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JBoss RichFaces

By Nick Belaevski, Ilya Shaikovsky Jay Balunas, and Max Katz

WHAT IS RICHFACES?

RichFaces is a JSF component library that consists of two main parts: AJAX enabled JSF components and the CDK (Component Development Kit). RichFaces UI components are divided into two tag libraries a4j: and rich:. Both tag libraries offer out-of-the-box AJAX enabled JSF components. The CDK is a facility for creating, generating and testing you own rich JSF components (not covered in this card).

INSTALLING RICHFACES

See the RichFaces Project page for the latest version- http:// www.jboss.org/jbossrichfaces/.

Add these jar files to your WEB-INF/lib directory: richfacesapi.jar, richfaces-impl.jar, richfaces-ui.jar, commons-beanutils.jar, commons-collections.jar, commons-digester.jar, commons-logging.jar

RichFaces Filter

Update the web.xml file with the RichFaces filter:

RichFaces Filter

- <filter> <display-name>RichFaces Filter</display-name>
- <filter.class>org.ajax4jsf.Filter</filter.class>
- </filter>
- <filter-mapping>
 <filter-name>richfaces</filter-name>
- <servlet-name>Faces Servlet</servlet-name>
 <dispatcher>REQUEST</dispatcher>
 <dispatcher>FORWARD</dispatcher>
- <dispatcher>INCLUDE</dispatcher>
- <dispatcher>ERROR</dispatcher>
 </filter-mapping>



The RichFaces Filter is not needed for applications that use Seam (http://seamframework.org)

Page setup

Configure RichFaces namespaces and taglibs in your XHTML and JSP pages.

Facelets

xmlns:a4j="http://richfaces.org/a4j" xmlns:rich="http://richfaces.org/rich"

JSP

<%@ taglib uri="http://richfaces.org/a4j" prefix="a4j"%>
<%@ taglib uri="http://richfaces.org/rich" prefix="rich"%>



Use JBoss Tools for rapid project setup http://www.jboss.org/tools

BASIC CONCEPTS

Sending an AJAX request a4j:support

Sends an AJAX request based on a DHTML event supported by the parent component. In this example, the AJAX request will be triggered after the user types a character in the text box:

a4j:support

```
<h:inputText value="#{echoBean.text}">
    <aij:support event="onkeyup" action="#{echoBean.count}"</pre>
                          reRender="echo, cnt"/>
```

</h:inputText> ch:outputText id="echo" value="Echo: #{echoBean.text}"/>
<h:outputText id="cnt" value="Count: #{echoBean.textCount}"/>

a4j:support can be attached to any html tag that supports DHTML events, such as:

a4j:support

```
<h:selectOneRadio value="#{colorBean.color}">
    <f:selectItems value="#{colorBean.colorList}" />
    <ai:support event="onclick" reRender="id" />
</h:selectOneRadio>
```

a4j:commandButton, a4j:commandLink

Similar to h:commandButton and h:commandLink but with two major differences. They trigger an AJAX request and allow partial JSF component tree rendering.

The request goes through the standard JSF life cyle. During the Render Response, only components whose client ids are listed in the reRender attribute (echo, count) are rendered back the the browser

a4j:commandButton, a4j:commandLink

- <h:inputText value="#{echoBean.text}"/>
- ch:outputText id="echo" value="Echo: #{echoBean.text}"/>
 <h:outputText id="cnt" value="Count: #{echoBean.textCount}"/>
 <a4j:commandButton value="Submit" action="#{echoBean.count}"</pre> reRender="echo, cnt"/>



- Developed by Exadel, the creators of RichFaces and Ajax4jsf
- Contact us today to learn how we can help you richfaces@exadel.com

Watch live demo at: livedemo.exadel.com/richfaces-demo Download today: jboss.com/download

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Basic Concepts, continued

When the response is received, the browser DOM is updated with the new data i.e 'RichFaces is neat' and '17'.

Text:	RichFaces is neat	
Echo:	RichFaces is neat	
Count:	17	
Submit		

a4j:commandLink works exactly the same but renders a link instead of a button.

a4j:poll

Enables independent periodic polling of the server via an AJAX request. Polling interval is defined by the interval attribute and enable/disable polling is configured via enabled attribute (true|fase).

a4j:poll

<a4j:poll id="poll" interval="500" enabled="#{pollBean.enabled}"
reRender="now" />
 <a4j:commandButton value="Start" reRender="poll"</pre>

```
action="#{pollBean.start}" />
<a4j:commandButton value="Stop" reRender="poll"
action="#{pollBean.stop}" />
<h:outputText id="now" value="#{pollBean.now}" />
```

a4j:poll

```
public class PollBean {
    private Boolean enabled=false; // setter and getter
    public void start () {enabled = true;}
    public void stop () {enabled = false;}
    public Date getNow () {return new Date();}
}
```

a4j:jsFunction

Allows sending an AJAX request directly from any JavaScript function (built-in or custom).

a4j:jsFunction

```
onmouseout="setdrink('')">Espresso
```

When the mouse hovers or leaves a drink, the setdrink() JavaScript function is called. The function is defined by an a4j:jsFunction tag which sets up the AJAX call. It can call listeners and perform partial page rendering. The drink parameter is passed to the server via a4j:actionparam tag.

a4j:push

a4j:push works similarly to a4j:poll; however, in order to check the presence of a message in a queue, it only makes a minimal HEAD request(ping-like) to the server without invoking the JSF life cycle. If a message exists, a sandard JSF request is sent to the server.

Partial view (page) rendering

There are two ways to perform partial view rendering when AJAX requests return.

ReRender attribute

Most RichFaces components support the reRender attribute to define the set of client ids to reRender.

Attribute	Can bind to
reRender	Set, Collection, Array, comma-delimited String

ReRender can be set statically as in the examples above or with EL:

<a4j:commandLink reRender="#{bean.renderControls}"/>

Basic Concepts, continued

2

It's also possible to point to parent components to rerender all child components:

<a4j:commandLink value="Submit" reRender="panel" /> <h:panelGrid id="panel"> <h:outputText /> <h:dataTable>...</h:dataTable> </h:panelGrid>

In the example above the child components of the **outputPanel** will be rerendered when the **commandLink** is submitted.

a4j:outputPanel

All child components of an a4j:outputPanel will be rerendered automatically for any AJAX request.

<a4j:commandLink value="Submit" /> <a4j:outputPanel ajaxRendered="true"> <h:outputText/> <h:dataTable></h:dataTable>

</a4j:outputPanel>

In the example above the child components of the outputPanel will be rerendered when the commandLink is submitted.



If ajaxRendered="false" (default) the a4j:outputPanel behaves just like h:panelGroup.

To limit rendering to only components set in the reRender attribute, set limitToList="true". In this example, only h:panelGrid will be rendered:

```
<adj:commandLink reRender="panel" limitToList="true"/>
<h:panelGrid id="panel">
<h:dataTable>...</h:dataTable>
</h:panelGrid>
<adj:outputPanel ajaxRendered="true">
<h:dataTable>...</h:dataTable>
</adj:outputPanel>
```

Deciding what to process on the server

When an AJAX request is sent to the server, the full HTML form is always submitted. However, once on the server we can decide what components to decode or process during the Apply Request, Process Validations and Update Model phases. Selecting which components to process is important in validation. For example, when validating a component (field) via AJAX, we don't want to process other components in the form (in order not to display error messages for components where input hasn't been entered yet). Controlling what is processed will help us with that.

The simplest way to control what is processed on the server is to define an AJAX region using the a4j:region tag (by default the whole page is an AJAX region).

```
<h:inputText>
    <adj:support event="onblur" />
    </h:inputText>
    <adj:region>
        <h:inputText>
        <adj:support event="onblur" />
        </h:inputText>
        <adj:support event="onblur" />
        </h:inputText>
</adj:region>
```

When the user leaves the 2nd input component (onblur event), an AJAX request will be sent where only this input field will be processed on the server. All other components outside this region will not be processed (no conversion/validation, update model, etc). It's also possible to nest regions:

<a4j:region></a4j:region>
<a4j:region></a4j:region>





Basic Concepts, continued

When the request is invoked from the inner region, only components in the inner region will be processed. When invoked from outer region, all components (including inner region) will be processed.

When sending a request from a region, processing is limited to components inside this region. To limit rendering to a region, the renderRegionOnly attribute can be used:

<a4j:region renderregiononly="true"></a4j:region>
<h:inputtext></h:inputtext>
<a4j:commandbutton rerender="panel"></a4j:commandbutton>
<h:panelgrid id="panel"></h:panelgrid>
<a4j:outputpanel ajaxrendered="true"></a4j:outputpanel>
<h:datatable></h:datatable>

When the AJAX request is sent from the region, rendering will be limited to components inside that region only because renderRegionOnly="true". Otherwise, components inside a4j:outputPanel would be rendered as well.

To process a single input or action component, instead of wrapping inside a4j:region, it's possible to use the ajaxSingle attribute:

<h:inputText> <a4j:support event="onblur" ajaxSingle="true"/> </h:inputText>

When using ajaxSingle="true" and a need arises to process additional components on a page, the process attribute is used to include id's of components to be processed.

<h:inputText> <a4j:support event="onblur" ajaxSingle="true" process="mobile"/> <h:inputText> <h:inputText id="mobile"/>

The process can also point to an EL expression or container component id in which case all components inside the container will be processed.

When just validating form fields, it is usually not necessary to go through the Update Model and Invoke Application phases. Setting bypassUpdates="true", will skip these phases, improving response time, and allowing you to perform validation without changing the model's state.

<h:inputText> <adj:support event="onblur" ajaxSingle="true" bypassUpdates="true"/> </h:inputText>

JavaScript interactions

RichFaces components send an AJAX request and do partial page rendering without writing any direct JavaScript code. If you need to use custom JavaScript functions, the following attributes can be used to trigger them.

Tag	Attributte Description
a4j:commandButton, a4j:commandLink, a4j:support, a4j:poll, a4j:jsFunction	onbeforedomupdate: JavaScript code to be invoked after response is received but before browser DOM update oncomplete: JavaScript code to be invoked after browser DOM updatedata. Allows to get the additional data from the server during an AJAX call. Value is serialized in JSON format.
a4j:commandButton, a4j:commandLink	onclick: JavaScript code to be invoked before AJAX request is sent.
a4j:support, a4j:poll	onsubmit: JavaScript code to be invoked before AJAX request is sent.

CONTROLLING TRAFFIC

Flooding a server with small requests can cripple a web application, and any dependent services like databases.

Controlling Traffic, continued Richfaces 3.3.0.GA and Higher

Queues can be defined using the <a4j:queue .../> component and are referred to as **Named** or **Unnamed** queues. Unnamed queues are also referred to as **Default** queues because components within a specified scope will use an unnamed queue by default.

<a4j:queue /> Notable Attributes

Attribute	Description
name	Optional Attribute that determines if this is a named or unnamed queue
sizeExceededBehavior	When the size limit reached: dropNext, DropNew, fireNext, fireNew
ignoreDupResponses	If true then responses from the server will be ignored if there are queued evens of the same type waiting.
requestDelay	Time in ms. events should wait in the queue incase more events of the same type are fired
Event Triggers	onRequestDequeue, onRequestQueue, onSizeExeeded, onSubmit

Other notable attributes include: disabled, id, binding, status, size, timeout.

Named Queues

Named queues will only be used by components that reference them by name as below:

<a4j:queue name="fooQueue" ... /> <h:inputText ... > <a4j:support eventsQueue="fooQueue" .../> </h:inputText>

Unnamed Queues

Unnamed queues are used to avoid having to specifically reference named queues for every component.

Queue Scope	Description
Global	All views of the application will have a view scoped queue that does not need to be defined and that all components will use.
View	Components within the parent <f:view> will use this queue</f:view>
Form	Component within the parent <h:form> or <a4j:form> will use this queue</a4j:form></h:form>

Global Queue

To enable the global queue for an application you must add this to the web.xml file.

<context-param>

<param-name>org.richfaces.queue.global.enabled</param-name>
 <param-value>true</param-value>
 </context-param>

It is possible to disable or adjust the global queue's settings in a particular view by referencing it by its name.

<a4j:queue name="org.richfaces.global_queue" disabled="true"... />

View Scoped Default Queues

Defined the <a4j:queue> as a child to the <f:view>.

<f:view>

<a4j:queue ... />

Performance Tips:

- Control the number of requests sent to the server.
- Limit the size of regions that are updated per request using <a4j : region/>
- Cache or optimize database access for AJAX requests
- Don't forget to refresh the page when needed

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Controlling Traffic, continued

Form Scoped Default Queue

This can be useful for separating behavior and grouping requests in templates.

<h:form>

```
...
<a4j:queue ... />
```

A4J:* TAGS

The a4j:* tags provide core AJAX components that allow developers to augment existing components and provide plumbing for custom AJAX behavior.

a4j:repeat

This component is just like ui:repeat from Facelets, but also allows AJAX updates for particular rows. In the example below the component is used to output a list of numbers together with controls to change (the value is updated for the clicked row only):

A
<a4]:repeat value="#{items}" var="item"></a4]:repeat>
<h:outputtext id="value" value="#{item.value} "></h:outputtext>
<a4j:commandlink <="" action="#{item.inc}" td="" value=" +1 "></a4j:commandlink>
reRender="value"/>

#{items} could be any of the supported JSF data models. var identifies a request-scoped variable where the data for each iteration step is exposed. No markup is rendered by the component itself so a4j:repeat cannot serve as a target for reRender.

The component can be updated fully (by usual means) or partially. In order to get full control over partial updates you should use the ajaxKeys attribute. This attribute points to a set of model keys identifying the element sequence in iteration. The first element has Integer(0) key, the second – Integer(1) key, etc. Updates of nested components will be limited to these elements.

a4j:include

Defines page areas that can be updated by AJAX according to application navigation rules. It has a viewId attribute defining the identifier of the view to include:

<a4j:include viewId="/first.xhtml" />

One handy usage of a4j:include is for building multi-page wizards. Ajax4jsf command components put inside the included page (e.g. first.xhtml for our case) will navigate users to another wizard page via AJAX:

<a4j:commandButton action="next" value="To next page" />

(The "next" action should be defined in the faces-config.xml navigation rules for this to work). Setting ajaxRendered true will cause a4j:include content to be updated on every AJAX request, not only by navigation. Currently, a4j:include cannot be created dynamically using Java code.

a4j:keepAlive

Allows you to keep bean state (e.g. for request scoped beans) between requests:

<a4j:keepAlive beanName="searchBean" />

Standard JSF state saving is used so in order to be portable

a4j:* Components, continued

it is recommended that bean class implements either java. io.Serializable or javax.faces.component.StateHolder.

a4j:keepAlive cannot be created programmatically using Java. Mark managed bean classes using the org.ajax4jsf. model.KeepAlive annotation in order to keep their states.JBoss Seam's page scope provides a more powerful analog to ths behavior.

a4j:loadXXX

RichFaces provides several ways to load bundles, scripts, and styles into your application.

Tag	Description	
a4j:loadBundle	loads a resource bundle localized for the locale of the current view	
a4j:loadScript	loads an external JavaScript file into the current view	
a4j:loadStyle	loads an external .css file into the current view	

a4j:status

Used to display the current status of AJAX requests such as "loading..." text and images. The component uses "start" and "stop" facets to define behavior. It is also possible to invoke Javascript or set styles based on status mode changes.

a4j:actionparam

Adds additional request parameters and behavior to command components (like a4j:commandLink or h:commandLink). This component can also add actionListeners that will be fired after the model has been updated.

RICH:* TAGS

The rich: tags are ready-made or self-contained components. They don't require any additional wiring or page control components to function.

Input Tags

Tag	Description
rich:calendar	Advanced Date and Time input with many options such as inline/popup, locale, and custom date and time patterns.
rich:editor	A complete WYSIWYG editor component that supports HTML and Seam Text
rich:inplaceInput	Inline inconspicuous input fields
rich:inputNumberSlider	min/max values slider

Components include: comboBox, fileUpload, inplaceSelect, inputNumberSpinner

Output Tags

Тад	Description
rich:modalPanel	Blocks interactions with the rest of the page while active
rich:panelMenu	Collapsable grouped panels with subgroup support
rich:progressBar	AJAX polling of server state
rich:tabPanel	Tabbed panel with client, server, or ajax switching
rich:toolBar	Complex content and settings

Components include: paint2D, panel, panelBar, simpleTogglePanel, togglePanel, toolTip

Data Grids, Lists, and Tables

RichFaces has support for AJAX-based data scrolling, complex cell content, grid/list/table formats, filtering, sorting, etc....

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rich:* Tags, continued

Тад	Description
rich:dataTable	Supports complex content, AJAX updates, sortable, and filterable columns
rich:extendedDataTable	Adds scrollable data, row selection options, adjustable column locations, and row/column grouping
rich:dataGrid	Complex grid rendering of grouped data from a model

Complex Content Sample

Product Code	Proposed Price	Sales Cost	Reason	Proposed Gross Margin
1	4.0	20.0	Nobody Needs it	-\$4.000
2	5.0	10.0	Bad Quality 🗘	-\$1.000

Menus

Hierarchical menus available in RichFaces include:

Тад	Description	
rich:contextMenu	Based on page location and can be attached to most components link images, labels, etc	Ci File Links Ci ➢ New Ci ➢ Open
rich:dropDownMenu	Classic application style menu that supports icons and submenus.	Save As → <u>Vi</u> Close
		Exit

Components include: rich:menItem, rich:menuGroup, rich:menuSeparator

Trees

RichFaces has tree displays that support many options such as switching (AJAX client or server), drag-drop and are dynamically generated from data models.

Тад	Description	
rich:tree	Core parent component for a tree	- 🗁 erg + 🗁 richfaces
rich:treeNode	Creates sets of tree elements	Gi deno datatablescruller SurtingSeen.jave
rich:treeNodeAdaptor	Defines data model sources for trees	GataTableScrollertiean.jav SortOption.java
rich:recursiveTree NodeAdaptor	Adds recursive node definition from models	+ 🛅 datatable

Selects

Provides visually appealing list manipulation options for the UI.

Тад	Description	Automitic States		Control Antica Interio	
rich:listShuttle	Advanced data list manipulation (figure x)	Den San X Den San N	• Capital	Contro Foltor Contro Doc E Fore	
rich:orderingList	Visually manipulate a lists order		- Renove Ad		a ben

Validation Tags

AJAX endabled validation including hibernate validation.

Тад	Description	
rich:ajaxValidator	Event triggered validation without updating the model- this skips all JSF phases except validation.	
rich:beanValidator	 Validate individual input fields using hibernate validators in you bean/model classes 	
rich:graphValidator	Validate whole subtree of components using hibernate validators. can also validate the whole bean after model updates.	

Drag-Drop

Allows many component types to support drag and drop features.

rich:* Tags, continued

5

Tag Description		
rich:dragSupport	Add as a child to components you want to drag.	
righ:dropSupport Define components that support dropped items.		
rich:dragIndicator Allows for custom visualizations while dragging an item.		
rich:dndParam To pass parameters during a drag-n-drop action.		

Miscellaneous

Тад	Description	
rich:componentControl	Attach triggers to call JS API functions on the components after defined events.	
rich:effect	Scriptaculous visual effect support	
rich:gmap	Embed GoogleMaps with custom controls	
rich:hotKey	Define events triggered by hot key (example: alt-z)	
rich:insert	Display and format files from the file system	
rich:virtualEarth	Embed Virtual Earth images and controls	

Components include: rich:message, rich:messages, rich:jQuery

SKINNING

Using out-of-the-box skins

RichFaces ships with a number of built-in skins.

Out-c	of-the-	box	Skins
		~ ~	•

default, classic, emeraldTown, blueSky, ruby, wine, deepMarine, sakura, plain, default, laguna*, glassx*, darkx*

* Require a separate jar file to function

Add the org.richfaces.SKIN context parameter to web.xml and set the skin name.

<context-param> <param-name>org.richfaces.SKIN</param-name> <param-value>blueSky</param-value> </context-param>

Sample blueSky skin	Sample ruby skin		
Continents	Continents		
Asia Africa North America So	Asia Africa North America So		
Asia is the world's largest and most populou billion people, it contains more than 60% of t	Asia is the world's largest and most populou billion people, it contains more than 60% of t		

Using skin property values on the page

You can use **skinBean** implicit object to use any value from the skin file on your page.



The button color is set according to the current skin[Ruby].s

Loading different skins at runtime

You can define an applications skin with EL expression like this:

Define a session scoped **skinBean** and manage its **currentSkin** property at runtime with your skin names values. Every

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JBoss RichFaces

rich:* Tags, continued

time a page is rendered, RichFaces will resolve the value in #{skinBean.currentSkin} to get the current skin. Changing Skins should not be done via AJAX but with a full page refresh. A full page refresh will ensure that all CSS links are correctly updated based on the new skin

Advanced Skinning Features

- Create custom skins, or extend the default skins
- Override or extend styles per page as needed
- Automatically skin the standard JSF components
- Plug'n'Skin feature used to generate whole new skins using
- Maven archetypes

rich:* Tags, continued

Customizing redefined CSS classes

Under the hood all RichFaces components are equipped with a set of predefined rich-* CSS classes that can be extended to allow customization of a components style (see documentation for details). By modifying these CSS classes you can update all components that use them such as:

.rich-input-text { color: red;

Project links for more information or questions:

Project page (http://www.jboss.org/jbossrichfaces) Documentation (http://jboss.org/jbossrichfaces/docs)

Practical

Max Katz

RichFaces



Nick Belaevski

Nick Belaevski is the team leader of the RichFaces project working for Exadel Inc. He has more than four years of experience in development of middleware products including JBoss Tools and RichFaces. Projects: RichFaces

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Projects: RichFaces



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and powerful programs. Assuming some JSF background, it shows you how you can radically reduce programming time and effort to create rich AJAX based applications.

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Projects: RichFaces, Seam Framework, and JBoss Tattletale

Synctusion

Max Katz

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Max Katz is a senior system engineer at Exadel. He is the author of "Practical Rich-Faces" (Apress). He has been involved with RichFaces since its inception. He has written numerous articles, provided training, and presented at many conferences and webinars about RichFaces. Max blogs about RichFaces and RIA technologies at http://m Projects: RichFaces

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