

Open source project to take Ajax mainstream

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The project, called Open Ajax, aims to create a single framework that standardizes development and debugging on a common library of Ajax widgets that could run on multiple Ajax runtimes.

Like J2EE before it, Open Ajax is all about assembling critical mass convergence around a stack to prevent Microsoft from co-opting it. And, like Linux before it, it's about vendors trying to hop a train that was already leaving the station with or without their support.

Besides IBM, which instigated the project, Open Ajax is endorsed by BEA, Borland, the Dojo Foundation, Eclipse Foundation, Google, Laszlo Systems, Mozilla, Novell, Openwave, Oracle, Red Hat, Yahoo, Zend, and Zimbra.

The goal of Open Ajax is to standardize around a common set of widgets, interfaces, and plug-ins to Eclipse so it can morph into an industrial strength rich web development environment. And with the standards, any Eclipse-compliant Ajax toolkit should be able to plug into any compliant Ajax run time, regardless of browser client or server deployment platform.

In effect, Open Ajax is intended to provide tools developers a common target to develop against. By providing a common technology base, it could stimulate an enterprise tools market, just as J2EE did for Java. In so doing, it creates the opportunity to build a critical mass skills base, which further entrenches the technology into the mainstream.

"Having a standard way of writing Ajax applications means we can bring a lot of our own work into Eclipse," said Andi Gutmann, CEO of Zend, which provides PHP scripting tools.

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