Cobol Termination Review

Prepared by David Williams, December, 2009

on behalf of the Tools PMC

Communication Channel: http://dev.eclipse.org/mhonarc/lists/cobol-dev/maillist.html

As stated in the Eclipse Development Process "The purpose of a Termination Review is to provide a final opportunity for the Committers and/or Eclipse membership to discuss the proposed withdrawal of a Proposal or archiving of a Project. The desired outcome is to find sufficient evidence of renewed interest and resources in keeping the Project or Proposal active."

It is in that spirit, the Tools PMC requests a Termination Review of Cobol Project.

History

Cobol was first started around 2005. There have been some releases, containing around 15 bundles, and definitely some downloads (approximately 10,000) and some interest and some positives things can be stated about the project. But there are some troubling aspects that led to this request for Termination Review. The following information was gathered from the projects main Eclipse home page or from its Foundation Portal summary page.

- The releases sporadic and not predictable. That is, on the surface at least, there does not appear to be the normal cycle of milestone, community-feedback, milestone, community-feedback, then release.

- CVS commits have been almost non-existent over past 2 or 3 years.

- There is no wiki-page or FAQ, though there is one document, and several articles.

- Only 9 bugs have been open, in its entire life of the project ... can that be right!? ... which indicates no interest or use or indicates perhaps a non-eclipse (non open!?) bug tracking system is being used.

- There are few messages on newsgroup: about 10 message on users group for the entire year of 2009.

- There are few messages on developers mailing list: it appears there are 2 to 4 message every month to the cobol-dev list.

- There are no active committers.

- There is only one in-active committer, Tetsuya Suehisa. (He appears to have been the only committer that actually committed anything).

- The project lead, Ron Langer, has apparently never been a committer (that seems odd, that it deviates from the Eclipse Development Process, but is probably not relevant in this context).

Goal of this termination review

For this project to continue, a new Project Lead is required and new committers are required. There has been some interest, expressed on the project's mailing list, but no concrete proposal yet. We, the Tools PMC, are requesting this termination review to make it clear that the default action is termination, if no one comes forward with a suitable plan to revive the project.

We hope that new committers and a new Project Lead will come forward, and can make a case it

should continue and that they have the time and resource get it back on track to be a well behaved, open Eclipse project useful to a variety of users and adopters, and become a credit to the Eclipse name.

A plan in the form of a Continuation Review would be appropriate if someone wants to take over the project.

Ron Langer is officially listed as the Project Lead, but Tetsuya Suehisa is effectively the only committer on the project and would be the best contact for questions or transfer activities, if needed. In fact, Tetsuya Suehisa has provided the following observations, with the hope that they would help any successors who take over the project, or perhaps help other Eclipse Projects to be vital.

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(1)   As an Eclipse plugin, it may easily be eliminated if there is no
any update for a long time. And it cannot arouse user's attention.
So, you need to keep the development pace of eclipse and speed up
the frequency of updates to obtain the degree of concern.

(2) Find ways to activate Forum and Mail-list, Invite developers all
over the world who have interests at COBOL to contribute to COBOL
Plugin.

(3) Upgrade this plugin. Currently, many implementations of COBOL
plugin are based on technology of earlier version(e.g. 3.0.x) of
Eclipse, I think it should be updated to the new versions(e.g. 3.4/3.5/3.6).
e.g. COBOL Watch view(a part of DEBUG component).
Though the latest version of Eclipse that COBOL Plug-in supporting
is Eclipse 3.4.2 even the architecture of Watch view is still based on
Eclipse 3.0! So if somebody who can migrate the current COBOL
Watch view's implementations to the new Eclipse VariableView,
that will be appreciated.
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Termination Actions

In the event new committers and project leads are not found, the following project termination actions will be required:

1. Directories archived and removed from CVS

2. Open Bugzilla bugs marked "won't fix" and the bugzilla component archived or marked read-only.

3. Website archived.

4. Wiki pages archived

5. If any, open CQ items withdrawn.