

Cisco Systems

www.cisco.com

By Antone Gonsalves

February 11, 2009

Cisco plans to incorporate Actuate's open source Business Intelligence and Reporting Tools to the Web-based interface of the network equipment maker's Secure Access Control Server.

ACS is an identity networking technology that simplifies user management by combining authentication, user and administrator access, and policy control.

BIRT, which is Actuate's Eclipse Foundation project, will provide ACS users with interactive data for network monitoring and planning, according to Actuate. In addition, the software provides ad-hoc query and report design tools for creating reports within the parameters set by IT staff.

Among the benefits of using BIRT on top of Cisco ACS is the ability to get aggregate views of system activity at the transaction level for both network access and device administration, according to Actuate, a developer of open-source BI software. Other capabilities include a view of network monitoring and planning, the ability to access problem detection and troubleshooting and to report on entitlement and compliance. Users also can set up alerts with thresholds and triggers on authentication activity for early detection of abnormal operations or trends.

"Actuate's reporting technology, embedded directly in ACS, allows network administrators to monitor and analyze who accesses the network and when," Neil Mehta, engineering manager for Cisco, said in [a statement](#) released this week. "Previously users wanting to monitor network access had to gather the raw data from ACS and cobble together custom reports themselves."

Eclipse BIRT, which is primarily of interest to Java developers, has attracted [wide interest](#) since its release in 2005. The software provides a report designer plug-in for the Eclipse integrated development environment and run-time reporting and charting engines for Java-environment deployment or via Eclipse Rich Client Platform (RCP) technology.

BIRT is available for free download and use under the Eclipse Public License, which allows developers to separately license improvements they make to the code.

Actuate put a big focus on BIRT in [last year's release](#) of Acuate 10, an upgrade of the vendor's flagship software, which is particularly popular among financial services companies. The latter use the software to develop interactive investment reports for clients over the Web, for example.

New features in Actuate 10 included Ajax-based BIRT viewing environment that lets end users customize Web content, JavaScript APIs for developers to more easily integrate BIRT content with other content, and new Flash-based widgets and gadgets.

Information source from UBM TechWeb (http://intelligent-enterprise.informationweek.com/channels/performance_management/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=TXLB4NLRO4O15QE1GHPSKHWATMY32JVN?articleID=213403848) on 8/30/2010