Evaluation of different social network frameworks

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Definition

A social network framework focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. The framework will provide functionality on which to build all kinds of social environments, from a campus wide social network for your university, school or college or an internal collaborative platform for your organization through to a brand-building communications tool for your company and its clients.

The main area includes:

- Activity Streams
- User Management / Access control
- Notification
- Persistence
- Views
- gadget application store

Why to use a social network framework instead of using vanilla Shindig?

The point in looking into a social network framework is that you get a functional container solution. I refer to you get user management, activity streams and other functionality out-of-the-box which reduces the dev time for new developments considerably.

Tested frameworks

I concentrate on frameworks that build "on-top" of vanilla Shindig.

- Eureka Streams: Eureka Streams is a free, open source enterprise social networking platform developed by Lockheed Martin.
- osec: The MITRE Corporation's light-weight, enterprise OpenSocial container. There is the intent to become an Apache Incubator project shortly.

Eureka Streams

Install

Following the official install guide

Eureka Streams uses GIT for scm. After checkout of the sources (TRUNK) I added all libs from $EUREKA/lib to my local maven rep (side note: what a fail when using maven!) and tried the mvn install route but it failed because of other missing artifacts. Now either I go down the "Search-the-jar-rep" route myself or I write a mail to the support list and test the community support at the same time. In the same mail I will ask why they have things like "shindig-common-3.3.jar" in the dep folder.

osec

Install

Following the official install guide

osec uses Mercurial for scm. After checkout of the sources (TRUNK) I run "ant" and then 11 sec later I get "BUILD SUCCESSFUL". Very nice and with no problems at all.

First impression

My first impression is very positive. First you need to login, so authorizing is working fine out-of-the-box. You can add a couple of gadgets right away and move them around. To mention is that the gadget interaction is rating/commenting on the gadget. osec comes with a gadget directory called "App Store" where you can add new gadgets to your page and if you are in the Admin role to the store. I tried adding http://osda.appspot.com/gadget/osda-0.8.xml and it worked like a charm.
What is missing what Jesse pointed out:
<code>On Tue, 2011-02-01 at 10:20 -0500, Ciancetta, Jesse E. wrote:
we don't have profile pages or any of the more "social" aspects of Partuza in this release, but we do plan to integrate more of those types of features in the future.</code>

So thinks like friends, following, feeds and other stuff is not out-of-the-box. However due to the ease to install gadget this may be overcome through standard opensocial gadgets that are already out there.