



Beginning WSO2 ESB

A comprehensive beginner to expert
guide for learning WSO2 ESB 5.0

First Edition

Kasun Indrasiri

Apress®

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About the Author



Kasun Indrasiri is the Director of Integration Technologies at WSO2, a company that produces open source middleware solutions in enterprise integration, API management, security, and IoT domains. He currently provides the Architectural Leadership for the WSO2 integration platform.

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He researched high-performance message processing systems and contributed to an ACM publication called “Improved Server Architecture for Highly Efficient Message Mediation.” Kasun holds an M.Sc. degree in Software Architecture and a B.Sc. Engineering degree in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

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Last but not least, thank you to everyone who supported me in many different ways.

CHAPTER 1



Introduction to WSO2 ESB

Nowadays successful enterprises rely heavily on the underlying software applications they use. To fulfill diverse business needs, the enterprises have to pick and choose different software application and services, which are built with disparate technologies, use varying standards, and are built by different vendors. When building IT solutions for business scenarios, the enterprises have to make these disparate software applications and services work together to produce unified business functionality.

The task of plumbing different software applications, services, and systems, and forming new software solutions out of that is known as *enterprise integration*. The software application that is designed to enable that task is known as the Enterprise Service Bus (ESB). An ESB enables diverse applications, services, and systems to talk to each other, interact, and transact. It acts as the main messaging backbone in any Service Oriented Architecture (SOA); it's lightweight, built on top of open standards such as web services standards, and supports commonly used patterns in enterprise integration known as Enterprise Integration Patterns (EIP—for more information, see www.eaipatterns.com).

What is an ESB?

Let's suppose an organization is running a financial business and has web services, which expose underlying business functionalities such as providing to its customers information on stock quotes (the price of a stock as quoted on a stock exchange) for a given company. They want to expand the business by enabling mobile users to use the online store by making these business functions accessible on mobile devices.

But the mobile devices are inherently based on message formats such as JSON while the backend web service only supports the SOAP message format. The financial organization has to integrate these two systems, which are using disparate message formats, to work together to achieve its business objectives.

To solve this enterprise integration problem, someone could possibly modify either the mobile device application or the backend service to convert one message format to the message format that's understood by the other party. But this approach has several drawbacks. By modifying either the backend web service or the mobile application per the requirements of the other party, the two systems are tightly coupled to the same message format. If the backend service or the mobile application changes its message format, the company is forced to change the code of the other system. Also, if we have to

further extend the business use case to include another backend service, then we need to wire all three systems with point-to-point links so that each system is connected to every other system. A change in one of these systems could break the entire business use case.

Therefore, you need a better way to integrate these systems with no modifications at the backend or the client, as well as use a configuration-based approach to integrate these systems without writing any code.

The ESB can be used as the intermediary integration layer between two or more disparate systems and services. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1-1, the ESB can be placed between the JSON-based mobile application and the SOAP-based web service. Without writing any code, you can configure the ESB to do the message format conversion. If the business use case needs to be extended further to include another service, you can integrate that service to the ESB, and rather than having point-to-point links, all three systems can be connected through the unified ESB integration layer.



Figure 1-1. An ESB can be configured to convert messages between the formats recognized by the mobile app (JSON) and the web service (SOAP) it wants to talk to. This is a simple example of enterprise integration.

Now you have a clear understanding of a concrete enterprise integration use case. Let's explore the enterprise integration space further and see how the ESB is used as the integration backbone.

Modern enterprises need to integrate all the heterogeneous systems (systems using disparate protocols, message formats, and so on) to form various business solutions. The integration between on-premise systems such as web services, file repositories (FTP), proprietary systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning systems (for example, SAP), legacy systems, and data residing in databases and cloud-based solutions such as Software as a Service (SaaS), is the key responsibility of an ESB.

The absence of an integration platform leads the enterprise to require links from a given system to all other systems in the enterprise IT solution. This is known as *point-to-point integration* or *spaghetti integration*.

As depicted in Figure 1-2, the point-to-point integration approach has inherent complexity because the number of systems that participate in the integration scenario increases. If you have to modify or remove one of the systems then that affects the interaction between most of the other systems in your enterprise integration scenario. Therefore, the point-to-point integration approach is extremely difficult to maintain, troubleshoot, and scale.

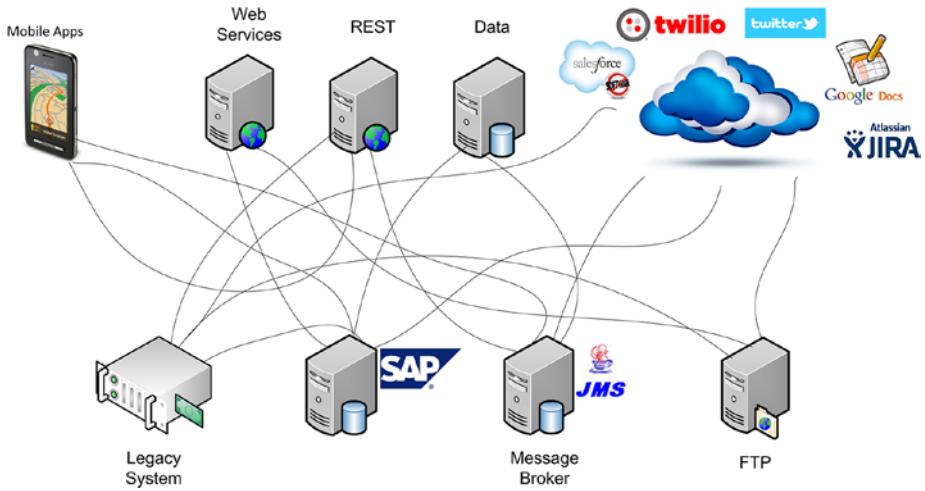


Figure 1-2. When an enterprise does not use ESB, each system must know how to talk directly to every other system it needs to interact with. This is known as point-to-point integration.

As depicted in Figure 1-3, ESB can be used as the bus that all the other systems can connect to. An ESB-based approach connects disparate systems using the ESB messaging backbone, and it connects on-premise as well as cloud services. As illustrated in Figure 1-3, ESB eliminates point-to-point integration and integrates all the disparate systems using the bus architecture.

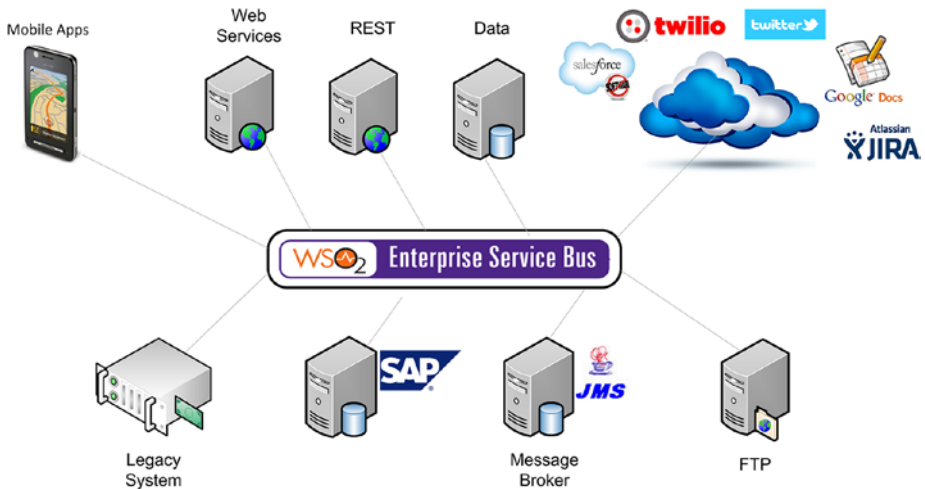


Figure 1-3. When an enterprise uses ESB, only the ESB needs to know how to talk to each application. The applications themselves do not need to be modified. This is far more efficient than point-to-point integration.

Based on the previously described integration use case, you can come up with a generic description for ESB. *ESB is an architecture pattern that enables the disparate systems and services to interact through a common communication bus, using lightweight and standard messaging protocols.*

In the next section, you'll discover the core functionalities that are common to any ESB.

Core Functionalities of an ESB

In general, ESB has to offer a wide range of integration capabilities from simple message routing to integrated proprietary systems using complicated integration adaptors. These are the generic functionalities that are common to most ESB products:

- *Message mediation:* Manipulate the message content, direction, destination, and protocols with message flow configurations.
- *Service virtualization:* Wrap existing systems or services with new service interfaces.
- *Protocol conversion:* Bridge different protocols. For example, JMS to HTTP.
- *Support for Enterprise Integration Patterns (EIP):* EIP is the de facto standard for Enterprise Integration (<http://www.eaipatterns.com/>).
- *Quality of service:* Apply security, throttling, and caching.
- *Connecting to legacy and proprietary systems:* Business adapters, including SAP, FIX, and HL7.
- *Connectors to cloud services and APIs:* Salesforce, Twitter, PayPal, and many more.
- *Configuration driven:* Most functionalities are driven by configuration but not code.
- *Extensibility:* There are extension points that can be used to integrate with any custom protocol or proprietary system.

For the most part in the ESB architecture, the ESB is considered a lightweight, stateless integration bus. The architecture itself is mostly based on SOA, but that doesn't mean that you can't integrate non-SOA systems, such as proprietary systems, by using ESB.

The ESB landscape is vast, where there are numerous ESB solutions ranging from open source to proprietary integration solutions. In the following section, you'll discover the key differentiators of WS02 ESB.

Why WS02 ESB?

In the ESB vendor space, most of the vendors have rebranded the monolithic and heavyweight enterprise integration solutions as an ESB. But WS02 ESB is designed and developed from the ground up as the highest performance, lowest footprint, and most interoperable integration middleware. While WS02 ESB has to improve its graphical

tooling support for designing message flows and graphical data mapping, it offers a broad range of integration capabilities and high-performance message routing support by using an enhanced and optimized message mediation engine, which was inspired by Apache Synapse. In this section, you'll discover key differentiators between WSO2 ESB and other ESB vendors.

Interoperability and EIP Support: Connecting Anything to Anything

WSO2 ESB offers a broad range of integration capabilities from simple message routing to smooth integration of complex proprietary systems. The de facto enterprise integration standards for Enterprise Integration Patterns (EIP) are fully supported in WSO2 ESB. It not only comes with 100% coverage of EIPs, but also with use cases and samples for implementing each and every EIP.

While supporting all the key ESB integration features discussed in the last section, WSO2 ESB offers various integration adapters to proprietary and legacy systems such as SAP. Also, it empowers the on-premise and cloud-based integration scenarios (hybrid integration) with numerous connectors that allow you to smoothly integrate to popular cloud services such as Salesforce, PayPal, and Twitter (see the Connector Store at <https://store.wso2.com/store/>).

WSO2 ESB offers all these integration capabilities that you can use by configuring the ESB without a single line of code, and in case of any custom requirement, such as supporting proprietary message formats, you can use the numerous extension points to plug in your custom code.

Performance and Stability: The Fastest Open Source ESB

The performance and latency of any ESB solution is a vital factor when it comes to handling large volumes of messages. Based on the regular performance comparisons done by WSO2 on the message routing performance of popular open source ESBs, WSO2 outperforms all the ESB vendors. (The latest ESB performance comparison is available at <http://wso2.com/library/articles/2014/02/esb-performance-round-7.5/>)

The ESB performance comparison given in Figure 1-4 is based on the most recent performance test comparison against WSO2 ESB and other popular ESB vendors. For almost all the integration scenarios, WSO2 ESB outperforms all other ESB competitors.

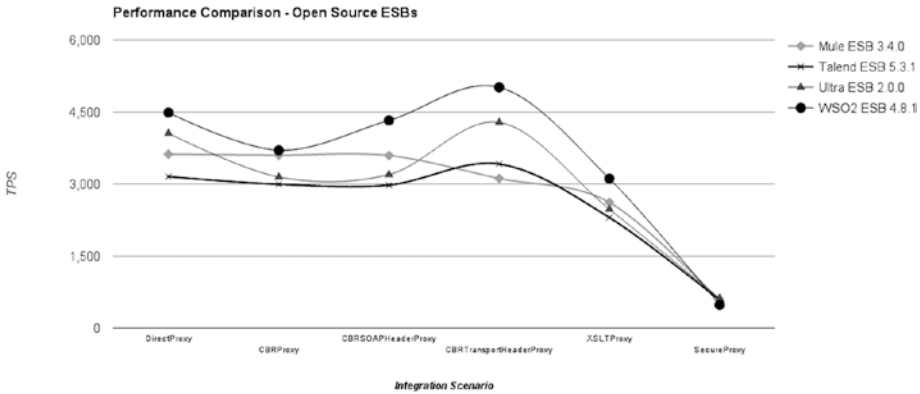


Figure 1-4. ESB performances comparison between open source ESB vendors for commonly used message routing scenarios

Stability is also another aspect that goes hand-in-hand with performance. Thousands of production deployments of WSO2 ESB show its stability and its maturity as an ESB solution. eBay uses WSO2 ESB for handling more than several billions of transactions per day in its live traffic (an eBay case study is available at <http://wso2.com/casestudies/eBay-uses-100-open-source-wso2-esb-to-process-more-than-1-billion-transactions-per-day/>).

The Platform Advantage: Part of the WSO2 Middleware Platform

WSO2 ESB is part of the comprehensive WSO2 middleware platform. When you're building real-world enterprise integration solutions, you require the integration capabilities offered by WSO2 ESB, as well as other middleware capabilities such as API management, identity management, data services, analytics, complex event processing, and so on, which are beyond the scope of an ESB. Few ESB vendors who aren't based on a platform concept have tried to have all these features in a monolithic ESB product, but have failed because such solutions cannot address the modern enterprise IT requirements.

A WSO2 middleware platform is built from the ground up with the holistic vision of facilitating all enterprise middleware requirements. The high-level objective of a WSO2 middleware platform is to enable a connected business.

- *All the WSO2 products are built from the ground up and on top of a common foundation:* WSO2 Carbon, a modular, reconfigurable, elastic, OSGi-based architecture, whereas most of the other middleware platforms are primarily built with acquisitions of heterogeneous middleware solutions.
- *Lean and optimized for maximum performance:* Every product in the WSO2 platform is lightweight and designed for achieving the highest performance. For instance, WSO2 ESB is the fastest open source ESB.

- *Largest middleware platform built on a single code base:* All the WSO2 products share the same code base built around a single kernel—WSO2 Carbon. Unlike middleware platforms built with the combination of heterogeneous middleware solutions, WSO2 offers frictionless cross-product integration.
- *100% free and open source under Apache License 2.0 with comprehensive commercial support:* WSO2 has no notion of commercial versus community editions. What you freely download from the <http://wso2.com> web site is the same version used for all the production deployments. The same architects and developers who contributed to the WSO2 platform drive the commercial support for the WSO2 products.
- *Cloud native:* Every WSO2 product inherently supports on-premise, cloud, or hybrid deployments.

At this point you’ve learned about the key differentiators of WSO2 ESB. In the next section, you’ll learn the fundamental concept that’s required to start integrating with WSO2 ESB.

How does WSO2 ESB Work?

In this section, you’ll learn about the core functional components of WSO2 ESB and the complete end-to-end message flow. Let’s design the same financial organization’s integration scenario with WSO2 ESB and use that to understand the message flow of WSO2 ESB.

As illustrated in Figure 1-5, the main integration challenges that you have here are to integrate a backend service, which is a SOAP-based web service, with a mobile application that uses JSON. Therefore, the ESB primarily takes care of message format conversion (Message Translator EIP) and exposes a new JSON interface on behalf of the backend web service. The JSON request from the mobile app to the ESB is shown in Listing 1-1.

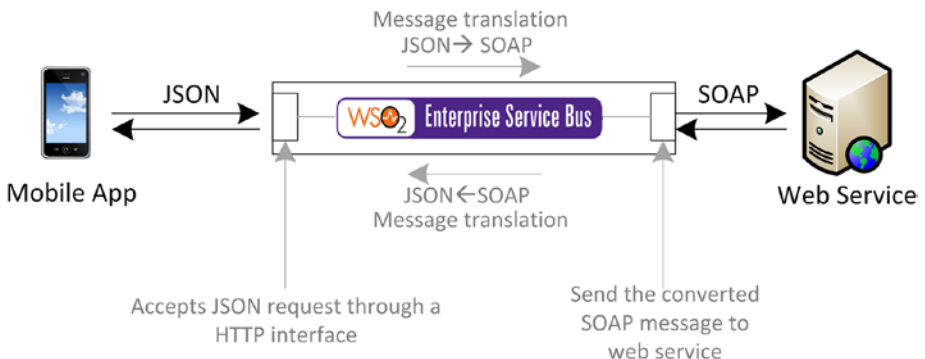


Figure 1-5. Using WSO2 ESB to integrate a SOAP-based web service and a JSON-based mobile client

Listing 1-1. JSON Request from Mobile App to ESB

```
{
  "getFinancialQuote": { "company": "WSO2" }
}
```

The backend web service accepts a SOAP message that's shown in Listing 1-2. Therefore, the message processing logic of the ESB needs to convert the request to the SOAP format and convert the SOAP response to back to JSON.

Listing 1-2. Request that Needs to be Sent to the Backend Web Service

```
<soapenv:Envelope
xmlns:soapenv="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/soap/envelope/"
xmlns:ser="http://services.samples">
  <soapenv:Header/>
  <soapenv:Body>
    <ser:getSimpleQuote>
      <ser:symbol>WSO2</ser:symbol>
    </ser:getSimpleQuote>
  </soapenv:Body>
</soapenv:Envelope>
```

The key steps related to the implementation of this integration scenario can be listed as follows:

- Build a virtual HTTP interface/service that can accept the JSON request from the mobile client and respond with the JSON response.
- In the request-handling path of the virtual HTTP interface/service, it should convert the incoming JSON message to a SOAP message and then send it to the SOAP-based web service backend.
- In the response path, the virtual HTTP interface/service needs to convert the incoming SOAP response to a JSON message and send it back to the client.

Now you'll discover how these steps can be implemented with WSO2 ESB by using its core functional components.

Functional Components

The high-level message flow of WSO2 ESB comprises three main logical components:

- *Message entry points:* Receive client requests.
- *Message processing units:* Contain the mediation logics to process client requests, request that ESB sends to the server, the server response processing logic, and the response that ESB sends back to the client.
- *Message exit points:* Integration points to backend services.

As depicted in Figure 1-6, the mobile clients send a request to the WSO2 ESB via one of its message entry points, then the ESB processes the request messages in the request message processing units, and the message is sent to the backend web service via message exit points. Once the response is received from the backend service, the message goes again through the response message processing units and finally sends the processed response to the client.

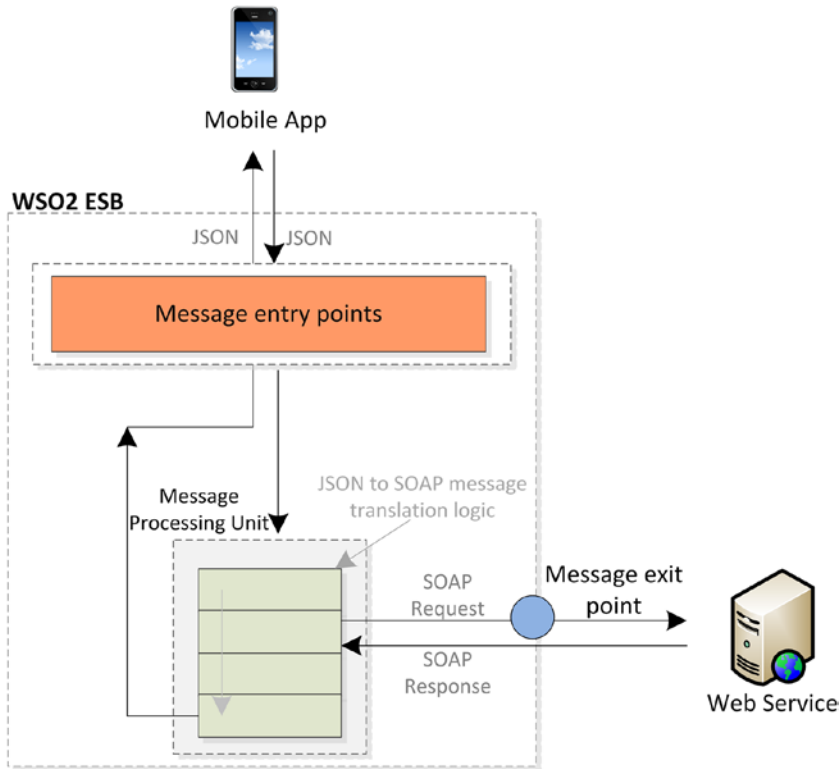


Figure 1-6. High-level message flow of the integration between mobile app and backend web service

The task of processing requests or responses in an ESB is known as *message mediation*. As shown in Figure 1-6, the message processing units are doing the required request and response message mediation work.

Message Entry Points: Proxy Service, APIs, and Inbound Endpoints

WSO2 ESB has three main message entry points:

- *Proxy service*: This is a web service interface exposed from the ESB.
- *REST APIs/HTTP*: An HTTP interface anchored at a specific URL context.
- *Inbound endpoints*: A message source with listening or polling capability.

The message entry points are the main components responsible for handling the message transferring from external systems to the ESB. The messages that come through any of these entry points are routed to the message-processing unit, which is responsible for the processing of the message context and message attributes. In the previous example, the messages sent from the mobile app via the HTTP protocol hit the message entry point API and route the message to the respective processing unit (sequence).

Message Processing Unit: Sequences and Mediators

The processing of the message takes place in components known as *sequences*. A given sequence can contain a sequence of components that can process a given message. These components are known as *mediators*. In our example, the logic to translate the message from JSON to SOAP and send out the message takes place in the message-processing unit.

Message Exit Points: Outbound Endpoints

The outbound endpoint (or endpoint) is the message exit point in the WSO2 ESB, which logically represents an external backend service endpoint. In our example, the service address of the backend web service is configured as an outbound endpoint and the message is routed to the outbound endpoint via a *call* or *send* mediator.

Figure 1-7 shows how the message flow is configured to implement the financial organization's integration scenario. The key points related to understanding the message flow in Figure 1-7 are as follows:

- *Expose an HTTP interface to the mobile client*: You should implement an HTTP interface that has to be exposed to the mobile client. That's where we need to configure the message entry points in the WSO2 ESB. Because we have to integrate a mobile client, we can go for the API/HTTP Service message entry point and configure that in the ESB.
- *Anchor an API/HTTP service*: An API/HTTP service is anchored at a URL context, which is designed by the ESB developer and is capable of receiving any request coming on HTTP protocol for that particular context.

- *Configure a mediation sequence:* When you create the API, you need to configure the sequence that will be used to process the request. The sequence contains a set of mediators to process the request.
- The first mediator is a payload factory mediator, which is used to convert the incoming JSON message format to the arbitrary SOAP message format and extract whatever values are needed from the original JSON request.
- You need to set a SOAP action as a header prior to sending the message out from the ESB, because it's required to send an action along with a SOAP 1.1 message. Therefore, a header mediator is used to set the SOAP action.
- Then you need a "call" mediator that can send the message out from the ESB.
- *Configure an outbound endpoint:* When you send out the message, you can configure the destination address of the message or the URL of the backend service using endpoint or outbound endpoint. In addition to specifying the address, you can add various conversion formats when configuring an endpoint, such as SOAP 1.1 and POX (Plain Old XML). Since you want to convert the message to SOAP format, you can use soap11 as the "format" attribute of the endpoint.
- *Configure the response mediation sequence:* Because you need to send a JSON response back to the client, the Property mediator is used as a flag to change the response message format to the JSON message format.
- *Set up a fault mediation sequence:* Any failure scenario can be handled using the fault sequence.

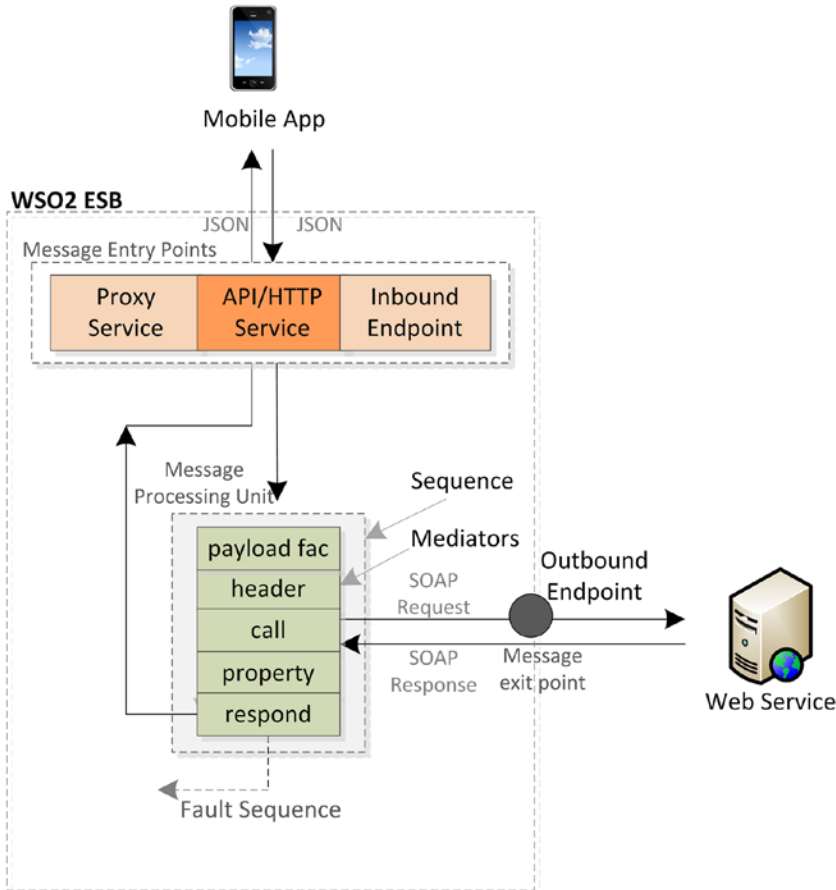


Figure 1-7. WSO2 ESB message flow for integrating a SOAP-based backend service with a JSON based mobile client

This completes the end-to-end message flow of our integration scenario. Also, you have an alternative approach to implement the same scenario with a two-sequence model.

As depicted in Figure 1-8, the API/HTTP service can use its built-in, in-sequence, and out-sequence to implement the same integration scenario that was illustrated in Figure 1-8. The only difference here is that the request message always goes to the in-sequence. Hence, the request message processing takes place there. Unlike in earlier approaches, a *send* mediator is used instead of *call* mediator. The main difference is that once you use the *send* mediator at a given sequence to send out the request, the message flow stops at that point. When you get the response from the backend service, the response flow starts from the out-sequence. Therefore, the out-sequence is the place that you can do the response processing.

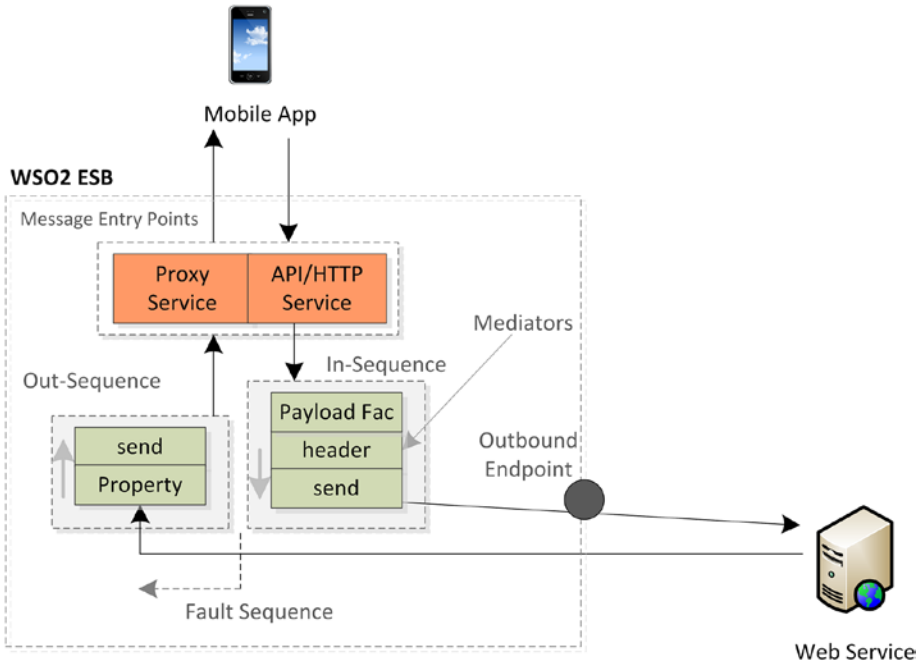


Figure 1-8. WS02 ESB message flow for integrating a SOAP-based backend service with a JSON-based mobile client using “In” and “Out” sequences

You can use both of the previously described approaches, but in cases when you’re implementing complex service orchestration/chaining scenarios, the *call* mediator-based approach is less complicated.

WS02 ESB Configuration Language

The entire message flow that you learned during the financial organization’s use case is implemented using the XML-based configuration language of WS02 ESB. Because the WS02 ESB integration scenario development procedure is completely configuration driven, all the message entry points, message processing units, and message exit points are configured using an XML-based configuration language.

Graphical message-flow editors are available for WS02 ESB. They’re built on top of its configuration language, but throughout this book you’ll find all the samples and use cases implemented in raw configuration language.

The following sample configuration represents the implementation of the financial organization’s integration scenario that we discussed previously. Here I used an API/HTTP service as the message entry point to the WS02 ESB and used the single sequence approach with *call* and *respond* mediators. With the following configuration, you can create a new API named `ShoppingInfo` that can be accessed through the HTTP protocol. The complete steps for implementing, deploying, and testing the integration scenarios are covered in detail in Chapter 2.

Listing 1-3. JSON Request from Mobile App to ESB

```

<api xmlns="http://ws.apache.org/ns/synapse"
name="ShoppingInfo"                                <!-- [1] -->
    context="/ShoppingInfo">
        <resource methods="POST">
            <inSequence>                            <!-- [2] -->
                <payloadFactory media-type="xml">
                    <format>
                        <soapenv:Envelope xmlns:soapenv="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/
soap/envelope/" xmlns:ser="http://services.samples">
                            <soapenv:Header></soapenv:Header>
                            <soapenv:Body>
                                <ser:getSimpleQuote>
                                    <ser:symbol>$1</ser:symbol>
                                    </ser:getSimpleQuote>
                                </soapenv:Body>
                            </soapenv:Envelope>
                        </format>
                    </payloadFactory>
                    <args>
                        <arg evaluator="json" expression="$.getFinancialQuote.
company"></arg>
                    </args>
                </call>
                <endpoint>                            <!-- [3] -->
                    <address uri="http://localhost:9000/services/
SimpleStockQuoteService" format="soap11">
                </address>
            </inSequence>
        </resource>
    </api>

```

1. Anchoring an HTTP service/API on the context / ShoppingInfo as a message entry point.
2. Request message processing (JSON to SOAP conversion and sending messages out).
3. Configuring backend web service as the message exit point.

4. Response message processing; change the response format to JSON.
5. Sending the response back to the client.

As shown in Listing 1-3, a top-level configuration element known as *api* is the message entry point configuration, followed by the *inSequence*, which is the message processing component. The *inSequence* has the mediators, which are the message processing units. To send out the message, you have a *call* mediator with an *endpoint*. The response processing happens in the mediators that are placed after the *call* mediator (property and respond).

You've discovered about all the building blocks required to design a real-world enterprise integration scenario with WSO2 ESB. You'll learn more about how you can implement and try out the same scenario in WSO2 ESB in Chapter 2.

How to Try the Use Cases in this Book

You can try most of the sample use cases that are discussed throughout this book.

- All the source code related to these use cases can be found at <https://github.com/kasun04/maestro/>.
- The configurations for all the use cases of a given chapter are located at: <https://github.com/kasun04/maestro/tree/master/src/main/resources>.
- All the instructions to run each example are specified under the README file of each chapter. For example if you want to run samples from Chapter 2, the instructions can be found at https://github.com/kasun04/maestro/blob/master/src/main/resources/ch_02/uc_01/README.txt

Also, note that the latest configuration is always kept and updated at the GitHub. So, in rare cases, there can be slight mismatches between the code snippet that you find in the book and the sample configuration you'll find in the GitHub repository.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned the fundamentals that are required to build integration solutions with WSO2 ESB. Let's summarize them as follows:

- An Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) enables diverse applications, services, and systems to talk to each other through a common communication bus, using lightweight and standard messaging protocols such as SOAP and JSON. It acts as the main messaging backbone in any Service Oriented Architecture (SOA).

- WSO2 ESB was built on top of a common foundation, called WSO2 Carbon. It's a modular, reconfigurable, elastic, OSGi-based architecture on which all WSO2 products are based. It's the fastest ESB implementation currently available, 100% free, open source under the Apache License 2.0, and supports on-premise, cloud, and hybrid deployments.
- An ESB has three main logical components. Message entry points receive client requests, message processing units contain the logic to process client requests and server responses, and message exit points provide a way to send client requests onto the server and receive their response.
- To configure a message flow through WSO2 ESB between a client and a server, you should configure a message entry point for the client to talk to the ESB, configure a mediation sequence that can process the client request into a message the server understands and sends it out to the server, configure the outbound endpoint for the message to the server, configure another mediation sequence to process and send on the server's response for the client, and set up a fault sequence to deal with failures.

CHAPTER 2



Getting Started with WSO2 ESB

In this chapter, you'll get started with building integration scenarios with WSO2 ESB. The first example provides the foundation for the rest of the chapters, by ensuring your ESB server is set up correctly. We'll also start with the most basic example of system integration by implementing the message transformation use case discussed in Chapter 1.

Designing a Simple Integration Scenario with WSO2 ESB

The best way to get started with WSO2 ESB is to build a simple but real-world integration scenario. The main objective of this use case is to transform messages between two common data formats: JSON and XML.

For our use case, assume that a financial company with the domain `example.com` exists, that hosts SOAP-based web services to expose its business functionalities as services. The `StockQuoteService` financial service is one of the key business functionalities offered from `example.com`, which gives you the stock quote details for a given organization. But the `example.com` financial organization wants to enable this business functionality to its mobile users (who use a JSON as the message format) without modifying the existing backend service and the mobile client.

Suppose that the JSON request format is as follows and the response accepted by the mobile client is the one-to-one transformation of the SOAP response from a backend service to JSON.

```
{
  "getFinancialQuote": { "company": "WSO2" }
}
```

The key design steps of the *integration scenario* illustrated in Figure 2-1 can be identified as follows:

- Creating an HTTP interface at the ESB layer on behalf of the existing StockQuote web service.
- Transforming the incoming JSON request to the appropriate SOAP request that needs to be sent to the SimpleStockQuote service of the example.org financial service and then invoking the service.
- Handling the SOAP response message from the SimpleStockQuote service and transforming it back to JSON before sending back the request.

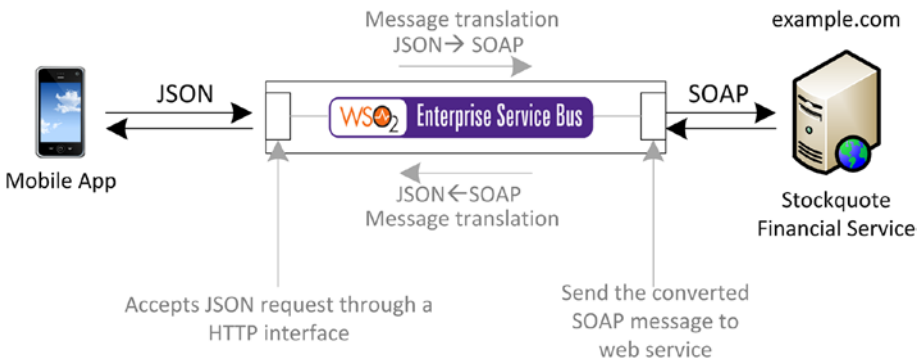


Figure 2-1. Integrating SOAP-based SimpleStockQuote financial service and a mobile client with WSO2 ESB

Now let's proceed to the realization of the previous design steps using WSO2 ESB.

Building the Integration Scenario

Since now you're familiar with the sample integration scenario that we are planning to build with WSO2 ESB, in this section I'll walk you through all the steps that are required to build that integration scenario using WSO2 ESB. For our example to be minimally viable, however, we need to do preliminary work to set up the StockQuote service.

As illustrated in Figure 2-2, the implementation of this integration scenario requires you to configure a message entry point in WSO2 ESB, configure message-processing components, and finally configure a response-sending logic. The key design steps discussed in the previous section can be mapped into the main implementation steps that you can follow in WSO2 ESB.

1. Creating an HTTP service/API in WSO2 ESB.
2. Creating the request that needs to be sent to the backend service.