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Topic: What's new with Dojo Toolkit 1.1

Hosted by:

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Jared Jurkiewicz (jaredj)

Adam Peller (peller)

tomyoung: On behalf of developerWorks, I'd like to thank everyone for joining the chat today. We're here with Adam Peller, Becky Gibson, Jared Jurkiewicz, and Roland Barcia to talk about the new Dojo Toolkit 1.1. I'll turn it over to Adam, Becky, Jared, and Roland to introduce themselves and then it will be open for questions.

MadMan has joined the room.

peller: I'm a committer on the Dojo toolkit and work in areas across the toolkit, but spend most of my time in Dijit (the UI portion) and doing internationalization work. I'm also currently the "caretaker" for the DojoX project, where Dojo extensions live.

rbarcia: Hi, I am Roland Barcia, Lead Web 2.0 Architect for Software Services For WebSphere. I have been working with Dojo, Project Zero, the WebSphere Web 2.0 FP, and helping customers enable their applications for Web 2.0.

RichardHoffman has joined the room.

becka11y: I work in the emerging tech. team focusing on Web accessibility. My most recent project has been implementing accessibility using the new Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA) spec. from the W3C.

jared j: Hello, all. I'm Jared Jurkiewicz, a committer to the Dojo toolkit. I primarily worked on the dojo.data API and the dojox.wires components, but I have also worked in various other areas to address bugs and so on. I've also written several applications that directly use Dojo that are used for my work on the WebSphere Application Server, Feature Pack for Web 2.0.

peller: I guess we could start off with a little pre-announce.

peller: Dojo 1.1 just wrapped up yesterday. It won't be officially announced for another day or two.

peller: See <http://download.dojotoolkit.org/>

peller: and here's a quick summary of what's in there: <http://dojotoolkit.org/book/dojo-1-1-release-notes>

peller: are people here new to Dojo? What areas would you like to discuss?

Joehallahhan has joined the room.

gsilverberg has joined the room.

rbarcia: I am interested in knowing the types of applications people are writing with Dojo.

paulamcm has joined the room.

paulamcm: Is there audio?

jared j: Is it often a mix of dojo into an older application, or applications starting from scratch? I know from what I've done they have often been from scratch, but I would like to know what the user community is doing.

jared j: It helps us, as committers, to direct efforts.

peller: paulamcm: just text/chat

kif33 has joined the room.

Joehallahhan: I'm writing a Web 2.0 application for my client, which will be an administrative front-end for an enterprise data exchange application

rdean400: We're mainly using dojo to decorate traditional Struts applications (probably JSF).

Joehallahhan: It uses Dojo widgets. One widget to search for data, and the data will asynchronously appear in a results widget

rbarcia: rdean400: Any challenges you find with mixing Dojo with JSF?

RichardHoffman has left the room.

rdean400: We haven't gotten to JSF yet. We've been waiting to adopt JSF 1.2 with a Java EE 5 version of WebSphere.

rbarcia: So what is the main driver to using JSF + Dojo over using Dojo alone?

paulamcm has left the room.

rbarcia: Joehallahan, which Dojo Widgets did you use in your application?

rdean400: For now, our applications are in Struts, and we're just using basic widgets, like a city suggestion list in several applications, and some tab containers.

Joehallahan: We use the tabbed panel.

jared j: Joehallahan: With regard to how you're exposing your data from the back end, are you taking the approach do it as a datastore that existing widgets can communicate through, or are you doing custom widgets to query and display it?

Joehallahan: We looked at the Dojo datagrid.

Joehallahan: ... but it seemed too heavy.

dvisentin has joined the room.

Joehallahan: We're using the RPCServlet and RPCAdapter.

Joehallahan: ...to invoke session EJBs.

peller: Joehallahan: Heavy in terms of resource? Or complexity?

rdean400: We're not really heavily invested enough in Ajax to write in Dojo alone. Tooling support in RAD would help a lot.

Joehallahan: For the data coming back, we chose XML

Joehallahan: And are looking at doing XSLT transform.

Joehallahan: Application is still under development (in-progress).

jared j: Joehallahan: What is it about Grid that makes it too heavy for what you're doing? What is it that you would want to see in a data grid?

Joehallahan: For the dojo datagrid -- when I say heavy, I mean complexity.

peller: Joehallahan: Yeah, it's actually a pretty compact piece of code, but still hard to understand.

rbarcia: rdean400: Are you mainly interested in RAD supporting drag and drop development for dojo dijits?

peller: Joehallahan: We only got some bug fixes in 1.1, but are looking for ways to make it easier in 1.2, like more declarative markup.

peller: Joehallahan: And generally ways of making "simple tasks simpler".

jared j: Joehallahan: So, to make it simpler ... what would help to make it simpler for you?

alainR: Hi, I wanted to know if the Grid widget is still in the experimental Dojo library in v.1.1, or has it been "stabilized" and moved to the standard Dojo library?

kif33 has left the room.

rbarcia: I know using the Dojo Wires technology has made some of the issues of syncing data between the Grid and the back end easier for me in my apps.

rdean400: That would be very helpful. Our main challenge is that our group is primarily RPG programmers learning newer technologies, and tooling support is essential in helping the developers make the transition.

peller: alainR: That's a common misconception, and one that we're probably guilty of from some of our own early docs.

peller: alainR: dojoX is for extensions, where dojo and dijit are relatively small, core pieces of functionality that we focus on.

peller: dojoX has subprojects that range from "experimental" to "stable" and are marked in their READMEs.

peller: We're looking to build better infrastructure/documentation around this, to make it easier to browse and use the subprojects.

peller: A "stable" DojoX project would carry with it API compatibility and some expectations of support, but typically not the same level as what's in core. We think Grid is one of the most important dojoX projects.

alainR: Yes, that would be helpful. Also, are there any new features in v1.1 that facilitate manipulating images in a Grid?

rbarcia: Our Rational organization is looking to provide some development support in RAD. Currently as part of Project Zero, the Web Based IDE has some drag and drop support for Dojo .

<http://www.projectzero.org/wiki/bin/view/Development/WebIDEGettingStarted>

peller: alainR: Not a whole lot of new Grid features in 1.1 that I'm aware of. Mostly work on stability. I hear there may be some new work on Grid in 1.2.

peller: alainR: Manipulating images how?

rdean400: Ok, thanks. I'll take a look at that. I looked at Project Zero a bit last year, but got too busy to keep up with it.

peller: alainR: Simply displaying images by URL ought to be possible with markup... beyond that, yeah, I don't know of any built-in support. That might involve some custom widgetry.

alainR: First, let me say that I'm new to Dojo. Right now, to include an image in a Grid, the only example code that I have seen requires a call to a function to wrap the image path in an HTML tag.

peller: alainR: Right, that's the simplest possible approach.

rbarcia: alainR: I have used the formatter tag as a way to add events to and wrap img tag as you say. There is always a tradeoff between being flexible.

rbarcia: Will providing some default formatters help?

dvisentin: Will it be possible to create a tree with edit widget as nodes?

peller: The grid is written to be very generic, and pluggable. Sometimes it might seem a bit tedious. Part of the space/performance tradeoff.

Sreenivas has joined the room.

alainR: Yes, it would be nice to have a default "image" formatter.

peller: alainR: We tend to avoid one-liners as a matter of policy to keep the code light, but this one may be a good exception.

tomyoung: For those just joining the chat, we're talking with Adam Peller, Becky Gibson, Jared Jurkiewicz, and Roland Barcia about the new Dojo Toolkit 1.1. Please feel free to jump in with questions or comments for the team.

peller: dvisentin: Sounds like something we should support. Can't say off hand whether we do right now.

peller: <http://dojotoolkit.org/forum/dijit-dijit-0-9/dijit-support/tree-node-editor-and-double-click>

peller: Sounds like something which needs work.

Joehallahan: Any recommendations for sorting data, by column, using the Dojo Grid?

alainR: Another question I have is where can I find additional resources that can show me how to build a custom dijit from start to finish. Unfortunately, I found the online documentation to be terse on the subject.

rdean400 has left the room.

rbarcia: The Dojo Grid supports sorting. You can get details here (<http://www.dojotoolkit.org/book/dojo-book-0-9-1-0/part-2-dijit-dojo-widget-library/advanced-editing-and-display/grid-1-0/sortin>)

jared j: Joehallahan: You click on the column to sort order ascending or descending. For dojo.data backed data models, this just passes the sort to the store which often (depending on the store implementation) requeries with a sorted order and presents it.

peller: alainR: Are you asking about crafting a custom widget or running the optimizer to produce a build?

becka11y: alainR: What documentation are you looking at? The Dojo Book?

Joehallahan: Thanks rbarcia and jaredj.

alainR: I looked at the Dojo book and am more interested in crafting a custom widget.

vpereira has joined the room.

becka11y: alainR: Not sure if there is a "creating a dijit" tutorial, but there are some good resources at <http://dojocampus.org>

alainR: Thanks Becky!

rdean400 has joined the room.

rbarcia: Anyone using the WebSphere Web 2.0 Feature Pack?

becka11y: alainR: Did you see this section in the book: <http://www.dojotoolkit.org/book/dojo-book-0-9/part-3-programmatic-dijit-and-dojo/manipulating-widgets-through-code?>

alainR: A question for Roland: When will the Web 2.0 Feature Pack include Dojo v1.1?

rdean400: I'm in the process of installing the Web 2.0 Feature Pack now.

dvisentin: Is there any tool that checks source written using the old version of Dojo and signals any fault respect current version?

jared j: alainR: We're not allowed to release dates here. They have to come through an official announcement to follow IBM policy. I'm sorry I can't provide you a better answer than that.

alainR: Ok, thanks Roland, I understand.

jared j: dvisentin: Between which versions?

rbarcia: I have worked on customer engagements where they used the JET2 Technology from Eclipse to generate Dojo 1.x apps from existing Dojo 0.4.x. Writing a template should not be that hard.

jared j: alainR: I will, however, log your question and take it back to management to help make decisions on how people are allocated so that things can be released, and so on.

peller: There typically shouldn't be any compatibility issues since 1.0, the 0.4 migration is a bit of work, though.

dvisentin: e.g. from 1.0 to 1.1 (but it'll be useful from 0.4 to 1.x because many examples on the Internet are based on this old release).

peller: So hopefully, porting from 1.0 to 1.1 is a no-op!

peller: Dojo isn't supposed to break any APIs for minor releases.

jared j: dvisentin: 1.0->1.1 should be easy, as no public APIs should have changed. As Peller says.

peller: And there should be deprecation warnings at major intervals.

Sreenivas has left the room.

becka11y: Are people using the i18n features of Dojo?

becka11y: Did accessibility of the widgets affect your decision to use Dojo?

peller: Another thing to look at -- check out <http://api.dojotoolkit.org>.

peller: One of the biggest shortcomings was the state of documentation. We're making good progress on that.

dvisentin: What about the use of some version of Dojo in a portlet running next release of WebSphere Portal that already includes its copy of Dojo ?

peller: (the API docs will be announced with 1.1)

pellor: Dojo 1.1 includes multi-version support. That might help, since you can basically move to a different namespace to avoid collisions.

Joehallahahan: Accessibility was one of the main reasons my project chose Dojo versus Google Web Toolkit (GWT).

becka11y: Joehallahahan: Glad to hear it! We worked hard to make the widgets keyboard, low vision, and screen reader accessible!

jared j: Joehallahahan: Have you found that the accessibility of Dojo works well for your application? Any concerns there?

pellor: dvisentin: Though I'd recommend consolidating on a single version of Dojo if at all possible, just for performance and simplicity. Sometimes in portal, I realize, that's not possible.

Joehallahahan: We're still at an early state of development right now.

Joehallahahan: ... haven't tested accessibility yet.

Joehallahahan: But one of our applications will be public-facing, and it's for a state government agency, where accessibility is critical.

jared j: Joehallahahan: Required, I imagine. Correct me if I'm wrong, Becka11y, but state governments follow the federal rules on accessibility, correct?

becka11y: Yes, should be following section 508 guidelines.

Joehallahahan: jaredj: Yes. At least in the state I'm in. State usually follows the Fed.

vpereira has left the room.

Joehallahahan: Becky and Adam... just wanted to say nice job on your Ajax World 2008 presentation.

tomyoung: Sorry to say it, but we're pretty much out of time. I'd like to thank everyone for joining, and thanks to Adam, Becky, Jared, and Roland for hosting the discussion today. You'll be able to find a link to the transcript for this chat at

http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/websphere/library/chats/0803_barcia/0803_barcia.html

Joehallahahan: "Reaching the Entire World: Accessibility and Internationalization with Dojo"

becka11y: Joehallahahan: Thanks, glad you enjoyed it!