

Business Rules

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The Object Management Group continued to expand its efforts to clarify business rules at its recent technical meeting in Orlando by issuing a Request for Information for Business Rule Management and a Request for Proposals for an Organization Structure Metamodel. Work is continuing on the Business Semantics of Business Rules proposals.

The Business Rule Management RFI presents an opportunity for anyone, whether or not they are OMG members, to provide input regarding the management of all kinds of business rules in business information systems, and whether there is a need or desire to standardize some aspects of business rule management. In an environment where there are thousands of business rules, many of which are subject to frequent changes that must be made quickly under business control, the need for robust rule management is apparent. Open, vendor-neutral rule management standards would help assure interoperability of different rule management systems and technologies. Such standards would allow a valuable corporate rule base to migrate to new technology, to more easily support growth and change of the company and its rule base, implement mergers, and interoperate with regulatory rule bases.

The Business Rule Management RFI questionnaire is open-ended, allowing either brief or extended comments. It is comprehensive, and responders are not expected to respond to all questions to provide meaningful input. The Business Rule Management RFI can be obtained from www.omg.org/docs/bei/04-06-03.pdf. Responses are due October 11, 2004. Any of you who have views about business rule management that you would like to contribute to the standardization process are encouraged to submit your response to the Business Rule Management RFI.

The organization of an enterprise is a basic element in the design of the enterprise. It defines the basic mechanisms of assignment of work and accountability. A standard metamodel for design of an organization structure will enable the development of related views and tools for organizational analysis, and will support the development of broader business models of which the organization structure is a basic component. The metamodel sought by the Organization Structure Metamodel RFP will support design, analysis, and modification of the organization as well as other business modeling that involves aspects of the organization structure. It will provide for a consistent representation of organization information used in software systems. For example, workflow systems that assign people to activities that determine their authority in certain processes. It is important to be able to transform an organization model to a run-time directory that can be accessed efficiently by a number of applications. Use of a shared organizational model will also enable the organization information to be maintained without the duplicated effort frequently required to maintain similar information for multiple applications and directories throughout the enterprise.

The Organization Structure Metamodel RFP (OSM) is available at www.omg.org/docs/bei/04-06-05.pdf. Letters of intent are due November 8, 2004, and initial proposals are due January 10, 2005. The OMG is currently looking for submitters for OSM. If your company is interested in submitting a proposal, or being part of a submission team, please submit a Letter of Intent by the due date. An LOI



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signals interest, and is required for eligibility to submit, but does not commit you to submit a proposal. Letters of Intent are used by the OMG to help manage the submission process.

The proposals for Business Semantics of Business Rules (BSBR) are continuing to evolve. One of the submitters has submitted a second revised proposal and has attracted additional co-submitters. The revisions show a continuing refinement of the natural-language-and-logic approach I discussed last time. The submitters are continuing to dialogue. A major BSBR milestone will occur on August 23, 2004, at the OMG Technical Meeting in Montreal. Revised submissions from all submitters are due before then, and BSBR presentations are planned on that day in the Business Enterprise Integration Domain Task Force meeting. The Montreal meeting will also continue the ongoing discussion about business modeling.

