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Sun plans to open app
store
Sun Microsystems

[Sun Plans to Launch Application Store](#)

Hoping that its huge user base will make the app store an ideal distribution system for developers

Sun CEO Jonathan Schwartz announced the company's plans to launch an application store for Java software. After the success of similar initiatives, like Apple's iPhone App Store, it seems like everyone wants in on the latest trend. More details on the currently named Project Vector will be available at the JavaOne event.

Schwartz is optimistic that java's huge install base will make this a guaranteed success. "[...]Unlike other app stores, whose audiences are tiny, measured in the millions or tens of millions, ours will have what we estimate to be approximately a billion users. That's clearly a lot of traffic, and will position the Java App Store as having just about the world's largest audience." he wrote. "Vector (which we'll likely rename the Java Store), has the potential to deliver the world's largest audience to developers and businesses leveraging Java and JavaFX."

Applications will be submitted through a web interface to be examined by Sun to determine if they are fit for publication. These apps will be delivered using the Java update system already installed on many PCs. The company plans to make money by taking a percentage of the sale price, similar to what Apple is doing with its store. It also plans to register a profit by having developers pay for position on application storefront. Sun's CEO believes there is a great potential market for the store based on Java's user base and on the need of companies to have a simple way of reaching potential customers.

This all sounds very good in theory. After all, a potential market of 1 billion customers should be the dream of any developer. Java has been quite successful on mobile phones but even there its market share is beginning to shrink. However, on the desktop front Java is practically nonexistent being replaced mainly by Flash applications on the web. The only two somewhat successful applications built on Java are Azureus, a bittorrent client, and Eclipse, a development software suite mainly used to build other Java applications. But even if somehow the store were to be a success, would it actually make money for Sun? Apple's App Store is seen as a big success, yet it is barely breaking even. However, Apple doesn't need to make money from the App Store because it launched it as way to drive iPhone sales and in that respect it has more than achieved its goal.

Sun has its work cut out in front of it and the odds don't seem very high. But if it does succeed, the store might prove to be a real money maker for the company.