung then described business benefits that Web 2.0 offers including improved growth through innovation, faster task execution, improved efficiency, and increased empowerment of key resources.

Jenny explained how users could extend SOA (Services Oriented Architecture) using Web 2.0. She said it personalized SOA for efficiency and innovation. Basically, the Web 2.0 interface would wrap around Enterprise content and Web-based content. Jenny affirmed that it was simple to use, and quick to develop and deploy. Listing:

- Rapidly assemble mashups

- Simply create widgets, feeds

- Reuse information and services

- Unlock enterprise and web contents

- Increase effectiveness with rich interface.

Contents:

Jenny said they were simple to access:

- Access resources with simple RESTful interface

- Reduce development time and skills needed

- Quickly transform and mix information

- Wider access from a variety of consumers (Web apps, outside partners, etc).

But what is a mashup? Jenny defined a "mashup" as a lightweight Web application created by combining information or capabilities from more than one existing source to deliver new functions and insights. Typically, "widgets" and "feeds" (probably) from independent sources are mashed together, but do not change when mashed. In this way, new applications can be created that deliver new insights and capabilities. They are built on a Web-oriented architectures (REST, HTTP) and leverage lightweight simple integration techniques (AJAX, RSS, JSON). And the result is the fast creation of rich desktop-like Web applications.

The various sources of mashable content is shown Figure 1.

Jenny also explained what is meant by a Web feed – it's a data format in XML used to provide users with frequently-updated content. Content distributors *syndicate* a Web feed, thereby allowing users to *subscribe* to it. Making a collection of Web feeds accessible in one spot is
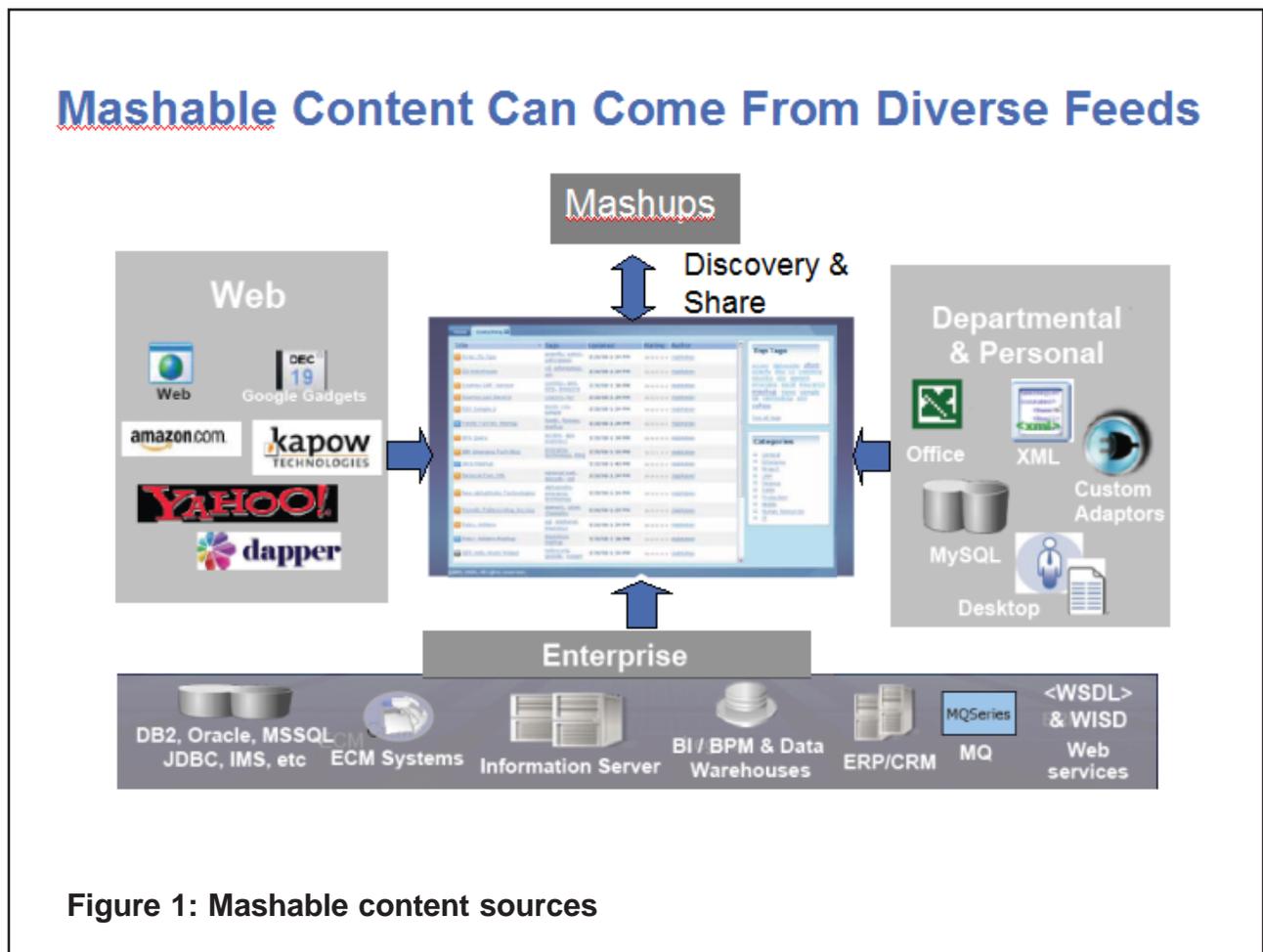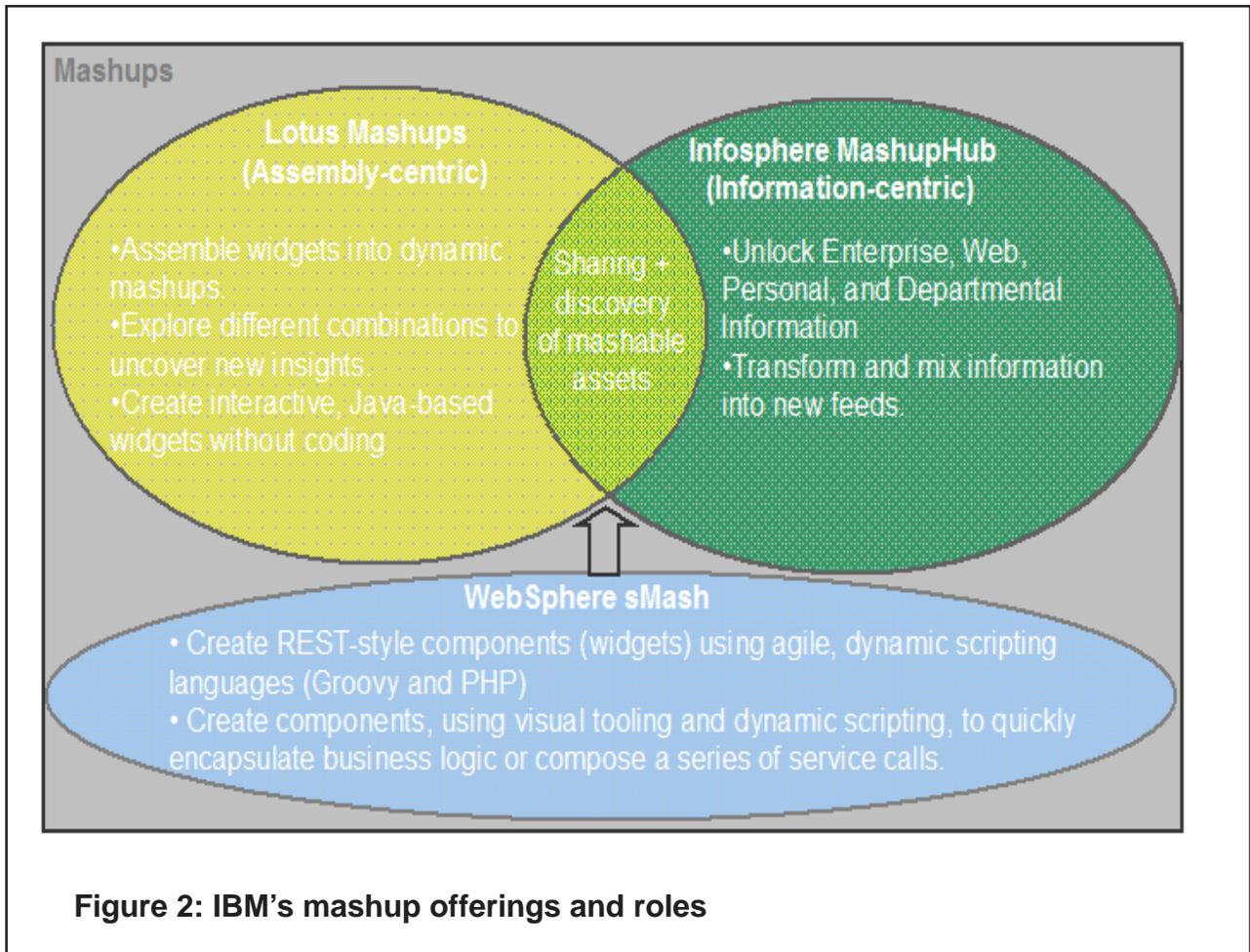

Figure 1: Mashable content sources

Figure 2: IBM's mashup offerings and roles

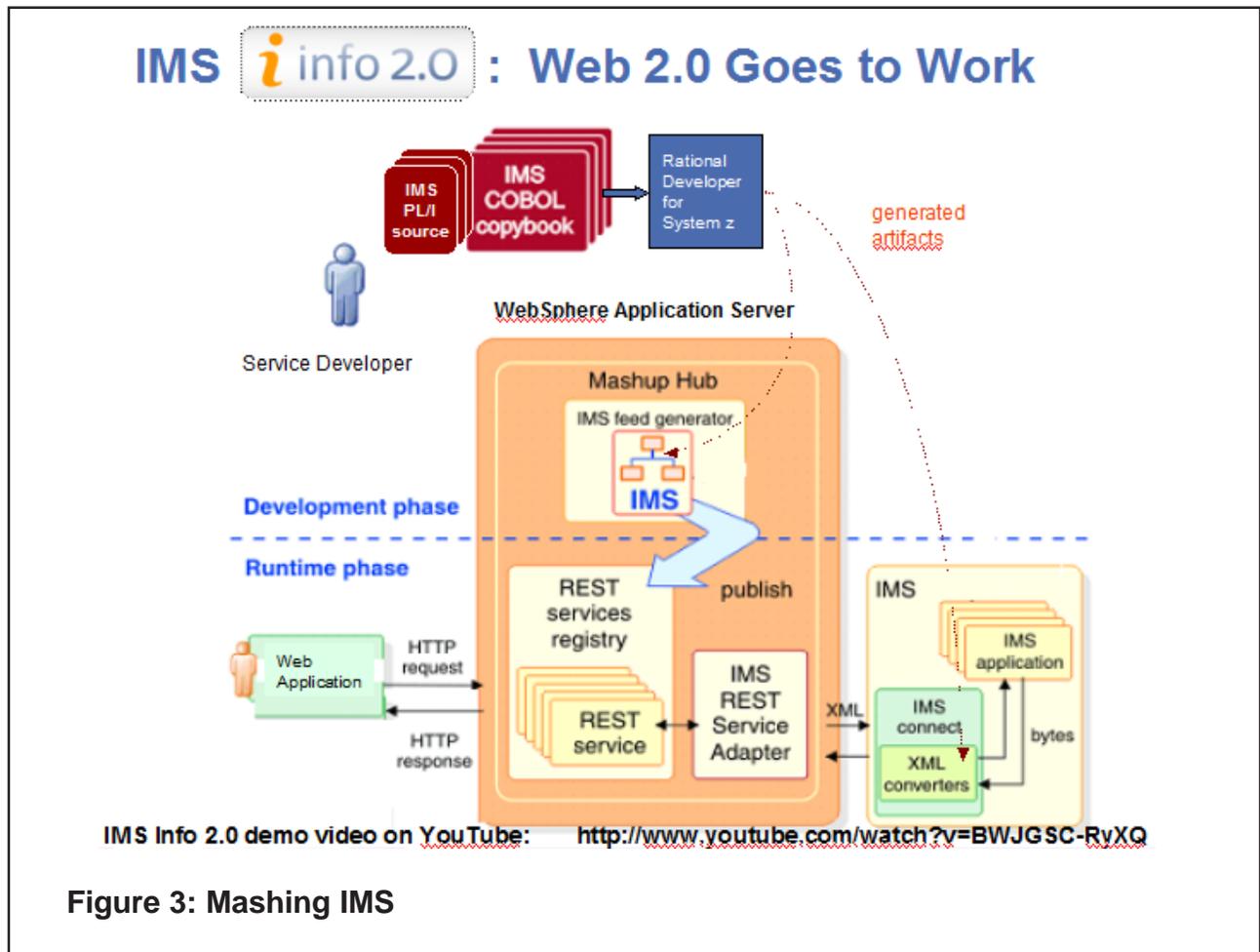known as *aggregation*, which is performed by an Internet aggregator.

A widget, she explained, is a small program or piece of dynamic content that can be easily placed into a Web site. Widgets are given different names by different vendors, eg gadgets, blocks, or flakes. Widgets can be written in any language (Java, .NET, PHP, etc) and can be as simple as an HTML fragment. Widgets can be non-visual, and often encapsulate an API. "Mashable" widgets pass events, so that they can be wired together to create something new.

IBM's mashup offerings and roles are shown in Figure 2.

Mashing IMS is illustrated in Figure 3.

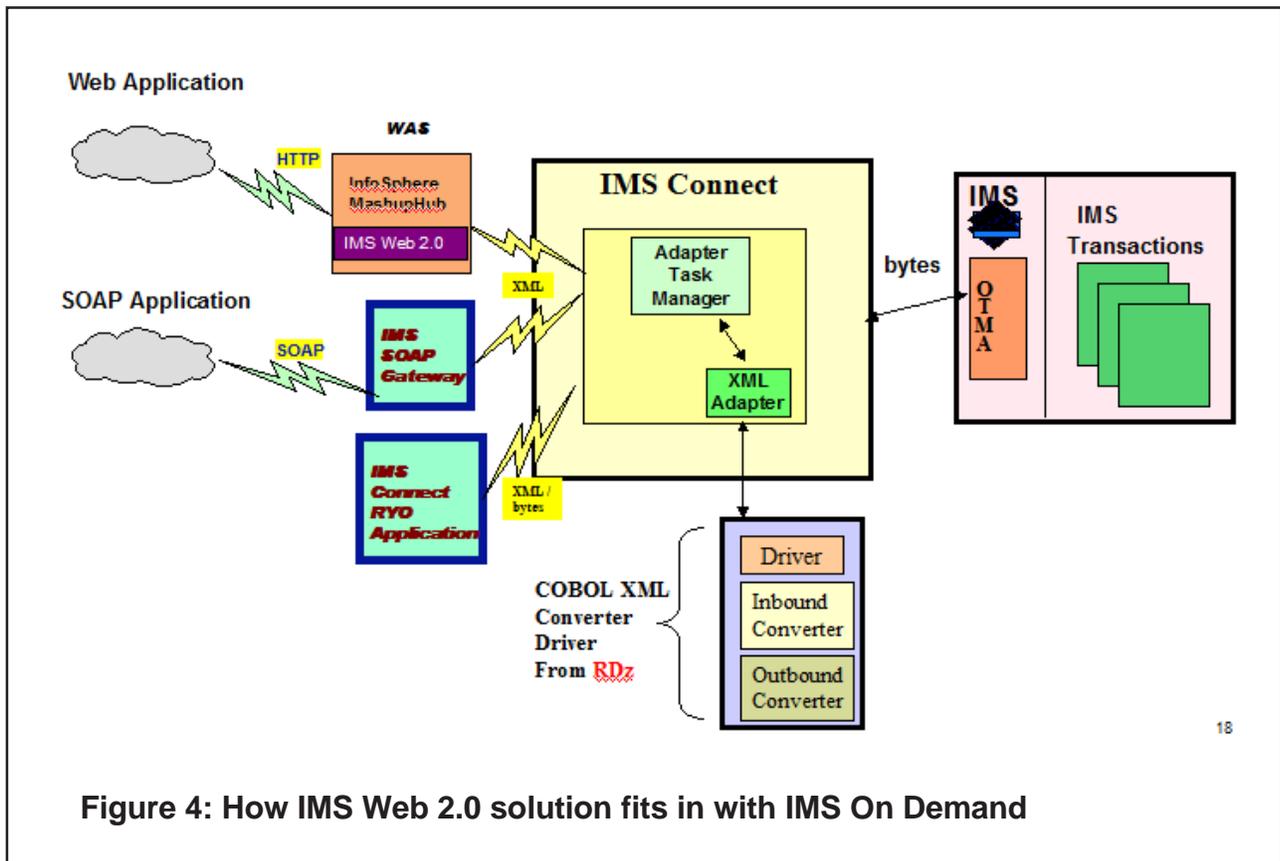Jenny highlighted the following prerequisites and restrictions:

- Software requirements

  – IMS V10+, IMS Connect V10+

  – Rational Developer for System z V7.1.1+

  – InfoSphere Mashup Center V1.0
    - o bundles InfoSphere MashupHub Enterprise Edition

Figure 3: Mashing IMS

- o bundles Lotus Mashups
- o bundles WebSphere Application Server V6.1.0.13
- – Windows 2003 Server
- – Internet Explorer V6, Internet Explorer V7, Firefox V2, and Safari V3
- • Restrictions
  - – Single Segment message support only
  - – No conversation support
  - – No callout support
  - – Commit Mode 1 and Sync Level None support only.

Exactly how the IMS Web 2.0 solution fits in with IMS On Demand is illustrated in Figure 4.

Jenny described how users could extend their IMS investment by converting an IMS asset into an IMS RESTful service, which has the ability to consume and be consumed by other Web 2.0 services. She added that IMS customer could then remix and mashup their data rapidly with IBM Info 2.0 tools to extend their business logic without the need to write a single line of code.

Figure 4: How IMS Web 2.0 solution fits in with IMS On Demand

Alternatively, by publishing an IMS RESTful Service to the Web 2.0 community, this opens up the possibility of third parties generating creative mashups that could benefit both third-party developers as well as the original IMS service provider. The third-party developer would now have IMS assets available to them. While, the IMS service provider could benefit from new business opportunities and increased partnership on the Web.

A copy of Jenny's presentation is available for download from the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* Web site at http://www.virtualims.com/presentations/IMSandWeb2.pdf.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* meeting dates

The following meeting dates have been arranged for the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* user group:

- *February 3, 2009 – Mike McKee, Senior Software Engineer, CONNX Solutions, SQL Access to IMS Data.*

- April 7, 2009 – Henry Sobieski, Director of Product Marketing, Software AG.

All meetings start at 10:30 Central Time (4:30 GMT in the winter and 3:30 GMT during daylight saving time). All members will be e-mailed the WebEx URL, access code, and password for each meeting. Members need to log in about five minutes before the meetings starts in order for the WebEx connection to complete, and to phone into the freephone number provided so they can join in with the audio component of the meeting.

News Update

Clerity Solutions has introduced new software and services that enable legacy mainframe applications and rehosted workloads to play strategic roles in SOA and Web services initiatives. Clerity Service Builder and Clerity Web Connect allow organizations to expose legacy assets as secure Web services and transform screen-based applications into Web applications. Using Clerity Service Builder, organizations can assemble and deploy multi-step, multi-operation composite business services from 3270-based IMS, CICS, and UniKix Transaction Processing Environment (UniKix TPE) transactions, in addition to COMMAREA and native data Web Services. Clerity Service Builder's runtime environment runs on a mainframe or rehosted platform, eliminating the need for middleware. Full details are available from www.clerity.com/news/modernization_and_soa_solutions.php.

Microsoft has announced the public beta release of BizTalk Server 2009. Not an announcement you'd expect to see on the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* newsletter, but BizTalk Server 2009 adds support for various IBM technologies. The product now works with the latest versions of IMS, CICS, DB2, and WebSphere MQ. Developers can now expose a mainframe as a service in the WCF (Windows Communication Foundation) format. Developers don't need to know the complexity of the mainframe. The final version should be available in the first half of 2009. More information is available at www.microsoft.com/biztalk/en/us/default.aspx.

Mainframe Zone IMS survey

Bob Thomas in his Mainframe Zone blog (www.mainframezone.com) revealed some of the results of its recent survey of IMS users. They found that almost 73% of respondents felt challenged by the absence of relational query capabilities and the difficulty of maintaining and enhancing applications. Also, more than 20% of respondents highlighted the on-going costs of their IMS applications as a deep concern. The survey also found that fewer than half of the respondents have put in place a defined plan to migrate away from IMS/DB, while a similar number had reviewed and dismissed the idea of rewriting their IMS applications because of the huge cost and considerable risk inherent in such a move. Full details of the survey will be published in the January/February 2009 issue of Mainframe Executive (www.mainframe-exec.com).

About Virtual IMS *CONNECTION*

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* is a user group established as a way for individuals using IBM's IMS hierarchical database and transaction processing systems to exchange information, learn new techniques, and advance their skills with the product.

The Web site at www.virtualims.com provides a central point for coordinating periodic meetings (which are technically-oriented topics presented in a webinar format), and will provide articles, discussions, links, and other resources of interest to IBM IMS practitioners. Anyone with an interest in IMS is welcome to join Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* and share in the knowledge exchange.

To share ideas, and for further information, contact trevor@itech-ed.com.

The Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* user group is free to its members. Various sponsorship opportunities are available to vendors of IMS-related products. Full details of these opportunities and can be found *here*.

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