

The politics of Java

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Politics

- ...is boring
- ...is dramatic
- ...is important
- ...is irrelevant
- ...is just an unfortunate part of life

We can't escape politics!

Java politics

- Money
- Power

Sun Microsystems

- Hippy company
- Trusted open source company
- Tended to do the Right Thing
- Went out of business!
- Now "Oracle America"

Oracle

- Focussed on the enterprise
- Software sales and support
- Use open source as a business tool
- Good at making money

IBM

- Focussed on the enterprise
- Software sales and support
- Use open source as a business tool
- Good at making money

Google

- Focussed on the web and consumer
- Advertising business model
- "Don't be evil"
- Active in open source, but as a business tool
- OK at making money

Apache Software Foundation

- Open Source foundation
- Not-for-profit
- Pragmatic license
- Ensure that licensing situation is clear
- Projects in the driving seat, not the Board

All have a piece of Java

- Sun → Oracle America
- Oracle
- IBM
- Google
- Apache

Open standard

- 1996 – "Java will be an open standard"
 - what we would now call Java SE
- ISO proposed
- Difficulty agreeing how it would work
- Sun wanted to retain patents and other IP
- All about control
 - with a dash of Microsoft lobbying

JCP

- 1998 – JCP formed
- Multiple vendors work together
- Initially just companies, later individuals
- Means to influence Sun's control of Java
- Way for others to do direct work for Java
- Working together for a greater result
- Sun guaranteed itself certain powers

JCP

- Not an organisation
- Just a department
- All staff and costs funded by Sun Oracle
- All legal agreements with Sun Oracle
- No dispute resolution process
 - relied on owner being benevolent
 - relied on fair play

Apache

- Not originally a member of JCP
- JSRs not originally implementable in OSS
- Apache negotiated with Sun
- Keynote announcement at JavaOne
- JSRs could then be in OSS
- Apache joined JCP and Executive Committee
- Lots of JSRs implemented at Apache

Java SE

- Java SE 5 and 6 are just JSRs
- No different to any other JSR
- So, Apache implemented it
- Sun didn't believe that was possible
- When it happened, they didn't like it
- Used nasty legal backdoor to block Apache
- TCK (testing kit) needed to check Harmony
- Political stalemate for years
- Long delay to Java SE 7

Executive committee

- 16 members discuss/control Java SE/EE
- 15 (including Oracle) took Apache's side
- 1 (Sun) did not
- No dispute resolution → stalemate

Oracle takeover

- Oracle backed Apache, right?
- No, they magically changed their minds
- Absolute power corrupts absolutely
- Situation finally clear
- Apache cannot trust the word of Sun/Oracle
- Apache left the JCP
 - with Doug Lea and Tim Pierls

Real reason?

- Google (Android)
- Oracle targetted Google with a lawsuit
- Heart of the lawsuit is Apache Harmony
- Oracle cannot give TCK to Harmony without compromising the lawsuit

Vibrant Java platform

- Oracle management claim
- "Number one priority is vibrant Java platform"
- "More important than making money from Java"
- Yet denying Apache is surely hugely damaging to the vibrant platform concept
- I believe the observed facts suggest lawsuit against Google is more important than having a vibrant Java platform

Politics continues

- Hudson → Jenkins
- OpenSolaris → Illumos
- OpenOffice → LibreOffice
- Java → ???

Fork of OpenJDK?

- No
- GPLv2 doesn't protect against patents
- There are now known patents in play
 - due to Google lawsuit
- Forking OpenJDK would be a Bad Idea

- GPL freedoms?
- Don't make me laugh

The Deal

- There used to be an implicit Deal
- The owner of Java invests time and money
- The community makes the investment relevant

- I wish Oracle understood this

Questions

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