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QoS Assurance for Service-Based Applications
Using Discrete-Event Simulation

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Abstract
The new paradigm for distributed computing over the Internet is that of Web services. The goal of Web services is to achieve universal interoperability between applications by using standardized protocols and languages. One of the key ideas of the Web service paradigm is the ability of building complex and value-added service-based applications by composing pre-existing services. For a service-based application, in addition to its functional requirements, Quality of service (QoS) requirements are important and deserve a special attention. In this paper, we introduce a discrete-event modeling approach for service-based application. This approach is oriented towards QoS assurance through discrete-event simulation.

Keywords: Web Services, Service-based applications, QoS assurance, Discrete-event simulation.

1. Introduction
In the last ten years, the Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) emerged as a powerful solution to enable interoperability between distributed software components known as Web Services (WSs) [1, 2]. WSs are universally accessible software components that are advertised, discovered, and invoked through the Web. The key aspect of the SOA is the use of standard technologies such as: WSDL, UDDI, and SOAP. These technologies define standard ways of WSs definition, discovery, and invocation.

SOA is the best solution for composite application integration. Indeed, WSs may be easily composed/aggregated together into a new application, regardless specific implementation platforms and technologies [3]. The obtained Service-Based Application (SBA) may be further published as a new service creating a collaboration network between different organizations. For example, telecommunication companies can be considered as an example of service aggregators [4]. Multiple and different services such as calling services (e.g., call forwarding and call barring), messaging services (e.g., text messaging and video messaging), and internet services (e.g., chat and e-mail) are brought together and offered via telephone.

For an SBA, in addition to its functional requirements, Quality of Service (QoS) requirements are important and deserve a special attention. QoS requirements for SBAs include response time, throughput, availability and security [4, 5]. Being able to characterize SBAs based on QoS has three distinct advantages [6]:

- It allows for the design of SBAs according to QoS requirements. Indeed, it is important for service providers to know the QoS of a SBA at prior before offering it to their clients.
- It allows for the selection and the execution of SBAs based on their QoS. Since many services provide overlapping or identical functionality, different SBAs can be composed, satisfying the same functional requirement. A choice needs to be made to determine which SBA is to be used to provide with the more beneficial QoS.
- It allows for the evaluation of alternative adaptation strategies. The dynamic and unpredictable nature of the execution environment (e.g., network resources and devices characteristics) has an important impact on QoS of SBAs. Thus, in order to better fulfill QoS requirements, it is necessary to adapt SBAs in response to an unexpected evolution of the execution environment.
To assure the desired QoS requirements for an SBA, different analytical quality assurance techniques can be used. The goal of these techniques is to evaluate QoS and uncover quality defects in the SBAs after they have been created. An example for analytical quality assurance techniques is simulation. The goal of the simulation technique is to emulate the conversational behavior of the atomic WSs of an SBA. In this paper, we adopt a special case of simulation that is Discrete-Event Simulation (DES) to assure QoS of SBAs. DES has proved its effectiveness for diagnosing the QoS of software applications [7, 8]. To perform DES, we propose a discrete-event modeling approach for SBAs. This approach enables analytical description of SBAs and allows QoS evaluation in different status and conditions of the execution environment. To assure QoS evaluation, we define a lightweight quality model for WSs focusing on essential properties of QoS that play a critical role for the effective management of WSs. These properties are measured by DES technique. We propose also a context model that supports an explicit description of the execution environment. This model is depicted into the simulation model in order to provide a context-based approach for evaluating QoS of SBAs. Our approach is supported by a simulation framework named SBAS.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces an overview of the Web services architecture. Section 3 reviews QoS assurance techniques for SBAs. In section 4, discrete-event simulation issues are addressed. We describe, in Section 5, the proposed context model. In Section 6, we introduce our quality model and explain metrics used to measure considered QoS properties. Section 7 introduces our simulation framework SBAS. Case study experimental results are documented in Section 8. This paper ends with concluding remarks and future work.

2. Web Services Architecture Overview

SOA is an architecture that functions are defined as WSs. According to [1, 2], WSs are self-contained, modular applications that can be described, published, located, and invoked over a network, generally, the World Wide Web. The SOA is described through three different roles: service provider, service requester and service registry. SOA requires three fundamental operations: publishing, finding, and binding. The key idea of the SOA is the following: A service provider publishes services in a service registry. The service requester searches for a service in the registry. He finds one or more by browsing or querying the registry. The service requester uses the service description to bind a service. These ideas are shown in the following figure 1. The above operations are supported by standard technologies that are: UDDI, WSDL, and SOAP [2].

- Universal Description, Discovery, and Integration (UDDI) [9]: provides a registry where service providers can register and publish their services.
- Web Services Description Language (WSDL) [10]: is an XML based language for describing WSs. It specifies the location of the WS and the operations exposed by the WS.
- Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) [11]: is an XML based protocol for exchanging information between WSs or between a client and a WS in a decentralized and distributed environment.

Fig. 1  Service-Oriented Architecture

What makes the SOA attractive is the ability of creating SBAs by composing existing WSs. Such a composition is based on the common standards of WS interfaces regardless of the languages that are used to implement the WSs and the platforms where the WSs are executed. In general, the WSs have the following features that make them better in composition inside the heterogeneous environments [3]:

- Loosely coupled: WSs are autonomous and can operate independently one from another. The loosely coupled feature enables WSs to locate and communicate with each other dynamically at runtime.
- Universal accessibility: WSs can be defined, described and discovered through the Web that enables an easy accessibility.
- Standard languages: WSs are described by standard XML languages that have been considered as parts of the Web technology.
3. Quality of Service Assurance techniques for Service-Based Applications

By QoS, we refer to non-functional requirements of SBAs such as response time, throughput, availability, and security [4, 5]. Thanks to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the execution environment, the management and assurance of the QoS aspects of SBAs become of utmost importance.

To achieve the desired QoS of an SBA, two complementary kinds of techniques can be employed: constructive and analytical quality assurance techniques. Figure 2 provides an overview of these techniques.

The aim of static analysis is to systematically examine an SBA in order to ascertain whether some predefined QoS properties are met. Examples of static analysis techniques include formal ones, like data flow analysis, model checking, symbolic execution, type checking and correctness proofs. We present, in the following paragraphs, some relevant approaches applying static analysis to SBAs.

In [15], Nakajima uses the model-checker SPIN to verify a set of QoS properties related to SBAs. SPIN provides a specification language that describes the SBA to be a collection of automata. The properties to be checked are reachability, deadlock, and freedom. These QoS properties are expressed as formulas of linear temporal logic.

In [16], Salaün et al. propose an approach that uses process algebra as an abstract representation means to describe, compose, and reason on SBAs. The techniques used to check whether an SBA described in process-algebraic notations respects temporal QoS properties (e.g. safety and liveness) are referred to as model checking methods.

In [17], Foster et al. propose the tool LTSA-WS to verify SBAs. This tool supports verification of QoS properties (e.g. absence of deadlock and liveness) created from design specifications and implementation models of SBAs to confirm expected QoS results from the viewpoints of both the designer and implementer. Scenarios are modeled in UML, in the form of message sequence charts, and then compiled into the finite state process algebra to concisely model the required choreography behavior and to verify the required QoS properties.

In [18, 19], Kazhamiakin et al. and Osterweil address the problem of the verification and the analysis of SBAs defined as a set of behavioral models against various QoS requirements. The works focus on modeling and analyzing specific QoS behavioral properties of SBAs, namely asynchronous communications, data and time-related properties. In [18], Kazhamiakin et al. present a framework which relies on a formal model where temporal logics are exploited for the specification and the verification of the above QoS behavioral properties.

3.1 Static Analysis

Numerous efforts have been made by leading research groups to use static analysis to evaluate QoS and to uncover quality defects in SBAs.

The goal of constructive quality assurance techniques is to ensure QoS and prevent the introduction of quality defects while the SBA is created. Examples of such techniques include code generation, software development guidelines, as well as templates. The goal of analytical quality assurance techniques is to evaluate QoS and uncover quality defects in an SBA after it has been created. We sub-divide the analytical quality assurance techniques into three major classes: static analysis, monitoring, and testing. These classes have been proposed in the software quality assurance literature [12, 13] and have been used in a recent overview of quality assurance approaches for SBAs [14].

This section will cover the state of the art in analytical quality assurance techniques for SBAs as our work deals with proposing DES as a new analytical testing technique to assure QoS for SBAs.

3.1 Monitoring

Monitoring has been widely used in many disciplines and, in particular, in service-oriented engineering. Monitoring is defined as a process of observing, collecting, and reporting information about the execution and the evolution of SBAs. The relevant references of monitoring are summarized in the following paragraphs.

In [20], Keller and Ludwig propose the WSLA framework for the specification and the monitoring of service-level agreements. The WSLA framework defines a language for
the specification of contract information that allows for
describing the parties involved in the agreement, the
relevant QoS properties, as well as the ways to observe
and measure them and the obligations and constraints
imposed on these properties.
In [21], Ludwig et al. propose an architecture and
implementation for the creation, the management, and the
monitoring of service-level agreements represented as
WS-Agreement documents. WS-Agreement specification
provides a standardized way of defining contractual
information between service provider and customer. The
proposed architecture is called CREMONA. The
monitoring module of CREMONA is not only used to
observe and detect contract violations, but also to predict
future violations and to engage appropriate adaptation
strategies in advance.
In [22], Curbera et al. propose the COLOMBO platform
for developing, deploying, and executing SBAs. The
COLOMBO platform incorporates the tools and facilities
for checking, monitoring, and enforcing service
requirements expressed in WS-Policy notations. WS-
Policy notations define the QoS assertions that can be
attached to a particular WS, operation, or a message type.
In [23], Baresi and Guinea propose the run-time
monitoring framework DYNAMO. DYNAMO uses an
expressive monitoring language namely WS-CoL for
specifying monitoring rules. DYNAMO oversees the
execution of SBAs by checking monitoring rules and by
reacting as soon as they are violated by means of the
associated adaptation strategies. In [24], Baresi et al.
extend this work for what concerns the kind of properties
the approach can monitor. The extended specification
language, namely Timed WS-CoL, allows for specifying
temporal QoS properties over the events that occur during
the SBA execution.

3.1 Testing
Testing is a frequently used technique for the analysis and
the prediction of QoS of SBAs.
The goal of testing is to systematically execute SBAs in
order to uncover QoS defects. During testing, the SBA
which is tested is fed with concrete inputs and the
produced outputs are observed. The observed outputs can
deviate from the expected outputs with respect to
functionality as well as QoS. When the observed outputs
deviate from the expected outputs, a defect is uncovered.
A special case of testing is simulation. Simulation allows
us to predict software applications performance in
different status and load conditions of the execution
environment. The predicted results are used to provide
feedback on the efficiency of the application. Simulating
SBAs for QoS evaluation is a research area with little
previous work. Works in simulation that are the closest to
ours are described by [25], [26], and [27].
In [25], Narayanan and McIlraith propose a model-
theoretic semantics as well as distributed operational
semantics that can be used for the simulation, the
validation, the verification, the automated composition and
the enactment of DAMLS-described SBAs. To provide a
full service description, Narayanan and McIlraith use the
machinery of situation calculus and its execution
behaviour described with Petri Nets. They use the
simulation and modeling environment KarmaSIM to
translate DAML-S markups to situation calculus and Petri
Nets. In this work, three QoS properties are analyzed:
reachability, liveness and the existence of deadlocks.
In [26], Chandrasekaran et al. focus on problems related
to SBA specification, evaluation, and execution using
Service Composition and Execution Tool (SCET).
SCET allows to compose statically a WS process with
WSFL and to generate a simulation model that can be
processed by the JSIM simulation environment. In this
work, Chandrasekaran et al. have enhanced WSFL to
include QoS measures obtained by performing simulation
tests.
In [27], Mancini et al. present a framework which is aimed
at supporting the development of self-optimizing,
predictive and autonomic systems for WS architectures. It
adopts a simulation-based methodology which allows
predicting QoS properties in different status and load
conditions. In contrast to [25] and [26], this work
considers execution environment information in the
simulation models. This work focuses on simulating only
atomic WSs. It proposes also only one possible QoS
optimization that is response time minimization.
Enhancements are needed to simulate SBAs and to add
more optimization rules for QoS properties.

4. Discrete-Event Simulation Modeling of
Service-Based Applications
Our work deals with using simulation as an analytical
testing technique to assure QoS of SBAs.
There are two main reasons for adopting simulation
techniques: first, simulation is a dynamic analytical
technique that allows QoS predictions for software
applications in different status and conditions of the
execution environment. Second, simulation allows to tune
and to evaluate software applications without experiencing
the cost of enacting them. The originality of our work is
the adoption of a special case of simulation that is the
Discrete-Event Simulation (DES) to evaluate and assure
QoS of SBAs.
In this paper, we propose a SBA modeling approach that is
oriented towards QoS evaluation through DES. DES is a
kind of qualitative description of a dynamic system the
behavior of which is event-driven. This technique is
frequently used to analyze and predict the QoS of software
applications. Giving the evolution of the operation of an
application, we can analyze its behavior and evaluate
appropriate quality measures. [7] and [8] are fundamental
works about discrete-event systems diagnosis. DES is
suitable to model the behavior of a SBA since it is
composed of WSs which are decentralized and dynamic.
The interactions between WSs can be modeled by a
synchronized composition of several local models.
To elaborate our simulation model for SBAs, we are based
on the work presented in [28] that focuses on modeling
distributed applications. We model an SBA as a
combination of two types of entities: distributed
application and network infrastructure entities [29]. Our
simulation model is shown in figure 3.

Fig. 3 Discrete-Event Simulation Model for Service-Based Applications

4.1 Distributed Application Modeling

The operation of the distributed applications is based on the
client-server model. In this model, the client sends a set of
requests to the server and the server sends a response back
to the client for each request. The operation scenario is
supported through specifying groups of actions:

- Processing: indicating data processing;
- Request: indicating invocation of a server process;
- Write: indicating data storage;
- Read: indicating data retrieval;
- Transfer: indicating data transfer between client and
  server processes;
- Synchronize: indicating replica synchronization.

Each WS is executed on a processing node. Processing
action indicates invocation of the processing unit of the
responding node and is characterized by the amount of
data to be processed.
Request action indicates invocation of a server process and
is characterized by the name of the server, the name of the
WS, its invoked interface and the required inputs. Request
action implies activation of the network, since the request
and the reply must be transferred from the invoking to the
invoked process, and vice versa.
There are two available actions for data storing, reading and
writing, which are respectively characterized by the amount
of the stored and retrieved data and the invoked server. The
observations and performance analysis of SBAs have
proven that SOAP messages are small and simple [30].
A transfer action is used to indicate SOAP messages
exchanged between processes.
A synchronize action is needed since the replication of data
is a common practice in such distributed applications.
Synchronize action parameters include the process replicas
that must be synchronized and the amount of transferred
data.
To describe the operation of a SBA, we proceed by
transforming the process behavior written in BPEL [31] into
discrete-event actions. BPEL is a standard proposed by IBM
and Microsoft along with several other companies to model
composed Web services. BPEL defines a grammar for
descirbing the behavior of a SBA. It is composed of fifteen
activity types, some of them are basic activities and the
others are structured activities. Among the basic activities,
the most important ones are the following:

- The <receive> activity: is for accepting the triggering
  message from another WS;
- The <reply> activity: is for returning the response to
  its requestor;
- The <invoke> activity: is for invoking another WS.

The structured activities define the execution orders of the
activities inside their scopes. For example:

- The <sequence> activity: defines the sequential order
  of the activities inside its scope;
- The <flow> activity: defines the concurrent relations
  of the activities inside its scope;

Each activity can be translated into the discrete-event
formalism as one or several actions.
Basic activities involve processing, request, and data
storing actions, while structured ones involve transfered
and synchronized actions.
4.1 Network Infrastructure Modeling

In the proposed modeling scheme, the network infrastructure is considered as a collection of individual networks and internetworks, exchanging messages through relay nodes (active communication devices e.g. routers and switches). Communication channels represent protocol suites (i.e. routing protocols (OSI layers 2 and 3) and peer-to-peer protocols (OSI layers 4-7)). According to the SOA, communication between WSs is performed through exchanging SOAP messages. Figure 4 illustrates one way of making a remote call using SOAP in OSI network reference model [32].

First at application level, a native data object needs to be serialized into XML as SOAP request. Then, the SOAP message is passed to HTTP level. The HTTP layer, on the client-side, needs to “handshake” with service-side by sending a “POST” request. This request initiated a TCP connection. Once receiving “HTTP: ACK”, the client-side HTTP begins to send the whole SOAP message via TCP/IP. The SOAP message may be partitioned into a set of small segments at TCP layer. Appropriate headers and footers are attached to each segment as the segments are passed through Transport, Network, Data Link layers, until reaching the Network Interface Card (NIC) at the physical layer. The NIC is responsible for putting the packages onto the wire at a specific speed (network bandwidth) to next network device (such as a router or a switch), till server NIC [32]. The path from bottom (physical layer) to the top (application layer) on the service-side is opposite to the process on the client-side: the received packages are unpacked at each layer and forwarded to next layer for further retrieving.

4.1 Context Model

By the term “context”, we mean “information utilized by the web service to adjust execution and output to provide the client with a customized and personalized behavior”[33]. Since SBAs are operating in dynamic environments, variations of execution context lead to variations in QoS expectations. In this work, we propose a context-based approach for evaluating SBAs performances. We consider a context model which consists of a set of elements grouped in 2 axes.

- User context: describes user preferences. To each QoS property, user attributes a weight. He chooses the value of this weight according to the level of the QoS property he needs. (e.g., execution time\(\leq 0.8\)).
- Computing context: describes network connectivity (e.g., Internet connectivity, locality, and bandwidth) and devices capabilities (e.g., memory capacity and CPU speed).

Context information are described in the simulation model. Context changes are modeled as discrete events.

4.2 QoS Model

In [34], we define a light-weight quality model focusing on essential properties of QoS that play critical role for the effective management of WSs and that can be measured by DES technique. The QoS properties detailed above are defined in the context of atomic WSs. They are also used to evaluate the QoS of composite WSs. To provide aggregation functions for computing the QoS of composite WSs, we use the QoS computation models described by [6] and [35]. In these works, authors propose aggregation formulae for each pair QoS property/control statement (e.g., Sequence, Switch, Flow, and Loop). QoS aggregation functions are summarized in table 1.

- Response Time: it corresponds to the total time needed by a WS to transform a set of inputs into
outputs. Response Time \((RT)\) for a service \(s\) can be computed as follows:

\[
RT(s) = ST(s) + DT(s)
\]  
(1)

- Service Time \((ST)\) is the time that the WS takes to perform its task.
- Delay Time \((DT)\) is the time taken to send/receive SOAP messages.

- Reliability: it corresponds to the likelihood that the service will perform for its users on demand. Reliability \((R)\) of a service \(s\) is a function of the Failure Rate \((FR)\):

\[
R(s) = (1-FR(s))*100
\]  
(2)

- Availability: it refers to the rate of Service Activity \((SA)\). Availability \((A)\), during a time interval \(I\), for a service \(s\) corresponds to:

\[
A(s) = SA(s)/I
\]  
(3)

- Scalability: it computes the capacity of the service to manage loads. To test the scalability of a WS, we conducted the simulation while changing the number of concurrent clients.

Table 1: QoS Aggregation Functions per control statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregation function</th>
<th>Response Time (RT)</th>
<th>Reliability (R)</th>
<th>Availability (A)</th>
<th>Scalability (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>(\sum_{i=1}^{n} RT(x_i))</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} R(x_i))</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} A(x_i))</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} S(x_i))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch</td>
<td>(\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i R(x_i))</td>
<td>(\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i R(x_i))</td>
<td>(\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i R(x_i))</td>
<td>(\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i R(x_i))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>(\max{RT(x_i)}_{x_i \in [a, b]})</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} R(x_i))</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} A(x_i))</td>
<td>(\prod_{i=1}^{n} S(x_i))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loop</td>
<td>(k \cdot RT(x_i))</td>
<td>(R(x)^d)</td>
<td>(A(x)^d)</td>
<td>(S(x)^d)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4. Our Simulation Framework SBAS**

We have conducted simulation experiments using NS-2 simulator [36]. NS-2 is a discrete-events simulator; its code is written in C++ with an OTcl interpreter as a front end. NS-2 is targeted at networking research. It provides substantial support for simulation of TCP, routing, and multicast protocols over wired and wireless networks. The main advantages of such an object-oriented simulator are reusability and easy maintenance. To support BSA simulation, we have extended the C++ class hierarchy of NS-2 in order to implement HTTP, SMTP, and SOAP protocols.

Our simulation framework \((SBS)\) is modular and includes: a graphical user interface, a BPEL generator, a simulation model generator, a models library and NS-2 simulator. The architecture of SBAS is presented in figure 6. User specifies the BSA under study. SBAS constructs corresponding BPEL model. Simulation model is implemented as actions organized in the object hierarchy of the NS-2 simulator. When simulation has been completed, results are collected and subjected to output QoS analysis.

**5. Experiments**

In this section, we describe three SBAs which satisfy the same functional requirement. We use our discrete-event simulation approach to evaluate QoS of each of these SBAs.

![Fig. 6 Our Framework for Simulating Service-Based Applications: SBAS](image-url)

To express variability modeling of SBAs, we adopt the MAP formalism [37]. A map is a labeled directed graph with intentions as nodes and strategies as edges between intentions. An intention is a goal that can be achieved by the performance of the process. Each map has two distinct intentions Start and Stop to respectively begin and end the navigation into the map. A strategy is an approach, a manner to achieve an intention. The MAP permits to capture variability by focusing on the strategy to achieve an intention and the potential alternatives to accomplish the same intention.

We consider an abstract intention \(Buy books online\). Maps (described in Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9) present possible refinements of this abstract intention. They model different SBAs \((SBA1, SBA2, and SBA3)\) that ensure the same functional requirement \(Buy books online\).
SBA1 begins by invoking SearchByISBN (SI) service. This service allows the customer to search a book by entering its ISBN code. The total price to pay is calculated using the CalculateTotalPrice (CTP) service. The client’s account is then checked for sufficient funds using the CheckCredit (CCr) service. If the client has sufficient credit, the ReleaseOrder (RO) service is invoked in order to send the book. Otherwise, the SendCreditLowInfo (SCLI) service is invoked.

In SBA2, the client begins also by searching the book that he wants to buy using the SearchByISBN (SI) service. The FindLowestFare (FLF) service allows him to find the cheapest bookstore. The client’s credit is then checked by VerifyCredit (VC) service. If the client has sufficient credit, ChargeCard (CC), DispatchBook (DB), and SendConfirmationSMS (SCS) are invoked. Otherwise, InsufficientCreditSMS (ICS) is executed in order to inform the client of his insufficient credit.

SBA3 begins also by invoking the SearchByISBN (SI) service. The FindPayPalBookStores (FPBS) service allows the client to find book stores accepting PayPal payments. The client’s PayPal account is checked by CheckPayPalAccount (CPA) service. If the client has a PayPal account, the ChargeCard (CC) and the ReleaseOrder (RO) services are invoked. Otherwise, the CreatePayPalAccount (CrPA) is executed to permit to the client to create a PayPal account.

Figure 10 shows the execution context of the user.

- Devices: PC, CPU: 1.86GHz, RAM: 2Go.
- Internet connectivity: NUMERIS, Modem speed: 512KB/s.
- Network: topology: user is connected to an Internet Service Provider (ISP), which is in its turn connected to Server through a Router (R).
  - Link User ISP: throughput: 512KB/s, delay: 50ms.
  - Link ISP R: throughput: 1MB/s, delay: 25ms.
  - Link R Server: throughput: 512KB/s, delay: 50ms.

Table 2 illustrates the user’s preferences. For each QoS property i, the user attribute a weight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QoS property</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Time</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalability</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The configuration of the simulation platform is Dual-Core based Windows XP system. For each QoS property, we performed a set of simulation experiments, and we have considered the average value. Simulation results (figure 11, figure 12, figure 13, and figure 14) show that SBA1 is more reliable, available, and scalable than SBA2 and SBA3, but SBA2 is faster than SBA1 and SBA3.
To validate these results in order to help the user to choose the appropriate SBA, we use a Benefit Function (BF). BF is computed as follows:

\[
BF = \sum_{i=1}^{n} d_i \cdot w_i \quad \text{with} \quad \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i = 1
\]

(4)

Where \(d_i\) is a normalized value of a QoS dimension (i.e., QoS property) and \(w_i\) denotes the user’s assigned relative importance to the dimension. As dimensions can be of different units (e.g., response time is in second and availability in percentage), in order to allow for a uniform measurement of WS QoS independent of units, data normalization is applied, which essentially transforms values of different units into comparable ones. By considering a 75% confidence interval, the dimensions that are stronger with larger values (e.g., reliability, availability and scalability) are normalized according to the following equation:

\[
f(n) = \begin{cases} 
  d_i = 1 & \text{if } d_i - m(d) > 2 \cdot \delta(d) \\
  d_i = 0 & \text{if } d_i - m(d) < 2 \cdot \delta(d) \\
  d_i = \frac{d_i - m(d)}{4 \cdot \delta(d)} + 0.5 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
\]

(5)

While for QoS dimensions that are stronger with smaller values (e.g., response time), they are normalized according to the following equation so that smaller values contribute more to the user’s benefit:

\[
f(n) = \begin{cases} 
  d_i = 0 & \text{if } d_i - m(d) > 2 \cdot \delta(d) \\
  d_i = 1 & \text{if } d_i - m(d) < 2 \cdot \delta(d) \\
  d_i = 0.5 - \frac{d_i - m(d)}{4 \cdot \delta(d)} & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
\]

(6)

Where \(d_i\) is the value of dimension \(d\) for the service instance \(i\), and \(m(d)\) and \(\delta(d)\) are the mean and standard deviation values for dimension \(d\) respectively.

The validation of SBA1, SBA2, and SBA3 has given the results shown in table 3. This validation proves that SBA1 is more appropriate for users’ expectations than the SBA2 and SBA3 are.

Table 3: Validation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SBA1</th>
<th>SBA2</th>
<th>SBA3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.265</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Conclusion and Future Work

In this work, we adopted a discrete-events simulation approach to evaluate QoS of SBAs. We presented a simulation modeling approach. This approach enables an analytical description of SBAs and allows QoS predictions in the different status and conditions of the execution context.

We defined a light-weight quality model considering a set of QoS properties that can be measured by simulation techniques. We proposed also a context model that describes execution environment and the user’s preferences. This model is depicted into the simulation model in order to provide a context-based approach for evaluating SBAs.

To show the effectiveness of our approach, we have conducted a set of simulation experiments in order to evaluate and to validate three SBAs that provide the same required functionality.

One possible extension of our work is the support of dynamic adaptations of SBAs. It requires extensive simulation experiments to define, validate and enhance the adaptation strategies.

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References


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