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## Sequence Diagram Generation Tool Cuts To the Chase

January 24, 2005

**EventHelix.com Inc.** has announced the release of EventStudio 2.5, the newest version of the company's sequence diagram modeling tool for Windows. The Gaithersburg, Maryland-based company claims that the usual UML-based modeling tools offer "only primitive support for sequence diagrams," whereas EventStudio provides "advanced constructs for sequence diagram-based object modeling."

With minimal user input through EventStudio's plain text Feature Description Language (FDL), the company says, EventStudio generates message sequence charts (MSCs), call flow diagrams, and process workflows. "It's very fast," says Deepa Ahluwalia, President of EventHelix. "Just write it down using declarative language in text, and [developers] can read the output in collaboration diagrams, message, and sequence charts." While developers concentrate on design, EventStudio catches design errors, inconsistent operations, resource leaks, and invalid timer operations.

Developers can work on multiple scenarios. Explains Ahluwalia, "They define a base scenario, and the other scenarios will be differences from the base scenario. The tool will take care of all the complete scenarios."

New to EventStudio 2.5 is that sequence diagrams and collaboration diagrams can not only be generated in Adobe PDF format, but also in Microsoft Word Picture (EMF) format. Other new features include automatic diagram layout, scaling, and margins. The company claims EventStudio can be used to classify objects into groups and subgroups to help focus attention where appropriate in a complex system.

Eric Goodheart is on the technical staff of a national phone company, and was tasked with representing call flows, the series of events representing the signaling that happens when you make a phone call. Goodheart used EventStudio to represent [call flows], which he says saved time over Visio or Rational Rose. He explains, "We would have had to do a lot of drag-and-drop with a GUI — moving every single widget. In EventStudio, the first part of the script that you're going to write defines the elements in the system. The body of the script represents the messages sent by these elements to one another. You can reuse both parts of the script to regenerate all the

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different scenarios that have to be understood in a particular project."

Goodheart had to be very productive, producing scores of these scenarios, and he felt that using a graphical user interface would be very inefficient. "Using this tool," says Goodheart, "allowed me to produce more in the same amount of time than I could have with other tools. I produced at least 159 pages of output — very detailed stuff. That's the reason you do this kind of thing in the first place. I became proficient enough with the tool to be able to make changes within the course of a conversation and see the results within all the scenarios within seconds."

Bennett Ramsey is Principal Engineer at [M-ACOM, Inc.](#). M-ACOM used EventStudio to develop a new Project-25 compliant radio system which allows different agencies — such as police and fire departments — to communicate with each other using different radio systems.

"We've been using Event Studio for about two years," says Ramsey. The company has put the software to use in its initial designs to develop message sequence charts for a visual representation of how the data flows through the system. "We continue to work with Event Studio now, even as we're releasing the software. It allows us to go in and find areas of weakness — to debug. We have people who know nothing about software programming who are using it. We were up and running quickly with it."

"The guys at the company were willing to make changes in the code. A lot of the features we suggested have come out in version 2.5. Before, you weren't able to bring their pictures into Word, and now you can bring your diagrams right into Word. They've also added a multicast message mechanism. I think we've been pretty happy with the product so far, and I'm not a paid representative," says Ramsey.

EventStudio 2.5 runs on Windows NT/2000/XP, and cost \$99.



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