EGL CASE STUDY: Streamlining Illinois State University’s Application Submission process

The Challenge:
To streamline the undergraduate application form submission process for Illinois State University. The University used to hand out paper forms to students which were hand filled and submitted to the university where data from the form was fed to IBM System z through various offices.

The Solution:
To develop a web based interface for the application form, where students could enter their data and that data would be transported via a web service to the IBM System z.

Benefits:
The need for a paper based form system was eliminated and any chance of error in data entry was now removed, as the data was validated on the client side and the student could always change his/her data before the final submission. Half filled applications could now be saved on the mainframe and updated/submitted anytime. Another advantage was the elimination of the manual data entry by the university staff upon receiving the paper application which was always prone to human errors.

Details:
The Illinois State University (referred to as ISU hereafter) had a paper based form for undergraduate students to apply for their graduation. The form needed to be filled by hand and then submitted to the university where it would pass through 2 to 3 different offices and the data from the form would then be fed to an IBM System z. Our task was to assist the ISU in streamlining and ‘webifying’ the entire process as the old process involved 2-3 steps and was error prone and cumbersome.

The most expeditious way to do it was, obviously, using RDz and EGL. Using RDz, a webservice was created that encapsulated the different data entry operations on the System z. Next, using EGL, a web interface was designed for the application form. Client side validation was used to prevent the students from entering invalid data.

The student was required to enter his/her ID number on the webpage. Upon entry of a valid ID number, some of the relevant data about that particular student (For example City, State, and Program etc.) were automatically filled on the webpage.

JSF pages were used to design the client interface and using EGL’s JSF handler, the business logic was written that validated all the form fields and submitted data to the mainframe. Upon the entry of an ID number, the webservice would fetch the details of the particular student and upon submission of the form; the webservice would submit the data to the mainframe.

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