BIGLEVER NEWSLETTER: GearUP Announcement

Introducing Gears 7.3: Meet the New Gears Matrix Wizard

Greetings from Dr. Drew Stovall:

BigLever Software has released version 7.3 of its industry-leading Gears Product Line Engineering (PLE) tool featuring a totally re-designed Matrix Wizard. The new Gears Matrix Wizard gives you instant access to the information you need – and provides the natural control you want – to make product definition selections efficiently.

Need some assistance? The Matrix Wizard also provides an analysis of every option to ensure that your products, and your product family trees, are exactly right.

Now: Product Definition Made Simple for Product Managers, Product Marketing, and Product Definition Teams

Gears has always been the standard for helping product line engineers build the product line infrastructure -- that is, the feature models and shared assets that define the complete space of a product line. As shown in this PLE factory illustration, those engineers work on the far left side of the diagram. They build the shared assets and endow them with variation points, so that they can be configured by Gears to build product-specific instances.

The new Matrix Wizard was designed expressly for the "Product Line Management" role, shown on the top of the illustration. These are the portfolio managers, product managers, and marketers that need to understand and plan the evolution of the product line. The Wizard gives these individuals more control and assistance in managing product definitions.

Introducing the Gears Matrix Wizard

To build a product, the Gears user "walks across" a matrix, selecting profiles that have been made available by the asset engineers. That sounds simple enough, but:

Multistage Configuration for Product Family Trees

Earlier this year, BigLever delivered its new multistage configuration capability which enables engineering organizations to create, deliver, manage, and evolve their entire product line family tree based on product line features.

Multistage configuration extends the product line factory approach, enabled by BigLever's Gears solution, to allow product line managers and marketers to better comprehend, organize, and manage highly complex family trees using product line features.

This new capability is especially powerful because it shortens the lead time required to translate new feature concepts and combinations into product implementation.
Product marketers can now gain a cohesive big picture view into the product family tree, and the subfamilies within their purview, to take strategic advantage of product feature commonalities and diversity within the product space.

As a result, businesses can leverage a feature-based product line management approach to efficiently expand and evolve their product line portfolio to meet customer need and market demand.

See more about multistage configuration in the previous issue of the BigLever Newsletter, or download the white paper.

Underwriting the Convergence of ALM and PLM

According to Tony Baer, Principal Analyst at Ovum, dealing with extreme product line diversity -- such as in the case of complex product family trees -- is a challenge that hits hard in the systems engineering arena, where the disparate worlds of software and hardware come together.

"As ALM (application lifecycle management) and PLM (product lifecycle management) technologies begin to converge, much of the industry's focus is on integrating the tools, rather than integrating the business across these two critical functions," said Baer. "BigLever's feature-based product family management approach can play a key role in helping engineering and product management establish a common vision for the product line."

Gears in the News

Automotive Engineering International: Feature-based product line family management software

SD Times: BigLever gets product line 'family trees' in Gears 7.2
definition is a labor-intensive task in the process flow, and especially for product lines with many cross-feature constraints that every product must honor. Now, building products in those environments is easy, and possibly even fun.

For those with small product lines -- small numbers of products, a small number of choices needed for each product, or few feature interaction constraints -- the Matrix Wizard is equally helpful.

And if you're accustomed to simply clicking on a matrix cell and availing yourself of the pulldown menu, no worries: You can continue to do that.

The Wizard is there if you need it, but doesn't activate unless you ask for it.

Houston, we don't have a problem

Using the Gears Matrix Wizard is like a Mission Control console for your product line, except that it's much less expensive (and you don't have to go to Houston). If you would like more information about the Matrix Wizard, or to see a product demonstration, please contact us at info@biglever.com.

Enjoy!

Best Regards,

Drew Stovall

BigLever Software Vice President of Engineering
dstovall@biglever.com