



QuickClip Portlet, BEA WebLogic Edition

Product Overview

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Overview of BEA QuickClip WebLogic edition

This document provides an introductory overview of BEA QuickClip Portlet WebLogic edition. The general concepts of web clipping are explained as well as how the QuickClip Portlet typically is used, its benefits and how it differs from other forms of web clipping.

What is Web Clipping?

Web clipping is the ability to access a web based application or information source and repurpose it in a new context. Typically the clip is inserted as a portlet in a portal but clips can also be used in other contexts.

The primary use of clips:

- Creation of specialized or personalized versions of public web sites
- Provide portal access to external or third party hosted web applications
- Portlet enabling of content from an intranet
- Creation of portlets with selected functionality of web applications
- Single Sign On (SSO) integration of multiple web based applications
- Access control of protected sites, where simple firewall and proxy products does not suffice

To solve these kinds of use cases, a couple of dominant forms of clipping exist:

- Portlet based clipping for portal users and portal administrators
- Enterprise web clipping for portlet developers and portal administrators

Portlet based clipping is typically simple in its use and also in the flexibility with which access and portlet creation is provided. Enterprise web clipping on the other hand is very flexible and provides lots of options for tweaking the access and transformation of sites and applications, but it often requires a dedicated development environment and more skilled personnel to set it up.

QuickClip Portlet

The QuickClip Portlet is a lightweight web clipping solution packaged in a portlet for BEA WebLogic Portal. It is built on top of the robust Enterprise WebClipper provided to BEA by Kapow Technologies. It consists of a portlet to be deployed in the portal UI and a server component for access to web sites and execution of clipping functionality. In the following the primary use cases is described.

Usage scenarios

The QuickClip Portlet covers two main use cases. Simple full site clipping and full site clipping of protected sites.

Full site clipping

The most simple and straight forward use case is one where a portlet need to provide a view of an existing Web application or Web Information source. It is possible to setup one common URL that all users will go to (e.g. www.fedex.com) or let each individual user setup their own URL (e.g. www.ups.com or www.usps.com) independent of other users. In both cases the site will be clipped in its entirety and any sub page within that site (domain) will also be clipped within the

portlet. Should a link point to a page on a different site it can either pop up as new window or be disabled.

Clipping of Authenticated sites (SSO)

When clipping from protected sites that need authentication the URL is always defined by the administrator and not by the end users. The credentials to access the protected pages of a site can be defined once for the whole user community (common login) or each individual user (individual login). In addition to these two modes of authentication is supported:

- **Basic Authentication.** This is the simplest form of authentication where the web server requires credentials to allow access to pages. Both common and individual login are supported. For common login the administrators' supplies user name and a password in the Portal Administration Console and for individual login the end-user enters user name and a password from the portlet's edit mode. In both cases the credentials are saved in the portlet's preferences and access is provided when the portlet is displaying the page.
- **Form based Authentication.** This is where it's not the web server but rather the Web Application that requires credentials. Both individual and common login is supported. This form requires a little more configuration by the administrator, but otherwise credential are supplied and saved in just the same manners as for Basic Authentication.

Limitations of QC

The QuickClip Portlet has the advantage that it is simple to configure, but it is a lightweight version of the Kapow Enterprise Web Clipping platform and as such it only has limited functionality compared with that of an Enterprise Web Clipping portlet.

- **Style and Layout** There is no possibility for style (skin) or layout changes to the clip. In the Enterprise WebClipper it is possible to add style change rules in robots so that one may change the layout of the clip to make it look like that of the portal.
- **JavaScript behavior** - There is no way to apply alteration to JavaScript embedded in the page and thus the original JavaScript behavior is preserved.
- **Component clipping** – It is not possible to remove or alter the elements of a page or return only a subset of the page – the QuickClip portlet only does full page clipping. In the Enterprise WebClipper it is possible to remove element from a clip, e.g. remove a logout link/button or one may restrict a clip to just part of a remote application.
- **Single Domain Clipping** - The QuickClip Portlet can only clip from one domain and this always the same as the domain of the start URL in the Enterprise WebClipper it is possible to define clips that crosses domain borders.
- **Protected Resources** - There is no support for resource clipping. Resource clipping means if one is clipping from sites that requires authentication and the resources, e.g. images on the web site also require authentication then these will not show up in the clip. The Enterprise WebClipper has support for this.
- **Parameterized Clips** - There is no way to add extra input parameters to further configure a clip. In the enterprise clipping solution one may add extra input objects to a robot and use these to parameterize the way the clip works.
- **Form login** - Form based login is limited to form submission that may be expressed as an URL - no support for additional parameters. In the enterprise solution a range of other options

for authentication is possible including the addition of additional form submission parameters.

- **Credential support** The QuickClip Portlet has no support for encryption of passwords for common credentials. The enterprise solution has more advanced support for SSO (single sign-on) and integration into the BEA WebLogic Portal SSO framework.

QuickClip Documentation

The documentation for the QuickClip Portlet consists of:

- **Product Overview** – This is the document that you are reading now.
- **Installation Guide** – This describes how to install the QuickClip Portlet feature in an existing BEA WebLogic installation.
- **Administration Guide** – This contains information on configuring the Portlets from the Portal Administration console. This should be read by portal administrators who want create and configure portals that use QuickClip Portlets.
- **Developer Guide** – This describes how to create QuickClip Portlets and gives an overview of the files that are part of the portlets. This should be read by developers that wants to create new QuickClip Portlets and template portals containing these.
- **Supported Configuration** – A description of the supported platforms (hardware, OS etc.)

Enterprise Web Clipping

The Enterprise WebClipper for BEA WebLogic has a range of advanced clipping capabilities.

Look and feel changes and page reformatting

If a clip needs a different style or layout before is presented to the user in the portal, it is possible with the Enterprise WebClipper to define page alterations, style changes or content transformations. This is helpful in cases where external clips need to be styled to follow the overall look and feel of the portal.

Item removal

If a clip is almost perfect but one or more elements (e.g. a logout button) need to be removed it is possible in the Enterprise WebClipper to hide or remove HTML elements. This is particular useful in situations where an internal application or site needs to be exposed on an external site and certain confidential or sensitive information needs to be removed.

Component Clipping

If a final clip need to be a subset of the original page or it needs to be a combination of different sections from the original page the Enterprise WebClipper provides the ability to clip multiple individual elements of the original page and piece them together in a single consistent portlet UI.

Protected Resources

The QuickClip portlet provides the ability to access protected pages. The Enterprise WebClipper further expands this capability to also allow clip of protected resources like images and .pdf files.

This is useful for reverse proxy solution where a set of intranet pages and resources needs to be exposed in a controlled fashion to the outside world.

Deep Site clipping

Should a page the needs to be clipped lie deep in the site hierarchy it is possible for the Enterprise WebClipper to employ navigation inside the clipping robot, thus providing the ability to clip dynamic and session controlled URLs.

Clips that integrates with multiple Sites or services

If a clip is dynamic in nature and it requires access to a web service or another site to figure out exactly what need to be clipped it is possible for the Enterprise Web Clipper to insert integration steps into the clipping process such that information is retrieved prior to the final clip.