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UFSS Migrates to AB Suite, Moves to the Cloud

By Mehran Radfar, Practice Director, UK Mortgages & Savings, Unisys



A financial solution that provides unique modules for mortgages, savings, client accounts, lending, and more, Unisys Financial Services System (UFSS) has a well-established track record in the U.K. financial services sector. In fact, roughly 40% of all mortgages in the U.K. are processed using UFSS.

And while its broad suite of capabilities, mission-critical characteristics, and robust security and compliance controls have allowed UFSS to earn the trust of numerous financial institutions, mortgage servicers, and building societies, there are always opportunities for more innovations.

That's why the UFSS development team has been hard at work migrating the solution from Enterprise Application Environment (EAE) to Agile Business Suite (AB Suite), starting with moving the UFSS runtime from EAE on Microsoft® Windows® to AB Suite on Windows. In fact, a few building societies are already running the AB Suite on Windows version of UFSS in production.

Once all steps in the process are complete, the move to AB Suite will give the UFSS developers newer, more sophisticated tools to improve and enhance the solution over time, enable it to seamlessly integrate with other systems, and function well in heterogeneous environments.

A key motivating factor behind this project was the UFSS team's desire to extend the value it had built into the solution while enabling it to continue to serve the evolving needs of financial services institutions well into the future. Building the solution in AB Suite represents a significant step in this direction. >>



A Journey to the Cloud

But the UFSS team didn't stop there. After transitioning from EAE on Windows to AB Suite on Windows, they launched a project designed to make the entire solution available as a subscription, through a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model.

Offering the solution as a managed service enables UFSS to be packaged as part of a broader, end-to-end “bank in a box” that complements the solution's existing capabilities with modules for branch and call center operations, as well as customer relationship management (CRM), data warehousing, arrears management, and backup and recovery.

And while the managed service version of UFSS is positioned as a complete offering, the flexibility afforded by the SaaS delivery model allows the solution to be broken into smaller pieces as needed, based on an institution's unique needs.

Delivering the solution as a SaaS offering also helps organizations reduce capital costs and takes away the worry of keeping their core solutions up to date with new regulations and technologies – all of that is taken care of by Unisys.

Transforming UFSS into a managed service proved to be a rather straightforward process. All that needed to be done in order to prepare it for a

particular customer's use was to simply replicate the AB Suite version of UFSS from the Unisys data center to the cloud and migrate the organization's account information and customer data.

Although the SaaS version of UFSS is based on a common architecture, all subscribers receive a dedicated instance of the solution with built-in production, development and test, and disaster recovery capabilities. And by coupling the solution's existing security and compliance controls with an additional ring of security around the supporting infrastructure, UFSS is able to minimize any concerns about the safety and privacy of sensitive data in the cloud, helping institutions adopt this new version with confidence.

As announced at the end of 2013, UFSS has already been subscribed to by three major regional U.K. building societies, all of which will be using the solution to manage their mortgage and savings accounts across the full cycle of a customer relationship, from inquiry and application to account closure.

This project proves that solutions built using AB Suite on Windows can be effectively extended to a private cloud environment. It also served as a good reference point for additional cloud-specific features for future AB Suite releases.

[Learn more about the capabilities and modules in UFSS.](#)

Exciting Changes for EAE Version Control Users

By Jim Nichols, Consulting Engineer, Unisys Global Technical Consulting (GTC), and Rajashekar Narasaiah, Subject Matter Expert, Unisys Global Technology Center – India (GTCI)

EAE Interim Correction (IC) Release 3.3.3300, made available in September 2013, introduced important changes to Enterprise Application Developer that provide EAE users with a new version control option – one that modernizes the underlying infrastructure in Developer and includes compatibility with third-party version control tools. The new functionality offers an alternative to the existing UREP-based EAE Version Control product, which is supported only on a limited number of older Windows operating environments.

The new EAE Version Control option uses the Microsoft Source Code Control Application Programming Interface (SCCAPI), an industry-popular source control API that is used by many third-party tools. IC 3.3.3300 made the SCCAPI available in Enterprise Application Developer – and added support for three source control tools to EAE:

- [Apache™ Subversion \(SVN\)](#), an open source tool
- [Microsoft Team Foundation Server \(TFS\)](#)
- [IBM® Rational® ClearCase®](#)

If you are using the existing EAE Version Control capability, IC 3.3.3300 gives you the option to move your critical configuration management information to a newer operating environment. The ability to use these three well-known version control products with EAE is also a big benefit.

Which Tool Should I Use?

These version control tools have unique features that may make one the appropriate option for your environment. Factors such as software availability, performance, configuration requirements, and product support structure should be considered when making your choice. With the changes introduced in IC 3.3.3300, an attempt has been made to take advantage of

what is offered by each tool in terms of setting up an environment and making effective use of its unique version control operations.

With the changes to Developer and the addition of the EAE History Explorer, EAE Version Control users will greatly appreciate the ease with which they can migrate from the existing UREP-based EAE Version Control product to any of the supported third-party tools. Please refer to the “[Enterprise Application Version Control Guide](#)” for information about installing and setting up each tool.

What Operations Can I Perform?

In defining an alternative offering to the UREP-based EAE Version Control functionality, we wanted to minimize changes for EAE developers – while providing multiple tool choices. This alternative version control option supports all the operations that you can do today with the UREP-based EAE Version Control product, except Branching and Labeling. These capabilities may or may not be available in the version control tools themselves – so if you use labeling today, it should be one of the criteria you consider when choosing which tool to implement. There are review and compare revisions operations in the three supported tools, as well. >>



Jim Nichols



Rajashekar Narasaiah

Here is what you can do with the alternative EAE Version Control options:

- **Add:** Enables you to add new versionable objects into the tool's source control repository, which must be done before you can carry out any other version control activities.
- **Check In:** Creates a new version of the selected object in the tool's source control repository and releases the lock that was put on those objects in the Enterprise Application Developer repository.
- **Check Out:** Moves the latest copy of the selected object from the tool's source control repository into the Developer Repository, where it can be modified, and locks the selected object (indicated by a lock symbol) in the Developer Repository.
- **Undo Check Out:** Reverses the Check Out operation by moving the latest copy of the previously checked out object from the tool's source control repository into the Developer Repository and unlocking the object.
- **Get Latest Revision:** Moves a copy of the most recent revision of the selected object from the tool's source control repository into the Developer Repository without locking the object.
- **Container Operations:** Performs all of the above operations at the folder level, so you can apply these same actions to groups of objects.

- **Review and Compare Operations:** Allows you to review and compare changes to the objects before they are checked in, using capabilities in both the third-party tool and Developer itself. The sources will be displayed in the LCIF view dialog box.

How Do I Import Files to a New Version Control Product?

As the source control responsibility has now been shifted to an external system, Unisys provides a tool called "History Explorer," which is designed to help you easily migrate from the UREP-based EAE Version Control product using the import operation. History Explorer can also be used to expose older revisions that were maintained in the UREP-based Version Control Bank and import a desired revision into the new source control environment.

For more information, please see the latest EAE Developer Version Control Guide or Enterprise Application Developer online help (IC 3.3.3300 or later). If you would like additional help modernizing your EAE Version Control environment, please contact your Unisys account executive or email us at ABSuite@Unisys.com.

ClearPath ePortal Simple Orchestration and AB Suite

By Nigel Tunnicliffe, Architect, Unisys TCIS



This article is the first in a series examining how the ClearPath ePortal can be used to create custom WCF services against existing ClearPath systems or Agile Business Suite applications running on a Microsoft Windows platform. This article's topic: Simple Orchestration.



While ClearPath systems form the cornerstone of your company's IT infrastructure, in almost all cases, there is an increasing need for these platforms to interact and exchange information with other applications and servers in a programmatic manner. This requires you to operate a complex infrastructure like the one shown in Figure 1, where your ClearPath systems and AB Suite applications need to accept and process service requests from a wide variety of end users and processes. Typically, this is done by implementing some form

of a service-oriented architecture (SOA), possibly with an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) routing and sending messages to a variety of back-end systems. Within the ESB environment, messages are typically in XML or JSON formats, and will be passed to an application server via some form of service-based interface.

A common problem you may encounter when trying to integrate your ClearPath and AB Suite applications into such an environment – particularly those that have been developed and enhanced over a number of years – is >>

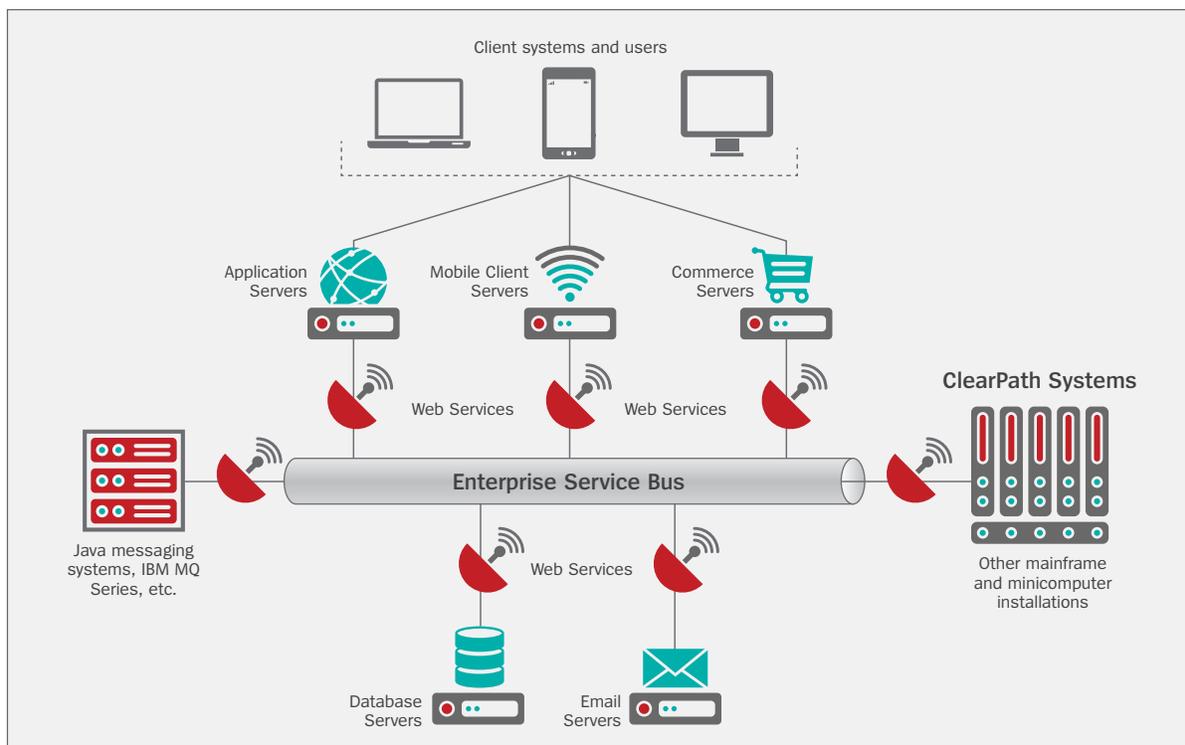


Figure 1. A complex IT infrastructure.

that they may only offer some form of terminal-based interface. These interfaces may not be immediately suitable for use in this kind of interconnected environment, and the process flow may not have been designed with a modern, complex infrastructure in mind. For example, a user may have to logon via a given screen and then use a screen-based menu system to navigate to a specific area in order to perform a particular business process. This is fine when the end user is an operator sitting at a terminal, but it's not so easy to integrate into a SOA-based solution.

However, using ePortal, it becomes very easy to integrate these systems with the rest of the IT infrastructure. It can effectively hide the fact that the ClearPath system and/or AB Suite application is only offering a screen-based interface by creating an interface that looks and behaves exactly like any other service-enabled application.

This article describes how you can create new services from original screens using the Simple Orchestration feature in ePortal. This feature does

not require any changes on the host – or any new discovery processes – making it possible to build new, separate services for each of the business processes exposed by a particular screen.

The examples shown in this article are all taken from an ePortal interface with an AB Suite application running on a ClearPath Libra system. However, as far as the developer of ePortal services is concerned, there is no difference whatsoever between an application running on a ClearPath Libra system, a ClearPath Dorado system, or, in ePortal Release 6.0, AB Suite on Windows. All the techniques described below will work equally well on any ePortal supported platform.

Simple Orchestration in Action

The process in Figure 2 shows a new WCF service being constructed using the ePortal Orchestration designer to read the customer record – with just a customer name given. This way, all the developer of the process consuming the service needs to know is the name of the service. >>

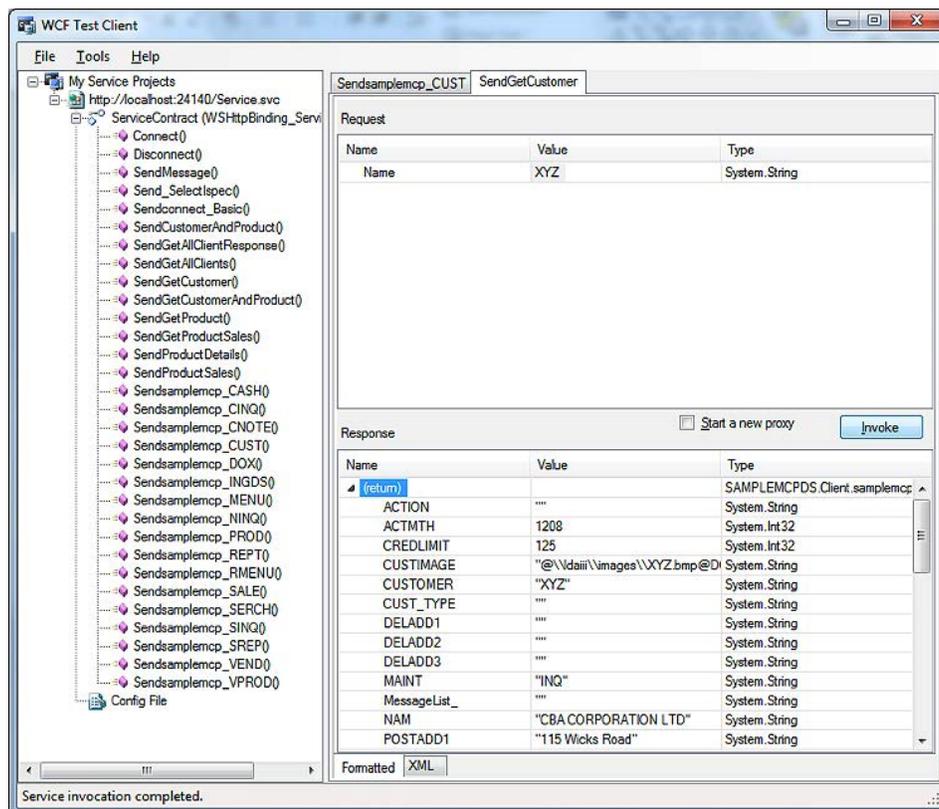


Figure 2. The Simple Orchestration process.

There's no longer any reason to know how the service has been implemented or pass any parameters that are not needed to process the request – the developer simply sets the single parameter, called "Name," and invokes the service. This results in a service that does one, and only one, function, making it more in line with SOA best practices.

Creating this new service is very easy and requires no changes to the host system.

The first step is to create a new Client message in ePortal defining only the values from the screen that need to be set in order to invoke the service. In this case, we just need a property containing the customer, so the new client message contains the single property shown in Figure 3. Note that we don't need to include any fields on the screen telling the host which function to perform, or any fields not directly required by the request message.

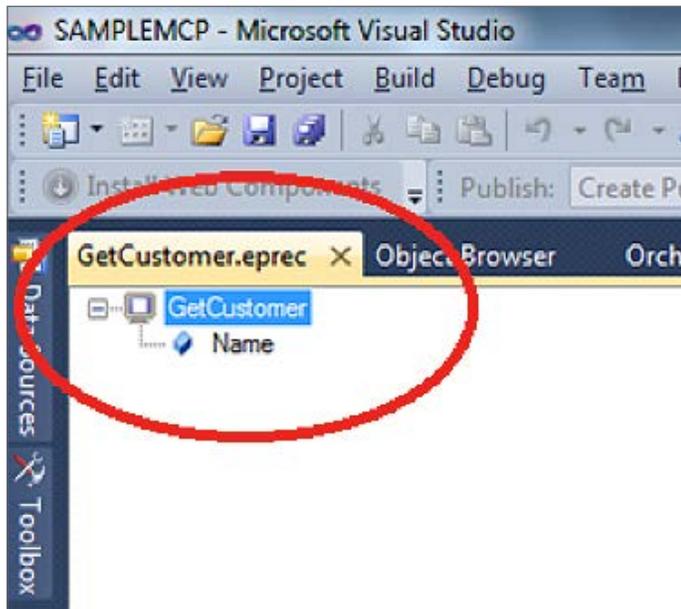


Figure 3. Creating a new Client message.

Once the Client message has been created, a new Orchestration can be defined for this message. Because we only want to invoke the CUST screen, the orchestration is very simple (see Figure 4) and uses the inbuilt Orchestration designer in ePortal, which is largely a drag-and-drop activity, to build the process flow required. In the example in Figure 4, we have defined a new service called "GetCustomer," which invokes the CUST screen on the host system. >>

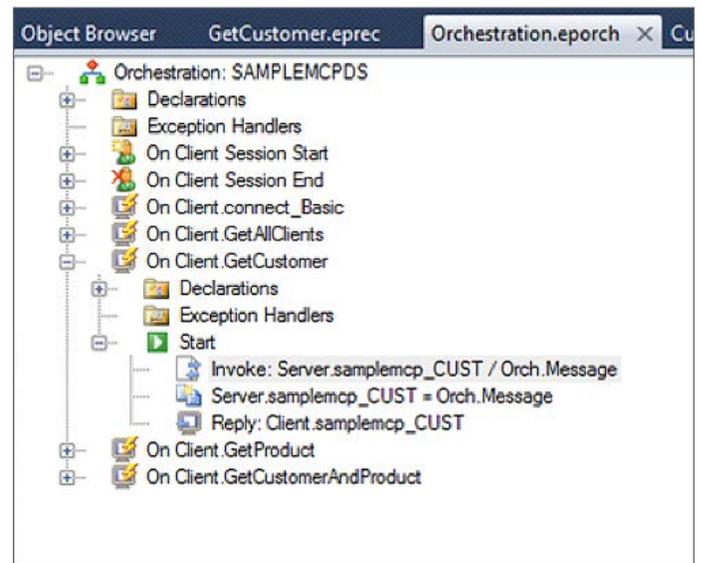


Figure 4. Creating the orchestration.

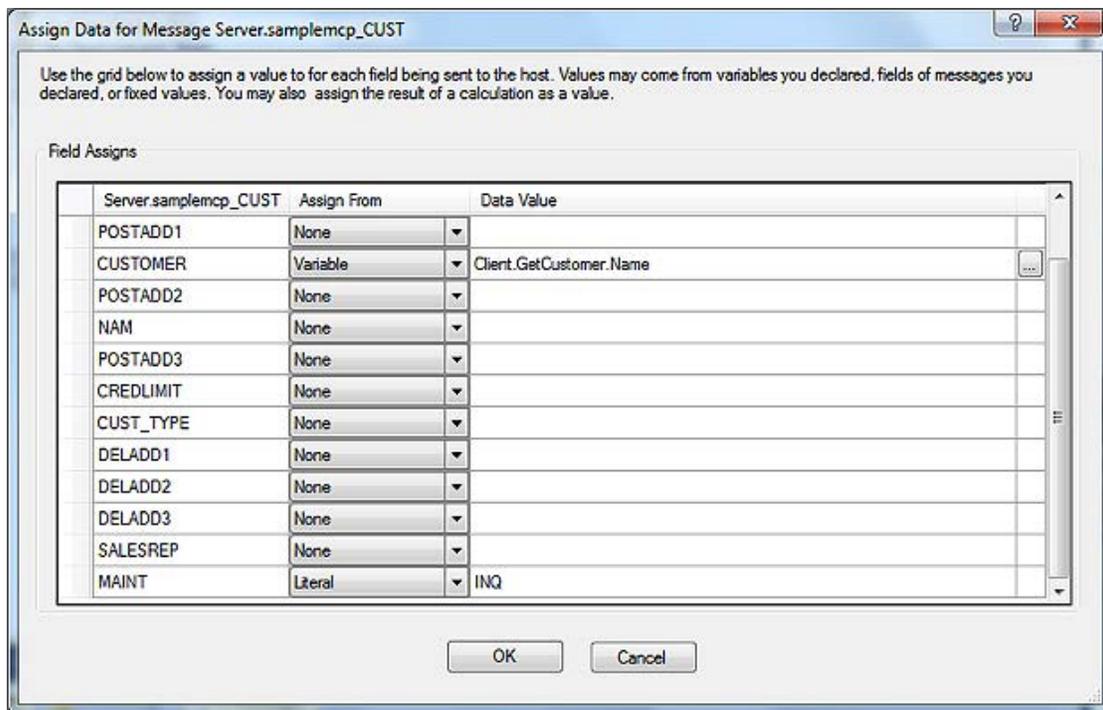


Figure 5. Setting the data mapping.

Once we have built the orchestration, the only thing left to do is determine how to map the fields from the previously defined Client message to the server message that will be sent to the host system. As Figure 5 shows, the “Assign Data” dialogue in ePortal makes this process quite easy. Using this dialogue, we can specify that the “CUSTOMER” field on the host screen should be from the “Name” property on the request message, and that the “MAINT” field should be set to the literal value “INQ.” All other fields can be left blank, as they are not needed for the “GetCustomer” request message.

The result of this process is a new service called “GetCustomer,” which takes a single parameter called “Name.” We can configure ePortal to automatically log on to a host AB Suite system, which allows us to submit an Ispec message without any custom navigation process. So now, when the service is invoked, ePortal will log onto

the system, invoke the CUST screen with the CUSTOMER field set to the contents of the Name property and the MAINT field set to “INQ,” send the request to the host, capture the reply, and then close the connection. The response message from ePortal will contain all fields from the CUST screen.

We could define similar orchestrations to create Add, Update, and Delete actions in exactly the same way, resulting in a set of far more granular services that can limit the functionality available to the consumer. For example, if we only build Update and Change services, but not Add or Delete services – and remove the original auto-generated service – then any consumer of these services will have no way to add or delete records. Alternatively, we could create a custom WCF behavior to restrict a service to only those requests submitted from applications using a particular set of credentials. >>

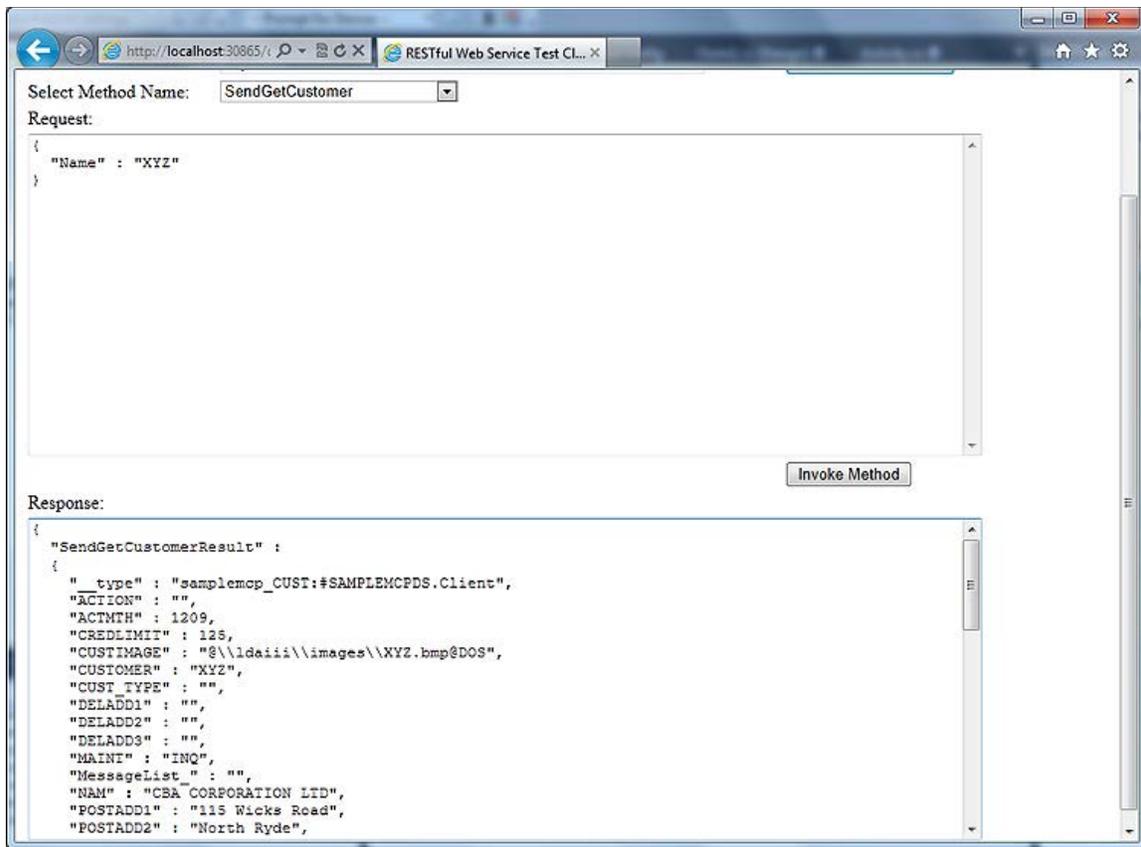


Figure 6. The standard RESTful message interface.

Additionally, ePortal also includes out-of-the-box support for RESTful services, so if we configure ePortal to generate RESTful services using the JSON message format, rather than XML messages, the client application can send and receive RESTful messages. Figure 6 shows an example of this, using the standard RESTful test client included with ePortal. The operating systems for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, tend to use JSON when calling external systems, as parsing a JSON message is far less processor intensive than parsing an XML message. Using this option to create JSON message services makes it very easy to invoke a mainframe function from a custom app written for a mobile device.

Most ClearPath systems already have all the elements of ClearPath ePortal built in and ready for use. We encourage you to explore these capabilities with a pilot project. [Visit our web site to learn more.](#)

If you have questions about ePortal, need help using it in your organization, or would like more information, please drop us an email at ABSuite@unisis.com. And be sure to look for the next article in the series – about looping orchestration – in a forthcoming issue of Developing Agility.

CSC Analyst Spotlight: Oscar Rico

This article is part of a series showcasing the Unisys Customer Support Center (CSC) Analysts who support EAE and Agile Business Suite. Interested in seeing a support analyst featured? Send us your nomination: ABSuite@unisys.com.



Oscar Rico started his career with Unisys in October 1998, as part of a team in Colombia supporting the LINC/EAE-based financial application SFB. Oscar had two key goals when he joined the support organization: familiarize himself with Unisys products and improve his English skills.



The two efforts went hand in hand. As he gained better competency with the English language through independent study programs and working with Unisys colleagues worldwide, Oscar was given greater responsibilities within the

support organization. This resulted in more contact with customers, increased exposure to Unisys hardware and software, and a better understanding of how to address a myriad of support issues.

Fast forward several decades and Oscar is now one of the South American CSC's most trusted analysts. Today, he serves mainly as a critical situation manager, but also provides a blend of technical and management activities as necessary. Though he often directly participates in any critical situation with customers, Oscar spends most of his time providing support for three large companies – a major retailer with EAE applications on ClearPath MCP, a telecommunications company that uses the Unisys Voice Messaging Solution (UVMS), and a healthcare provider running AB Suite on Windows.

These organizations all fall under the umbrella of what Oscar defines as “mission critical.” He gives them this distinction because any issues they encounter can have an immediate, significant impact on their brand reputations, as

well as the daily lives of millions of individuals. This creates a tremendous sense of urgency anytime a situation arises. It also means Oscar must quickly adapt his thought process based on whether the issue lies in EAE or AB Suite, or the MCP or Windows operating environments.

A Trusted Advisor to His Clients

In addition to providing routine support, Oscar often helps these organizations complete special projects. For example, after experiencing greater-than-expected growth in both the number of stores it operates and the variety of products it sells, the EAE on MCP customer needed to increase its product codes from three digits to five. However, with hundreds of stores and thousands of products to its name already, this requirement pushed the company's EAE application and DMSII database to the limit. Knowing this presented a significant roadblock to future growth, Oscar and the rest of the Unisys engineering team worked with the organization to define a process to allow the retailer to expand its application requirements while maintaining a 24-7 production environment.

In addition, Oscar recently helped the healthcare provider migrate an application that is used to assign and print medical appointments and surgery approvals for more than 1.5 million citizens to AB Suite. The migration effort was noteworthy due to the size and complexity of the application involved – which included critical interfaces to external systems and requirements for very >>

fast response times. The innovative way Oscar and his colleagues planned the project – putting an intense focus on collecting all pertinent information about the organization’s EAE environment upfront – was the precursor to the EAE to AB Suite Assessment Service. This rigorous onsite assessment workshop is now a key component recommended for all AB Suite migrations.

“Working with Oscar Rico has given us confidence and a feeling of security.”

– Luis Angel, Grupo Exitó

Finding the Work-Life Balance

Oscar understands that the demands placed on him can be significant, and that the hours are often long and unpredictable, which is why he takes special care to spend time with his wife, son, and daughter – and makes his customary trips to the gym three or four times a week – whenever possible. The stresses of the job aren’t without their benefits, though. The intensity of working with mission-critical customers has allowed Oscar to cope with real-life situations with greater ease and understand that nearly every problem does eventually have a solution.

Resources and Calendar



New additions to our libraries of How To documents, white papers, and other useful information include:

- **How To:** Install Visual Studio 2012 for AB Suite 4.0 **(NEW)**
- **How To:** Install SQL Server for AB Suite 3.0 or 4.0 **(Updated)**
- **Other:** Software Qualification and Support Matrix AB Suite 3.0 **(Updated)**
- **Other:** Software Qualification and Support Matrix AB Suite 4.0 **(NEW)**
- **Other:** AB Suite Release and Support Plan **(NEW)**

To view these and other resources, simply go to public.support.unisys.com and choose “Documentation” in the “Public Information” box located on the left-hand side of the screen. No special login is needed.

We also encourage you to view the list of available [AB Suite training courses](#). These courses are a great educational resource and include a lot of graphics, interactivities, simulations, and demonstrations with voice-over narration.

And for even more training and educational resources, please visit the [Unisys Education & Training web site](#).

Be sure to mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN
Universe Conference	Dallas, Texas	October 13-15, 2014
EAE/AB Suite Symposium	Dallas, Texas	October 13-15, 2014

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