

Skyway leverages Eclipse projects in new model-centric push

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Sector: Enterprise Software

Event summary

- In early 2008, Skyway Software released Skyway Visual Perspectives, a major refresh of its model-centric development environment.
- Skyway Director, the deployment product, has been discontinued. In 2009, Skyway plans to introduce two new products into Skyway Visual Perspectives: Tester and Architect.
- Skyway sees much promise in domain-specific languages for model-driven development and is keen on easing their creation in Skyway Visual Perspectives.

The 451 take

Model-driven development greatly speeds up application creation but hasn't integrated well with process-heavy development in the past. Skyway is looking to build out a full suite of development tools for model-driven development based on mainstream developer tool suites such as Eclipse. This approach is likely to ease model-driven development into a more process-oriented software development mainstream. We are also pleased that Skyway's roadmap leverages two open source communities we think are significant to the future of enterprise Java: The Eclipse Foundation and the Spring Framework.

Details

Skyway Visual Perspectives, released in June 2008, is a refresh of **Skyway Software's** earlier product line. This release uses **SpringSource's** Spring Framework and several tooling projects from the **Eclipse Foundation**, such as the Eclipse Modeling Framework (EMF), rather than being developed in-house. The heavy use of open source code has given Skyway a chance to build out its model-centric development product in ways paralleling traditional software development tools, around testing and software architecture. Director, whose future was unclear when we last covered Skyway, has been discontinued to make way for Eclipse-friendly deployment methods that use open source build automation tools such as Ant and Maven. Tester will enable enterprise Java developers to model Java unit tests based on JUnit; Architect will enable senior developers and system architects to define architectural guidelines for a system.

Skyway has 14 customers, two of which have signed on after the company's latest release. Skyway sees more accurate capture of requirements and easier communication among global teams as its primary value. One customer, a global systems integrator, is extending Builder to generate code not just in Java but also in user-defined domain-specific languages. This feature, which Skyway sees as significant to the company's future, is enabled by Skyway's use of EMF's JET code-generation templates.

Competitive landscape

Skyway competes to varying degrees with **Bungee Labs**, **WaveMaker Software** and **Appcelerator**. Bungee Labs provides a browser-based visual IDE and hosted deployment environment aimed at software developers. Bungee applications may be developed visually and customized using Bungee Connect, a programming language we think resembles C# in its language constructs. WaveMaker provides a visual development environment aimed at business users outside IT departments. From its application models, WaveMaker aims to generate artifacts that can be easily managed, and deployed on-premise by IT departments. Appcelerator is a RIA presentation-layer framework that recasts Web application development into a message-oriented style, with flashbacks to robust application development practices in the client-server era.

Servoy is a Dutch RIA platform vendor with an Eclipse-based modeling environment that can be used to deliver business logic as RIAs and rich client applications; the company targets ISVs seeking to modernize their offerings. Other vendors that make end user-oriented application development platforms, especially around business applications, include **Salesforce.com** and **Relationals** with **LongJump**.

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