

Eclipse Test and Performance Tools Platform (TPTP) PMC Report to the Board

June 17th, 2008

This is a report from the TPTP project to the Eclipse Board. A copy of the TPTP review slides is included, as these slides fully document the current status of the TPTP project to a very good level of detail.

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1. Review of project scope and charter, and a description of where within the defined scope work is actually taking place. The PMC should also provide some guidance as to whether the scope and charter documents should be revised. Things may have changed since the charter was approved by the Board.

The charter for TPTP is relevant and up-to-date. The various roles in the charter are all filled and active.

http://www.eclipse.org/tptp/groups/PMC/project_charter.php

The following paragraph is excerpted from the charter and summarizes TPTP.

The Eclipse Test & Performance Tools Platform Top-Level Project (the "Eclipse Test & Performance Project") is an open source collaborative software development project dedicated to providing a robust, extensible, commercial quality, and freely available industry platform intended to reduce the cost and complexity of implementing effective and highly interoperable test & performance tools.

As mentioned later, the majority of work from this point on is on fixing bugs.

2. A high-level review of technical progress, strategy and release plans.

Technical Progress: For high level view of the progress over the last year, please check:

http://www.eclipse.org/tptp/home/downloads/4.5.0/documents/whatsnew/new_and_note_worthy.html

For a more detailed view of the last year, including statistics such as bug fixes, please refer to the release review slides.

TPTP Strategy: Our strategy going forward is to fix bugs, rather than enhance the functionality of TPTP. TPTP is many years old now and there is a lot of function in it. At this point in its lifecycle it is appropriate to stabilize this functionality so the community can use what is already there. We will fix bugs requested by consuming products and fix bugs reported by community.

Note that the resource contributions for IBM and Intel are in flux at this time. For the amount of effort that we can devote to community bug fixes, we will try to focus on the profiler.

TPTP Release plans: We will participate in the fall and spring Ganymede update releases. We will participate on being part of the next product train for June 2009 (Io) with TPTP release 4.5.1. We hope that our consuming products do not require point releases other than that, but we will also need to do support for older versions that are shipped as part of our consuming products.

3. Self-assessment of the performance of the project under the following headings (inspired by the Three Communities section of the Development Process):

Performance as an Eclipse open source project, with specific self assessments on the following:

i. Openness

Excellent. All plans are documented publicly. When changes in plans occur, they are reflected in the eclipse web site and mailing lists immediately. All information is linked to from the TPTP home page (www.eclipse.org/tptp).

ii. Transparency

Excellent. All are welcome to partake in the decision making process. When in doubt, others are encouraged to partake in the regularly scheduled PMC calls. Minutes for each call are kept and are totally accessible.

iii. Meritocracy

Adequate – Year to year, there is a fairly large turnover in staff. A meritocracy is based on knowing the persons capabilities very well, and this is more difficult to do when someone is new to the project. Nonetheless, TPTP privileges are approved by a vote of peers with the criteria being their ability to produce.

Tasks within TPTP are tackled by the best person qualified. There is no rancor or turf battles. Doing the right technical job is always the priority and technical issues are openly debated.

iv. Diversity

TPTP would benefit from more diversity. The main consumer/contributor is IBM. Intel has added good diversity, but Intel is reducing their contributions over the next year to between two and three engineers. OCS (the third active party in TPTP) contributes a quarter person.

v. Compliance with the Purposes (e.g. are they successfully “...supplying frameworks and exemplary, extensible tools..”?)

IBM makes good and ongoing use of the frameworks in many tool areas, so the frameworks do work. Testing Tech has also used the frameworks for their testing product.

vi. End user community and adoption. E.g. are there lots of downloads, bugs, contributors, newsgroup postings, ...? Note that I believe that while the absolute

numbers are interesting, the more important data-point is the project's assessment of how those numbers compare to their own expectations for the project.

See the release review slides for specific numbers.

The tptp project is not getting as much uptake in the community as we would like. This largely stems from the fact that the eclipse mission is not defined as supporting the community, yet it is a continual stretch goal to support the community. When trade-offs need to be made, it is hard to shortchange consuming products in favor of the community.

Over the last period, we had tried to address this by choosing an important TPTP feature that aligned perfectly with IBM, Intel and TPTP. We called that the POG effort (Profiler of the Gods). The idea was that since IBM, Intel shipped the profiler pretty much as is, we could all agree to put resources into that. We made some progress here, but now Intel has decided to reduce it's contributions, so that will trim our ability to do community support for this. Still, we anticipate the profiler becoming easier to use over the next year, which should increase uptake on it.

OCS did a comparison of the Netbeans profiler vs the Eclipse profiler. A focused effort of a couple of man years could make the Eclipse profiler much more compelling, but no contributor wants to commit resources to this effort.

We will do what we can to get better community uptake.

vii Commercial community and adoption. E.g. is the technology from the project showing up in products?

Components of TPTP are distributed in 30+ IBM products in the Rational, Tivoli, AIM, Lotus and IM brands. Notably none of the IBM products take all of TPTP.

Testing Tech has built a TTCN-3 tool set on top of the TPTP testing tools.

Scapa has built products on TPTP, but forked the code last year.

Intel leverages the code base for some of their harmony work and uses some of the code internally, but does not ship products based on TPTP.

There is also an EC academic initiative that is building off of TPTP text and trace models

4. Compliance with the Roadmap

http://www.eclipse.org/org/councils/roadmap_v3_0/index.php

The enclosed slides discuss how TPTP has implemented the themes and priorities of the RoadMap.

5. Board Assistance: What are the areas where the Board could be helping the PMC be more effective? E.g. Explain the “top three” problems that the Board needs to solve for the Project in the next year? (e.g., IP backlog, improving diversity, whatever).

TPTP is quite satisfied with the overall Eclipse organization and we have no specific "enhancements". There are two areas that we would like to discuss.

The first is success metrics. A very common question that comes up repeatedly from contributing companies is the definition of success in the community. Typically, the number of downloads is used as a metric, but in the same breath, everyone discounts downloads (as downloads from mirror sites are not counted). If there could be a generally agreed upon metric(s) to determine the success of a project in the community, it would help contributing companies justify their investments.

The second is the ongoing tension between supporting community vs supporting consuming, commercial products. It is not clear what the board can do here, but (specific to TPTP), the Eclipse community should have a world class profiler, yet it is not a priority to the Eclipse contributors that this should be a focus of TPTP. TPTP did make good progress over the last year in this area, but there will be less emphasis this year due to resource reductions.

6. Noteworthy: What are the things about the project not covered above which the Board should know?

TPTP would love to have the resources to directly target the community with the TPTP profiler.