
FAQ WHITE PAPER

Introduction

Nowadays, every person working in a company knows how important it is to share the information between each others. Internet is the best support to provide enough different tools allowing to store and use the knowledge of all the employees inside the company, and between companies themselves. Frequently Asked Questions applications are now present on every web site. This document defines the technical and functional needs provided by our FAQ web application.

Features

The technical features provided by this application are defined below :

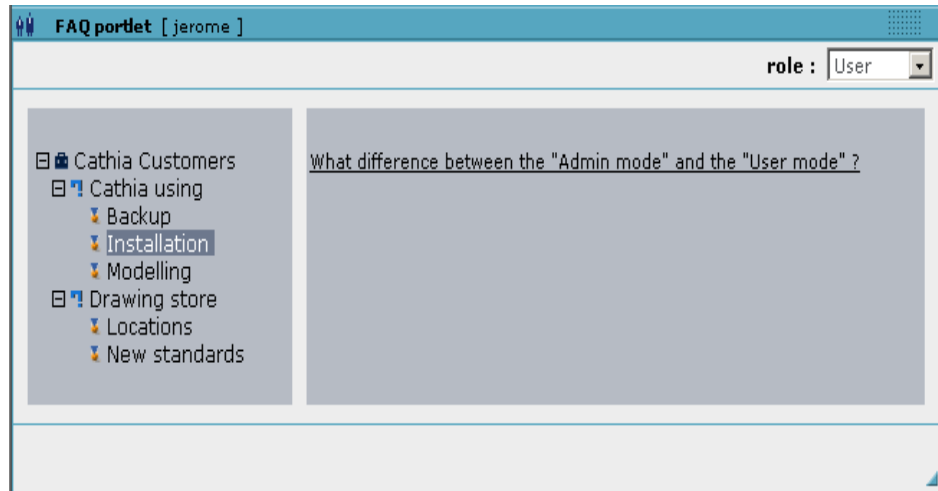
- **Based on Java standards:**
The FAQ web application is a 100% Java application that leverages server-side Java technologies such as Servlets, JSP, and JDBC. Java provides great performance on a wide variety of platforms.
- **Platform support**
Any platform with Java 2 and any web server with Servlet 2.2 and JSP 1.0 support will work. It has been tested under Linux and Windows platforms, and with web environments such as Apache with Tomcat and Orion server.
- **Database backend:**
A database backend gives this application excellent performance and scalability. The database schema has been carefully tuned to work with a wide variety of products. Currently supported databases include: Hypersonic SQL, MySQL, Postgres. Built-in database connection pooling gives maximum database performance.
- **Integration into existing systems:**
You can integrate the FAQ web application into your existing portal and your existing user and authentication system : you can even define roles for each user of your system on this application.

Inside a project team, the information is often represented by questions and associated answers. This application proposes to capitalize these questions in order to make them easily reachable for every project member.

The FAQ web application proposes therefore the following functional needs.

- **Question organization:**

The questions are organized into a tree structure which can include two or three levels according to the usage mode (integrated or standalone). These levels are Project, FAQ and Topic. Questions can be inserted both at FAQ and Topic level. Below is an example of such a tree structure.



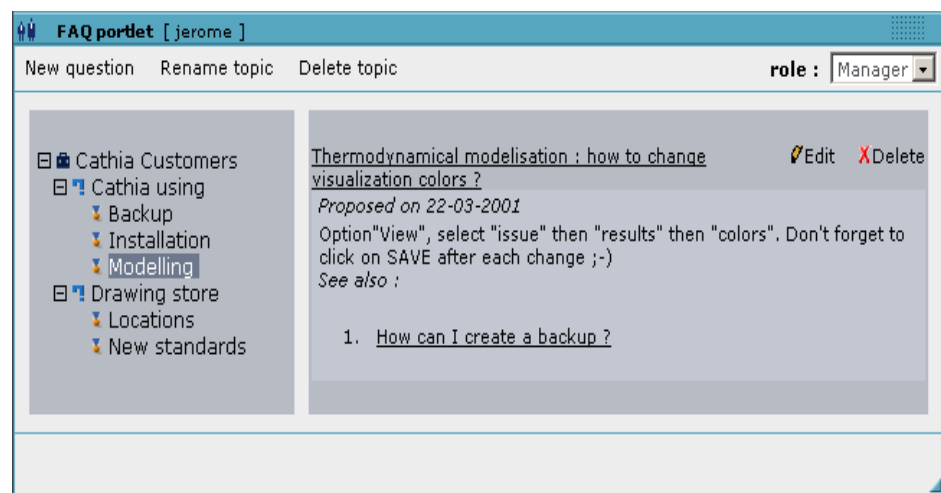
This application instance runs inside a portal and is already linked to a project context. This explains why you see only the last two levels, FAQ and Topic.

The window is shared in two parts : the part on the left allows to browse the FAQ, thanks to the plus and minus sign. The element currently selected has a different appearance.

The part on the right side displays the questions relative to the selected node.

- **Question access :**

To keep the list clear and easily readable, only the question is displayed; but you can click on it to access the answer and other information, as following :



Once a question is developed, the application displays its author name and its creation date. You can notice that another question is inserted: it is a related question. In fact, this application allows you to link questions between them, if you think that they can be complementary.

It is interesting when you want to guide the user through a logical way that does not necessarily follow necessarily the tree. When clicking on a related question, the tree will be automatically refreshed so that you can see where this question has been recorded.

In order to modify the FAQ content, the current user must have a particular role, which is that of manager. This particular user is responsible for updating the questions. To perform this function, he is proposed the following features.

- **Tree management :**
It is possible to add new elements in the tree, either Project or Faq or Topic; the proposed action is contextual to the selected node. On the previous screen shot, you can see that the current node was a topic; therefore the action proposed was to create a new question.
It is also possible to rename or delete each element.
- **Question management :**
You can create a new question at the levels of Faq and Topic; you will be asked to complete fields such as the question content, its answer, the date (current date is proposed as default), and an optional author. It allows to link the new question with existing ones, thanks to a system similar to the classic “drag and drop” feature, between two lists of questions.
Each question can be updated as many times as wished, and deleted too.

All this functionalities allow thus to propose a content well organized and quickly updatable, and therefore increase the sharing of knowledge.

Conclusion

All these features allow to build a knowledge base, containing the set of questions relative to a project, for instance. But it is not the only use case : the FAQ content can be addressed to different kinds of users, such as clients or partners. Both will not require the same information : the first ones would certainly ask questions about the product and its features, whereas the partners may be more interested in technologies. Thanks to the authentication feature, each one would see on the same page the information that interests him.

Having many instances of the FAQ web application on the same site could therefore bring a good added value to its content, and attract more users thanks to the part of interactivity it allows to develop.

