

WebSphere Portal Business Solutions Catalog: Getting more value from your portal solution

Welcome to the IBM Websphere Portal Business Solutions Catalog Podcast. I'm Danny Smith, World Wide Channel Marketing for Lotus and with me here today to talk about the Business Solutions Catalog, is Kris Jayaram, Websphere Portal Channel Marketing Manager and founder of the Catalog delivery environment.

Also, Kirsten Kelley, Marketing Manager for Dashboard Accelerator.

To get us started today, I'd like to ask a question to Kris. Kris can you tell our listeners what the Websphere Portal Business Solutions Catalog is and why it is important to them?

Kris

Certainly Danny I'd be glad to. The Web Portal Business Solutions Catalog was created a number of years ago, about five or six years ago and is intended to be a one stop shopping environment for all our Websphere Portal customers and any Systems Integrators who may be implementing for our customers.

The solutions that you find out on this catalog have been written both from IBM and from our business partners. It may contain things such as solutions, portlets, it could contain pure services, and we have a number of services companies that offer their services out there.

The catalog is a world wide product. It is available in multiple languages and solutions are downloaded and put out there in many different languages across the world. It's also very important for our customers to know that we have created this catalog with a level of assurance and that level of assurance is that for our business partner solutions we validate those solutions.

These solutions if we validate them gives it a stronger value proposition for our customers, you have a level of assurance that those solutions are going to actually work when you get them.

Just a little bit more, you can go out onto this catalog and you can search for things that you might need to find. It provides our customers a great deal of flexibility in connecting once you have purchased the Websphere product connecting with and finding solutions that will work with your product and your environment with a level of assurance that the solutions out there are supported and that you can get assistance if you have problems with them.

Danny

Kris you mention this word, "validated" can you tell us a little bit more about what that validation process is all about?

Kris

Absolutely! The validation process is a very important component of our whole process in admitting our IBM business partner solutions into the catalog. I can elaborate more later on how many business partner solutions that we have because we have a significant set.

What we do is we provide these business partners with a methodology to ensure that when they develop a solution, that we understand what version of Websphere Portal it works with and we actually ask them to show it to us so we have a set of technical people who validate, who basically get online with the technical person at the business partner who has developed that solution and asks them to walk us through the solution.

Show us installing it into Websphere Portal, show us the documentation and we walk through the entry that goes into catalog to make sure that it's complete and that we don't have any questions.

We make sure that there's a contact point for support if that item is supported and make sure that all of the things that our customers are going to be using out on the website will actually work.

I will mention that sometimes a few things slip through especially entries that might be a little bit older and we always have a process where our customers can come back to us and ask us questions very easily, if they are having trouble getting a hold of one of the customers or one of the partners with solutions on the catalog.

Danny

Good, so if I'm a listener today then Kris, what can I find when I go out on that catalog?

Kris

That's a great question! You can find a tremendous number of things. We have solutions categorized in a number of different ways. You can come and look for solutions that are industry-based, you can go out and look for solutions that are from just IBM or if you have a particular partner solution that you need you can go search specifically for that.

You can search for a function as well out on the catalog. We have many industry-based solutions that is one of the primary ways that we offer the solutions on the catalog because we know that that's often the way our customers will come seeking capabilities.

You can go out to the catalog and very easily search and find those functions and one of the great things is if you're a customer who's been on the catalog before you may want to take a moment to go out and take a look at it again. Very recently we just did a major update to the catalog and changed the look and feel of it making it much easier to find these kinds of things. It's a terrific opportunity for you to be able to do that.

If you haven't been on the catalog before, we can get you started there and you should take a look at that as well.

Danny

O.k. great now you did reference both IBM solutions and Business Partner solutions so what kind of business partner solutions have you seen with the existing catalog?

Kris

Well Business Partner solutions have been a mainstay for the catalog for quite a few years. We have significant kinds of solutions out there as I mentioned earlier, we have many Systems Integrators that have put their repeatable solutions out on the catalog.

We have a tremendous number of ISVs who have put their capabilities out on the catalog and to date we have about 196 entries on the catalog. We work with those business partners on the catalog to make sure they keep their solutions updated.

From an IBM perspective I will mention that we have a quarterly delivery schedule to the catalog where we keep the solutions and capabilities up-to-date on a very regular basis. It can just address in addition to some of our IBM capabilities out on the catalog. We've got some very exciting new solutions including a fairly new Google gadget Portlet. That Google gadget portlet has had over 2522 downloads since it's been available just within the last six months!

We also have a couple of other IBM capabilities out there. Our IBM Webpage portlet is very popular with over 1428 downloads and also from a partner perspective, just a little feel from some of our top partners in the catalog. They are right now, and these change all the time, a company by the name of <<Telesis>>, <<Gruppo Pro>>, <<Citrix>>, <<Descom Oy>> and Business Objects are our top partners in the catalog.

I can also give you a little bit of statistics. This year we have had 8,302 hits to the catalog that's up 12% from last year in 2006 and we also from a content perspective have had a 50% increase in catalog content so that's some really exciting activity and capabilities that have been going out into the catalog this year.

Danny

Great, great Kris and lastly, I guess the last question for you is, can you talk a little bit about the extensions that you've added to the Websphere Portal Business Solutions Catalog?

Kris

Yes certainly! Our extensions have been very important especially as we have been growing in our strategy on Websphere Portal to extend beyond just Websphere Portal into our whole accelerator area. The Accelerator capabilities that we have are very very critical and we have been working, we started earlier this year and I started working closely with Kirsten Kelley and her team and we implemented a new Dashboard KPI Catalog that we are very excited about, that allow our customers to get a lot more capabilities from IBM to be able to make their Dashboard KPI's when they purchase the Dashboard KPI capability highly valuable to them.

Danny

O.k. thanks Kris for all this great insight, in fact now, what I'd like to do is turn over to Kirsten. Kirsten can ask you a few questions about the Dashboard Key Performance Indicator Catalog.

So first of all Kirsten can you tell us what the KPI Catalog is?

Kirsten

Hi Danny, sure the KPI's or Key Performance Indicators are really just the metrics that are used to measure performance, so Dashboards and the KPI's that populate them bring the right metrics to the right people at the right time.

Danny

Kirsten what can we find today in the KPI Catalog?

Kirsten

Well the Dashboard KPI Catalog is really a branch of the portal catalog as Kris mentioned. It features a robust reusable Dashboard KPI assets and these are available at no charge to Lotus Active Insight and Websphere Dashboard Framework licensees.

What these do is help speed Dashboard deployment for faster time to value. They are essentially reusable development modules that help jumpstart these customer deployments. They are built on a flexible automation framework in SOA and they leverage portal communication and collaboration technologies.

The assets that are in the catalog today provide not only the sample portlets, but sample users, sample roles and data and style sheets, set up scripts and more. It really provides everything a customer needs to get started quickly.

Danny

Kirsten what types of Key Performance Indicators are in the catalog now?

Kirsten

Well listeners of the call today can go to the catalog and see several pre-built portlets for both specific industries and for line of business users. Some of the industry portlets include automotive, government, banking and insurance and we recently added manufacturing. We also have Dashboards that are available for specific line of business users like Executive Dashboards, Sales Dashboards, IT, Finance and this past month we also added a Dashboard for claims.

Danny

So are we expecting any new KPI's soon or how often do you add KPI's to the catalog?

Kirsten

Well, we typically add new KPI Dashboards to the catalog every month and many of the dashboards that you will see on the catalog today are based on real life examples that we built from customer proof of concepts or internal deployments.

We are always interested to hear from customers to see what they would like to see up there next so please send us your feedback we are always anxious to listen.

In addition to the Dashboards I just mentioned, we have a couple new ones coming up; you can continue to watch this page for new additions that are going to target specific areas like retail, oil and gas, compliance and several others!

Danny

O.k. and real important, why is IBM investing these Dashboard KPI's?

Kirsten

Well, IBM is investing in developing these to help the speed the development process for customers. If a customer has a portal infrastructure and then has a need for Dashboard and has the Dashboard Framework to start developing them, they can really leverage these pre-built Dashboards and then just edit them to fit the needs as opposing to building them from scratch.

These are examples that customers can download for free and start playing with to jumpstart their project or incorporate different portlets and ideas into their own deployments. Essentially they are really here to help our customers get going more quickly and see results even faster then ever!

Danny

O.k. and Kirsten last question for you I guess is where can our listeners go today if they want to find more information on these KPI's?

Kirsten

Listeners can go to the Dashboard KPI Catalog and that URL is ibm.com/software/lotus/dashboardkpicatalog

Danny

O.k. thanks again Kirsten for all the great information and you know what? I will flip it back to Kris and just ask you the same question as far as a two part question. Where can our listeners go today if they want to find out anymore information on the topics that you discussed? As well as, what would you suggest our listeners do for next step after this call?

Kris

Certainly Danny! In order to take a look at the catalog our URL is ibm.com/websphere/portal/catalog

That will take you right to the portal catalog web page. In terms of what I recommend you can all do as a next step. We do recommend our customers go to both catalogs and

familiarize yourselves with the sites. See what's out there and see how you can use the capabilities that are out there and become aware of what we have to offer for you out on the catalog to strengthen your business and to really help you develop more powerful solutions in your own shops.

Do note that you do need a portal license in order to use these solutions but once you purchase portal they are an extremely useful tool that everyone can use and really provides a powerful solution that at this point few of our competition can match.

To any of our business partners who are listening out there we also like to encourage you to add your solution to the catalog if you haven't already. You can do this by looking for a link on the left hand nav bar under "Related links" called "Getting Your Solutions into the Catalog". It's quite simple and you can follow a step-wise process through that and there is even a telephone..an email link there for you if you have any questions or get stuck.

That is what we recommend that our partners go do it!

Danny

Kris thanks, and Kris and Kirsten I just want to thank you both for your time that you spent with us here today and a special thanks to our listeners for joining our Podcast. This does conclude the Podcast and have a great day!