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Tasktop Supports Integration with ScrumWorks Pro and ThoughtWorks Adaptive ALM Tools

By Srinu Penchikala, InfoQ

[Tasktop](#) Technologies, the company behind the Eclipse [Myllyn](#) Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) integration framework, now supports integration with the latest release of Danube Technologies' agile software development software ScrumWorks Pro. The connector, available as an extension to Tasktop Pro, allows software developers to retrieve all tasks and user stories stored in ScrumWorks Pro from within the Eclipse IDE. For each artifact (backlog items, tasks, and impediments) accessed in the IDE, the task-focused interface shows only the relevant source code.

Tasktop also announced at the recent Agile 2009 conference, the upcoming integration with ThoughtWorks Adaptive ALM Connector. Set for release with Tasktop Pro in October, the connector will provide direct access to ThoughtWorks Studios products from within the Eclipse IDE. With the connector, the users won't have to toggle between the browser, e-mail and IDE to gather information necessary to complete their application development tasks.

Tasktop released Tasktop Pro 1.5 back in June, which builds on the Galileo release of Eclipse 3.5 and Mylyn 3.2. The new features include a redesigned task editor with a streamlined UI, making scanning task updates faster than browser-based access. This release introduces the Mylyn Connector Discovery tool, which makes it easy to find and install new Mylyn integrations into the Eclipse IDE using an Apple App Store-like interface. The new version also includes the integrations for IBM Rational ClearQuest, and expanded support for Atlassian tools JIRA, Bamboo, Crucible and FishEye.

Rational ClearQuest: Mylyn integration for Rational ClearQuest allows teams who are using the change management software to work with ClearQuest artifacts directly from the Eclipse IDE. The connector uses the new Open Services for Lifecycle Collaboration (OSLC) interfaces to ClearQuest; OSLC is a community effort to develop specifications for software lifecycle resources and interfaces to improve tool interoperability.

Atlassian Connector: The latest release (version 1.1) of the Atlassian Connector for Eclipse, built in collaboration with Tasktop, introduces Eclipse integration for its FishEye SCM insights and enhanced Mylyn

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connectors for JIRA issues, Crucible code reviews and Bamboo build management.

InfoQ spoke with Mik Kersten, CEO of Tasktop Technologies, about the recent release of Tasktop and the new integrations with the other tool vendors. Responding to a question on how the software development teams who are using Agile, XP or Lean software development methodologies can use Tasktop and Mylyn software, Mik said:

Tasktop has its roots in tool support for agile development. All of the projects I have worked on in the past decade have been developed using agile methods, and the task-focused interface evolved as a way to automatically link what we work, e.g., tasks, user stories, issues and bugs, with the code that we produce. The Eclipse Mylyn project provides a framework for integrating any kind of task, backlog or project management technology with the developer's workflow by making tasks a first class part of the Eclipse IDE. This makes it possible for developers to work with backlog items alongside their code. Their workspace shows only the code related to the story or task they're working on and their outgoing changes are organized automatically. It's a lot easier to use agile methods when they are integrated into your workflow, and when you can collaborate with the artifacts that you use for planning and project tracking, right within the IDE.

Can you give us more details on how the new ScrumWorks Pro connector will help the developers with software development as well as project management tasks in a typical Java development project?

Think of Tasktop as the tool for connecting the agile process to the developer's workbench. To succeed with agile, you need a project management repository that supports the flavor of agile that you're interested in. Danube Technologies is a thought leader in Scrum, so if you choose ScrumWorks Pro your product owners and ScrumMasters should be happy. But prior to our partnership with Danube, the developer was left switching back-and-forth between ScrumWorks and the IDE. With the Tasktop connector, everything is integrated and linked. If you click a Java stack trace in a defect, the stack trace opens up instantly in the editor and starts populating the task context. If you put a code comment in a Java file that refers to a user story, you can click the ID of that user story and have it open up instantly using the rich task editor, even if you're offline. If you're using one of the



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Tasktop Certified source repositories, such as SVN via Subclipse, the change set for the ScrumWorks backlog item you're investigating will be automatically created and linked back from the revision history in SVN to ScrumWorks.

With the new integration of Tasktop with ClearQuest, Atlassian tools and ScrumWorks Pro, is there a round-trip traceability between the requirements, test cases, and the source code?

We have two key goals for integrating these Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) technologies. One is to provide seamless linking between the ALM tools and the IDE. The other is to provide federation between the amazingly wide variety of ALM technologies in use. Almost every customer we talk to has multiple bug/task/issue trackers and suffers from a lack of integration between them.

To enable this rich ecosystem of integrations, we provide open source APIs in Mylyn that allow a wide range of task, change, build, source and test management systems to be connected. The Mylyn project provides some reference implementations, such as connectors to Bugzilla, Trac and CVS. Our ecosystem of third party integrations provides support for dozens of commercial and open source ALM solutions. For example, you can download the SpringSource Tool Suite (STS) that we've been building with SpringSource, then install Tasktop Pro along with Tasktop Certified integrations for ScrumWorks Pro, Subversion as well as Atlassian's JIRA, Bamboo and Crucible. The result is that you have an IDE that seamlessly integrates a diverse ALM stack containing multiple best-of-breed technologies. Your code reviews, defects, Scrum planning and builds are all integrated with the Task List, task contexts allow you to focus your coding on Java and Spring Beans. Tasktop Pro layers on top of this so that you can create a user story from an Outlook or Gmail thread, and instantly restore your browser session in Firefox when you return to working on fixing that bug in your web app. This traceability and automation is enabled by the Mylyn APIs, and there's more on the way.

What's the future road map of Tasktop product?

First, we are continuing on our mission of creating more connectors. We have thousands of votes for various tools that we don't yet support, so if you're in need of a connector, please make sure to cast your vote to help us prioritize our connector backlog.



The second key focus for the fall release of Tasktop is improving the cross-repository support. We already allow the developer to work with multiple task repositories side-by-side and to transfer individual tasks between them. Next we're providing the ability to link tasks between various repositories. For example, you'll be able to make user stories in ScrumWorks or Rally depend on defects created in ClearQuest or Bugzilla. We've had a lot of interest in this kind of cross-repository federation, and between new APIs coming in Mylyn and the OSLC effort that we're undertaking with IBM, this is now possible.

Finally, we are evolving the Task List to give the developer better visibility into the planning process, in particular into Scrum. Not only do we use Scrum internally, and for joint development work with three of our partners, we've seen steady growth in the number of our users and partners adopting this methodology. So in addition to all the flexibility that you have in setting up your Task List for various planning and management practices, Scrum and Scrum-like methods are going to start playing a first class role as well.

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