Sun Beefs Up NetBeans

May 8 2007

New features of the Sun NetBeans open-source IDE include support for Ruby on the JVM as well as new service and support options.

Sun Microsystems and the NetBeans community will announce the availability of the NetBeans 6.0 Integrated Development Environment Preview release at the company's NetBeans Day prelude to its annual JavaOne conference on May 7.

NetBeans 6.0 extends support beyond Java and C/C++ by providing features for the Ruby and JavaScript dynamic scripting languages, as well as support for the latest Java standards while retaining NetBeans' ease of use and high productivity, the company said.

NetBeans Day is but one element of an entire day of community-related events sponsored by Santa Clara, Calif.-based Sun at an event it is calling CommunityOne Day that is being held here at the Moscone Center.

Sun is also announcing enhancements to the NetBeans GUI Builder that include support for new desktop technologies, such as Beans Binding (Java Specification Request 295) and the Swing Application Framework (JSR 296). And building on NetBeans' history of providing innovative solutions to developers, the NetBeans GUI builder (formerly code-named Matisse) continues to help Swing developers build graphical user interfaces, the company said.

In addition, Sun, like Microsoft and others, is beefing up its support for the Ruby dynamic language. JRuby, the implementation of Ruby for

Java, which is run by two Sun engineers, is included with the NetBeans Ruby support, allowing developers to use Ruby on Rails with existing Java code. Other features of the release include improved code editing, inspection and navigation capabilities, local history, integrated support for Subversion, and extensive profiling features integrated into the standard distribution.

Moreover, in NetBeans 6.0 the complete set of features from packs, such as the Visual Web Pack, will be delivered via a single install program. The new install program will allow developers to customize their development environment, choosing only the tools that they need. The single NetBeans 6.0 installer expedites configuration of the developer's environment and no longer requires the installation of multiple packs to add features to the IDE, Sun officials said.

ICEsoft Technologies, provider of standards-compliant, AJAX-based solutions for developing and deploying Java EE rich Internet applications, has made NetBeans an important part of its developer offering. "Integrating with NetBeans and the Visual Web Pack is a key component of our strategy for acquiring and securing new customers," said Robert Lepack, vice president of marketing and product management for ICEsoft. "ICEfaces takes full advantage of the Visual Web Pack's design-time capabilities to deliver a true rapid application development environment for AJAX-enabled JSF applications."

"During the last 24 months, we have seen a surge of interest, with adoption of NetBeans doubling each year," said Jeet Kaul, vice president of developer programs at Sun. "We expect the momentum to further skyrocket with the launch of NetBeans 6. This is just another example of the tremendous momentum Sun is experiencing with its open-source initiatives. With all of the features that are being added and the new install experience, NetBeans 6.0 is the only IDE you need."

Sun offers a Try and Buy program - starting May 8 and running through June 12, Sun will offer the developer community a free 60-day trial of a complete Sun system for Java and Solaris application development, as well as unlimited online developer support to answer programming questions and online developer training courses as two key features of Sun Developer Service Plans. When trial systems are purchased, customers can save 25 percent off the list price when purchasing a Sun Developer Service Plan package, which includes product phone and escalation support and training credits, the company said.

Moreover, Sun is offering a tiered set of support services for NetBeans, ranging from single incident to comprehensive developer support, the company said.

JavaOne runs May 8-11 at the Moscone Center.

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Citation: Sun Beefs Up NetBeans (2007, May 8) retrieved 10 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2007-05-sun-beefs-netbeans.html