



IBM Software Group

Experiences from the UK WebSphere User Group

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UK WUG Founder and IBM Representative on the WUG Board

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@business on demand software

Topics

- **How & why the WUG became successful**
- **Some experience and best practices**



The UK WebSphere User Group

- **Founded in March 2001**
 - First full meeting in June 2001
- **25 events held so far**
 - Two events a year:
 - March in London – up to 300
 - September in Edinburgh - up to 190
- **Parallel presentation streams, high profile speakers, vendor exhibition, lunch & refreshments provided**
- **WUG is independent of IBM and maintains its own finances**
- **The WUG has a clear focus of interest around the Application Server and tools,**
 - with special interest groups on related areas: Java, Portal, SOA, Security, Integration, architectures, etc.



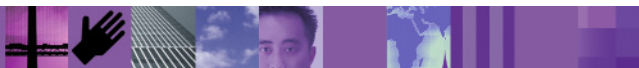
A typical early UK WUG event (June 2001)

10:00	Chairman's Introduction - Nigel Gale
10:15	Trends & Direction - IBM reveal the future of WebSphere
11:00	User Contacts - An open user forum
<i>11:15</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:45	Master Class - Performance Tuning - learn valuable tips and tricks to get the most from WebSphere (Jerry Cuomo, WebSphere Performance Lab., IBM Raleigh)
<i>13:00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00	Development Tooling - a look at the latest WebSphere development tools (Mark Tomlinson, IBM)
<i>14:45</i>	<i>Break</i>
15:15	User Presentation - Learn from a users real experiences - Steve Crockett (Legal & General Insurance)
16:00	Chairman's Summary - Nigel Gale



A typical UK WUG event (March 2009)

9:30 -11:00	11:00 -11:30	11:30 -13:00	13:00 -14:00	14:00 -15:00	15:00 -15:30	15:30 -16:30
KEYNOTE: WebSphere Directions - Rob High (IBM US)	Coffee Break	The POWER 3: IRules (ILOG) Business Event Process - Andrew Howarth (IBM)	Lunch	Enabling EA and BPM Collaboration - Rob High (IBM US)	Coffee Break	WSRR/ALE and Service Governance - Rob High (IBM US)
OSGi in WebSphere v7.0 - Matt Perrins, Martin Gale	Coffee Break	Managing an Enterprise WebSphere Environment - Richard Bettison, David Savers	Lunch	WebSphere Security Overview - Simon Kapadia	Coffee Break	WAS Migration/Interoperability 7.0 - Andrew Leonard
Use Cases for DataPower ESB, B2B and LLM Appliance - Bharat Bhushan	Coffee Break	WebSphere MQ v7 'what's new' - Pete Siddall	Lunch	WebSphere MQ v7 - Pub/Sub - Pete Siddall	Coffee Break	WebSphere ESB and Process Server v6.2 - David Currie
(No Session) -	Coffee Break	Web 2.0 for Business and IT - Rick Robinson	Lunch	Developing Web 2.0 UI with iWidgets and Dojo - Martin Gale	Coffee Break	Building Situational Apps with WebSphere sMash - Robin Fernandes
Building an authoring experience for Portal - Thomas Nilsson	Coffee Break	Good practice in planning your Portal project - Richard Shooter	Lunch	Real-World Experiences Using Portal Capabilities - Graham Harper	Coffee Break	Portal the face of SOA at London & European - Chris Booker
(No Session) -	Coffee Break	SIB, WMO and SCA directions for WebSphere products - Graham Wallis	Lunch	Enterprise Messaging with SIB, MQ, DataPower & MQ - Nigel Roper	Coffee Break	Complex SIBus Topologies and WAS V7 Improvements - David Ware
Get your BPM Target State Faster: Roadmaps & Reuse - Anton Heseltine	Coffee Break	Interactive Process Design: Business Modeler - Paul Smith	Lunch	AS FOR WEBSPPHERE PORTFOLIO UPDATE -	Coffee Break	AS FOR WEBSPPHERE INTEGRATION USER GROUP -
(No Session) -	Coffee Break	(No Session) -	Lunch	RAM of events originating from non-IBM sources - Matt Turnbull	Coffee Break	Integration hub is valuable, how do we prove it? - Richard Brown
Reading the runes for Java runtimes - Tim Ellison	Coffee Break	WebSphere Real Time: Deterministic Java - Alan Stevens	Lunch	IBM Monitoring/Diag Tools for Java: Health Center - Brian Peacock	Coffee Break	SAME AS WEB 2.0 SIG -
(No Session) -	Coffee Break	Project Blue Spruce: The Web Browser - Future - David Boloker	Lunch	Faster Stronger Harder with Low Latency Messaging - Ben Newton	Coffee Break	Building a secure forms solution with DataPower - Stu Smith
SAME AS WEBSPPHERE APPLICATION SERVER PLATFORM -	Coffee Break	RADv7.5 Update (including new SCA tools) - Anita Rass Wan	Lunch	Java EE Support in WAS7: JSR 311 JAX-RS and JPA - Matt Perrins	Coffee Break	Technical Overview of WAS7 Web Services - Sara Mitchell
(No Session) -	Coffee Break	Mediation Policy & Service Gateway in WESB 6.2 - Brian Hulse	Lunch	(No Session) -	Coffee Break	(No Session) -



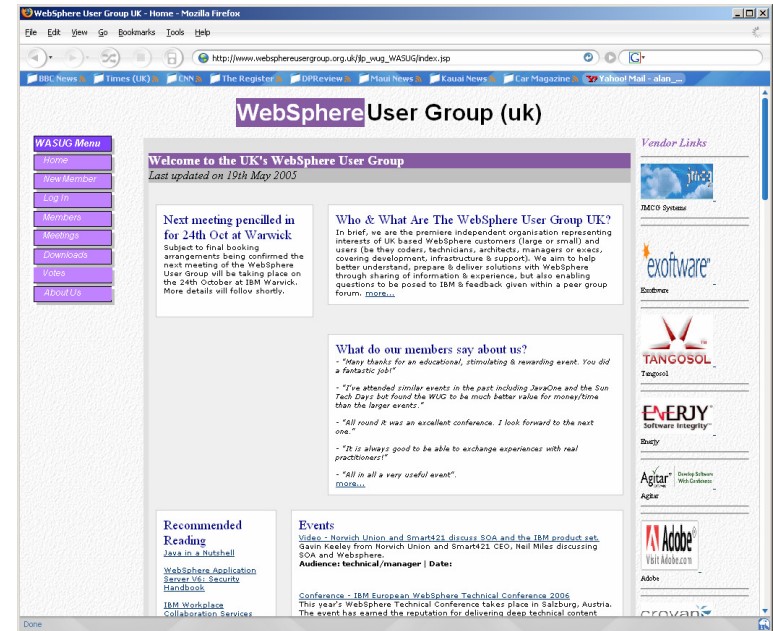
The UK WUG's Constitution

- **All agree that independence is important**
 - For the credibility of the WUG
 - To differentiate it from IBM Marketing events
- **WUG is run by a Board as follows:**
 - Chairman: Rick Smith (Canada Life)
 - Deputy Chairman: Colin Renouf (Lloyds TSB)
 - Treasurer: Chris Mason (Aegon Insurance)
 - WebMaster and Communications: Alex Moss (John Lewis)
 - IBM Representative: Alan Chambers (IBM)
- **The Board meet rarely these days**
 - but plan events by conference call and e-mail
- **Rules set out in a constitution document, available on the website**
 - Designed to aid smooth working and remove inhibitors to attendance
 - E.g. no head-hunting at events, no overt selling



The UK WUG Website

- www.websphereusergroup.org.uk
- Created by our own WebMaster (works for John Lewis)
- Provides:
 - WebSphere news, useful links, etc
 - Details of forthcoming events
 - Registration for events
 - Maintains membership list (about 1600 members currently)
- It's a lot of work to develop and maintain!
 - Now looking at alternatives



Money!

- **The UK WUG manages its own finances**
 - Has a bank account, operated by its Treasurer
 - Main expenses:
 - Hire of venues for events (other than those hosted by IBM)
 - Catering for events
 - Board member travel expenses
 - where reasonable and unclaimable from member's employer
- **Main revenue sources:**
 - Attendance fee – dropped once numbers reached critical mass
 - Vendors who exhibit at events (usually around £500 for space for a pop-up stand)
- **The trick (don't tell IBM!):**
 - Charge vendors to exhibit at an event hosted and paid for by IBM
 - Use this to subsidise other events
- **Rule of thumb:**
 - Keep enough in the WUG account to cover the full cost of a failed event
 - Usually about £5000 is the minimum (currently over £11,000)



Getting Started

Our experiences from 8 years of the WUG



Our experience: presentations

■ **Very popular:**

➤ User presentations:

- a customer describes experience of implementing something with WebSphere, including tips and advice, problems encountered and solutions, recommendations, etc..

➤ Masterclasses:

- usually by IBM Consultants discussing some component or technique in detail, with examples, best practices, etc.

➤ Futures/directions presentations:

- From product architects/product planners.

■ **Quite popular:**

➤ Emerging technologies:

- presentations by IBM lab. people on new technologies that may affect users in the future

➤ Product updates on core WebSphere products (e.g. WAS 7.0)

■ **Not popular**

➤ Anything that sounds like a sales pitch or marketing

➤ Presenters who don't have extensive good practical experience with WebSphere (i.e. waffle)



Our experience: speakers

- **We started off using mostly local (UK) speakers**
 - IBM Software Services is an excellent source of very good speakers
 - The Hursley lab have some very good people on a wide range of topics and like the chance to get out and meet some “real” people
- **US-based lab speakers**
 - Even in the early days if we asked, we usually got them
 - These days we usually have several at any event
- **Tip: many US-based lab speakers are very keen to get out and meet customers and are very enthusiastic about coming over for a WUG.**
 - If your IBM team can line up some customer calls on the same trip, it's even better.
 - Sometimes they have personal reasons for wanting to come
- **Most speakers enjoy the experience and are willing to encourage others to volunteer**
 - You can build a network of lab. supporters for your group
- **Customer speakers are often poor presenters (lack of practice) but the audience doesn't mind if the content is good**
 - Much better than a slick presenter saying nothing for an hour!



Our experience: money

In the early days, we charged about £25 for entrance but no annual membership fee

- ◆ This was unavoidable but was an inhibitor to attendance
 - partly because of the cost but also because members had to get approval from their employers to pay and claim this

We have always charged vendors to exhibit

- ◆ As attendance as increased, vendors have become more keen to exhibit

We reached a critical mass in 2003

- ◆ Stopped charging for entrance
- ◆ Massively increased attendance (from 60-90ish to over 200)
- ◆ Fully funded the WUG from vendor fees

You will have to feel your way to get this right for you

- ◆ Or find sponsors/hosts for all your events and manage without independent money at all



Our experience: feedback & participation

- **Too many members are happy to attend but do nothing to contribute**
- **You may need to cajole people to:**
 - ◆ Offer themselves as speakers for user experience sessions (very hard)
 - ◆ Join the committee/board
 - ◆ Speak up at an event to provide suggestions/ideas for future meetings
 - ◆ Fill in a feedback form (you have to offer goodies in return)
- **No helpful suggestions here – just be aware of the problem!**



Our experience: benefits of having a WUG

An opportunity to learn from experts

- Who aren't trying to sell you something
- Other users
- IBM and independent consultants
- IBM lab developers
- Choice of topics decided by members via their committee/board

Networking and sharing

- Discover and share experience with other users
- Find out who else is using WebSphere
 - even the ones that aren't referenceable by IBM
- Feel part of a community - safety in numbers

A forum through which common issues may be fed back to IBM



Why volunteer to run your WUG?

You decide what content to include in WUG events

- Reflecting members interests as well as your own

Form very strong relationship with the rest of the committee

- Including your IBM representative
- can be useful sometimes for non-WUG stuff

Enjoyable and satisfying

- When you see a successful event running that you've organised

Good on your CV/Resume



Quotes from UK WUG Board members

"...a chance to make contacts with Websphere people from other companies, exchange technical tips, and add some additional variety to my jobs"

"my employer felt that it might give some additional leverage with IBM"

"...occasional direct access to the yanks has speeded up some issue resolution"

"I don't have to go to such lengths to justify attendance at the user group meetings themselves"

"networking with other users and, especially in the earlier days, providing an alternative to the lack of technical documentation (redbooks etc)"

"I actually found out about a useful, undocumented feature in 3.0.2 ... at the kick-off meeting"

