JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM?

JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform enables organizations to quickly build dynamic websites in a highly reusable way. Unlike portals of the past, JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform enables quick time-to-value, technical simplicity, and a minimal impact upon existing skills and technology investments. By bringing the principles of JBoss Open Choice to the presentation layer, there is assurance that a decision to implement JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform will mitigate the risk of evolving trends and technologies.

WHAT ARE THE KEY BENEFITS OF JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM?

- **Enables you to build compelling and dynamic websites faster**
  - Easily create portals and other framework-based UIs from one unified platform
  - Provide a rich portal platform that enables business users to manage and administer their own websites
  - Create, publish, and manage web content easily within the context of the portal interface[1]
- **Provides support for a wide range of assets and frameworks**
  - Provide a reusable set of presentation services used inside and outside of the portal UI
  - Make it easy to consume and integrate with outside rich Internet application (RIA) frameworks
- **Offers simplicity and flexibility**
  - Be up and running in minutes with simple installation
  - Virtualize your portal installations at the portal or application server levels
  - Easily deploy add-ons from Red Hat and other partners without complex installation

WHAT IS JBOSS OPEN CHOICE?

The JBoss Open Choice application platform strategy aims to provide a single environment for deploying a variety of programming models with a common platform, making it easier to develop and deploy applications, without sacrificing operational requirements for reliability, availability, scalability, or manageability. For JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform, Red Hat has extended JBoss Open Choice to enable the consumption of non-portal applications into the portal framework, as well as to include support for the delivery of portal services to other non-portal applications.

WHERE AND HOW ARE PORTALS TYPICALLY USED IN AN ORGANIZATION?

The role of the portal in an organization has shifted over the past three to five years. Originally considered a key part of a corporate intranet, portal technology has evolved to support a broader range of use cases. While portals are still often deployed to support internal web applications, such as human resources portals and corporate communications websites, the usage of portals to external users has eclipsed the original internal-only mindset.

Today, portals are used to extend the footprint of an organization, enabling customer, citizen, and partner self service. Using a portal to provide these services not only reduces the costs associated with supporting external audiences, but it also provides a rich platform to educate and grow new business opportunities.

1 Requires JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform Site Publisher add-on subscription

WHY WOULD SOMEONE USE A PORTAL OVER AN APPLICATION SERVER OR RICH INTERNET APPLICATIONS (RIA)?

While traditional application servers are great for delivering the compelling look and feel of a website, they often lack the level of user-driven personalization and configuration that a portal can offer. Unlike application servers and RIAs, defined communities of users that require a more integrated and often more complex experience can use portals to meet their needs. Additionally, portals provide the end user a much more customizable user interface so that they can tailor the look and feel of the website based upon their needs.

WHAT TECHNICAL SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO CREATE A PORTAL?

Like many web applications, a portal requires some diverse skills. The main roles that are present when a portal is deployed are:

- **Application developer –** The basic building block of a portal includes the portlets and gadgets. These web assets widely vary in complexity and can number in the dozens or, in some cases, in the hundreds. Therefore, portals often require some level of development experience. In the case of JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform, that developer should have experience with JBoss Developer Studio.
- **Skin/UI designer –** The look and feel of the portal is stored in the portal skin. This skin is a fairly lightweight construct based upon Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). A portal installation can have one or many skins depending on how the portal will be used.
- **Site administrator –** As a portal is a dynamic and multi-page (and often multi-site) environment, someone skilled in managing users, groups, and pages is highly recommended to maintain the website and ensure compliance with necessary IT governance requirements.
- **Page and content creators –** These are resources who create portal pages and websites or add web content to a portal page or website. This resource could be an entry-level Java EE developer, business analyst or, in some cases, a power user.

WHAT IS A PORTLET?

Portlets are pluggable and highly reusable user interface components that define the content within a portal server. A portlet can present content, data, and/or applications to an end user. With JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform Site Publisher, the creation and presentation of a wide range of web content sources is also available through out-of-the-box web content management portlets.

WHAT IS A SKIN?

A skin is a wrapper for a portal site that drives its branding and overall look and feel. The skin is what makes one website look different from another. JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform has the ability to store and use many skins, enabling every website and page within JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform to have a unique skin.

WHAT IS A GADGET?

A gadget is similar to a portlet in the sense that it is a pluggable user interface component that can be delivered in a page. However, a portlet is generally delivered only in a portal page whereas a gadget can be presented on any webpage.

Additionally, a portlet renders on the server whereas a gadget is rendered within a browser. This difference is an important detail as there are some cases where a portlet can do more, such as transactional applications, than a gadget. For straightforward use cases, gadgets are easy to develop and are very portable. JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform enables you to store gadgets within the platform and share them with any other webpage outside the portal and vice versa.

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL SITE?

A virtual site, a feature of JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform 5, is a means to create, host, and independently administer many websites within a single portal server installation. The key capability is that the management of a virtual site can be delegated to a specific group, role or user. Or, given the right level of access, a single administrator can manage all of the virtual sites, as well to simplify the management of many unique sites.

DOES THE PORTAL REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL SOFTWARE?

No. Someone can run the portal on any system with Java installed. This configuration works well for a developer's workstation or test system. However, for production use, it is recommended that the portal be integrated with an external database to hold user profile and page configuration information. This enables the portal server to scale to support higher numbers of users and operate better in a high availability configurations.

WHAT MAKES JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM UNIQUE COMPARED TO OTHER PORTAL PRODUCTS?

Unlike other portals, JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform is very lightweight and offers simplicity. For example, JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform can be up and running in fewer than five minutes after it is downloaded from the Red Hat Customer Support Portal. Additionally, JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform is highly scalable and supports thousands of users per core. Similar to other Red Hat middleware offerings, JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform is developer-focused and includes features that are easy to configure and use. The addition of JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform Site Publisher enables business users to easily create, publish, and manage their own websites and their own content within the context of the portal.

WHAT IS GATEIN?

All JBoss Enterprise Platforms are based upon the combination of multiple open source community projects. The bulk of JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform's functionality is developed in the open source JBoss Community project called GateIn (gatein.org). The process by which GateIn and other associated projects become the JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform is called productization. The effort behind productization includes additional steps to ensure that JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform is a highly reliable and supportable product for its entire lifecycle. Common activities in the productization phase include further functional testing, ensuring compatibility with supported configurations, further tuning of the code base to optimize and improve performance, and ensuring documentation is complete and accurate.

DOES JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM CONFORM TO ANY SPECIAL STANDARDS?

Yes. JBoss Enterprise Portal Platform conforms to the JSR 286 specification, which is backwards compatible with JSR 168, for portlet containers, WSRP 2.0, and the draft specifications for JSF Portlet Bridging 2.0 (JSR 329).

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT JBOSS ENTERPRISE PORTAL PLATFORM?

jboss.com/products/platforms/portals

ABOUT RED HAT

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