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Make Your Workflows Smarter

Do you have workflows with many manual tasks that slow down your business? Or, do you scale back workflows because there are simply too many manual tasks? Basic workflow robots can automate some common tasks, but not everything. This presentation will show how advanced robots called "expression robots" can be set up to perform everything from simple tasks such as: moving, creating folders, renaming, changing or creating an attribute, and revising, to more complex tasks like: creating a pdf, or even launching a session of Creo Parametric and performing a specific modeling task. Expression robots are able to utilize the Java API and Info*Engine to do almost anything you can imagine! Best of all, these tools are supported by PTC and will work with later releases of Windchill. Limited knowledge of Java, Info*Engine, and XML are required.

- The attendee will learn what task expression robots are capable of performing.
- The attendee will learn what is involved in setting up an expression robot.
- The attendee will gain a basic understanding of simple Info*Engine tasks.
Make your Workflow Smarter

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The Engineering Services Contract (ESC) at Kennedy Space Center provides services to NASA for the design and development of flight and ground systems in support of manned space flight. The ESC process support team provides for efficient optimized design and development processes through development, configuration, and implementation of software tools, training, documentation and standards. The team of 7 people supports over 200 engineers and design specialists using Windchill, Pro-E, NX, AutoCAD, and other design and analysis tools.
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- Add Expression Robot to Workflow
- Call Java Class from Robot
- Brief Introduction of Info*Engine Tasks
- Calling Info*Engine Task from Workflow
- Demonstration Calling a I*E Task from a Workflow
- Add Expression Robot to Workflow
- Call I*E task from Robot
Business Need for Workflow Robots

• Workflows Improve Business Practices...
  – Increase productivity and minimize time to market
    • Minimize effort associated with work distribution
    • Optimize distribution of workload among resources
  – Decrease costs
    • Eliminate routing expenses
    • Reduce need for managers
    • Reduce burden on project leads
  – Improve Quality
    • Ensure that quality steps are not skipped
    • Enforced process which minimizes “rushed” jobs which lead to poor execution of work and quality problems

• ...Robots Improve Workflows
  – Reduce manual steps
  – Improve efficiency
  – Enforce consistency
Workflow Robots

Basic Robots

- Capable of automating a limited set of tasks.
- Require property configuration only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Robots</th>
<th>Task(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notification Robot</td>
<td>send emails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method Robot</td>
<td>check out, check in, set state, submit, promote, demote, deny, or drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL Robot</td>
<td>communicate with another server</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timer Robot</td>
<td>add a time delay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workflow Robots

Advanced Robots

- Capable of performing sophisticated and complex workflow interactions.

- Utilize the Java API and Info*Engine to provide a high degree of flexibility/versatility/customizability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Robots</th>
<th>Task(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Robot</td>
<td>launch an application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression Robot</td>
<td>execute Java expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronization Robot (Expression, Object, Class, Event)</td>
<td>synchronize a process to a Windchill event or Java expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workflow Robots

Expression Robots

- **Capabilities:**
  - Enable execution of Java expression in a workflow.
  - Can be configured to do anything that can be accomplished using Java code.
  - Can be used to automate business processes by executing Windchill transactions, updating object attributes or global variables, as well as conducting process logic.

- **Limitations:**
  - Execution is synchronous only, that is, the workflow does not continue until the expression has been successfully executed.
  - The Java code in an expression robot is limited to 2000 characters, so the robot needs to call Info*Engine tasks or classes on the server for more complex processing.
Workflow Robots

Expression Robot Examples

- A workflow determining an object revision value for a two phase life cycle to change revision from numeric to alpha within a promotion request.

- Creating many folders from reading a file or creating a folder dynamically within a business process.

- Determining the CAD Document’s related WTParts are included in a Promotion Request or Change Object.

- Verifying WTParts links with CAD Documents.

- Creating PDF, DXF or other file formats when a object is released.

- Exporting a formatted BOM file when an object is released.
Process

Overview

1. Put Java Classes on Server
2. Checkout Workflow
3. Add Expression Robot to Workflow
4. Define Expression in Robot to Call Java Classes on Server
5. Checkin Workflow
Put Java Classes on Server

- Put a class file under the code base folder with a folder structure that is equal to the package that is used in the class.

```java
class WindchillUtil {
    // Class implementation
}
```

```plaintext
package com.ext.windchill;
```
Add Expression Robot to Workflow

- The expression robot is added to either a Change Object or Promotion Request workflow. Usually, the robot is placed just after the promotion objects are set to Released.
Process

Callout Class from a Robot

- For all Expression Robots, a StandardMaturityService is required and the robot needs to retrieve the primary business object and its query. The first three lines of code shown below are required in all promotion expression robots in order to retrieve the contents and the last 2 lines calls the class on the server.

```
wt.maturity.StandardMaturityService p = new wt.maturity.StandardMaturityService();
wt.maturity.PromotionNotice pn = (wt.maturity.PromotionNotice)primaryBusinessObject;
wt.fc.QueryResult pn_targets = (wt.fc.QueryResult)p.getBaselineItems(pn);
com.ext.windchill.WindchillUtil pr = new com.ext.windchill.WindchillUtil();
pr.getPBO(pn_targets);
```
Demonstration

Demonstration of a Expression Robot

- Add Expression Robot to Promotion Request
- Call Java Class from Robot
- Run Promotion Request

Diagram:

- Start → Submit Document → Review Document → Released → Set State Released → Expression → End

Optional paths:

- Rework → Start
- Or
Resources and Help

- Felco Solutions Website: http://www.felcosolutions.com