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Zero Deployment With JNLP

One great benefit web applications offer end users is the ability to simply visit a URL in their browser and run the application without needing any special installation or configuration. This functionality is possible because the browser provides the runtime environment for the client application. BASIS offers two powerful options for deploying a standard BBj® application in the browser. The extremely popular and cutting edge browser user interface (BUI) provides a quick and simple way to deploy a standard BBj application as a 100% browser-based application with no special installation or plug-in requirements for the user. However, some applications may be better suited for running on a standard desktop or they may have user interface requirements that are not supported by BUI such as custom Java components. Enter Java Web Start, a powerful part of the Java Runtime Environment automatically installed on most desktops around the world.

Java Web Start allows users to run applications directly from the Internet using a browser and without the sandbox restrictions placed on Java applets. The application does not run inside the browser, but rather, the browser downloads a JNLP (Java Network Launching Protocol) file that describes the application, configuration, and its required resources so that Web Start can properly run the application. When Web Start launches an application, it downloads the required resources described in the JNLP file and then runs the application. Since BBj's thin client is a Java application, BBj developers can make their applications available to their end users via Web Start to eliminate the need for any special installation on the client machines. Additionally, using Web Start makes it easier to upgrade to new versions of BBj because clients will receive an updated version of the thin client from the server automatically, once the server upgrade is complete.

Deploy an Application Using Web Start

Setting up an application for deployment using Web Start is quick and easy via the Enterprise Manager (EM) using the Eclipse plug-in version or the browser-based version. Initially, you only need to configure a few simple options to get up and running, however, the EM provides a very powerful and robust interface for managing the advanced aspects of the JNLP (including raw XML editing for those who require very specific changes).

1. Log in to the EM.
2. Expand 'Web' and 'JNLP Configuration' node in the 'BDT EM Navigator'.
3. Double-click 'Applications' to open the list of currently configured JNLP application configurations.
4. Select [+] to add a new application and open the 'JNLP Application Editor'.
5. At the top of the editor in 'Application Name', enter a name for the application without spaces, as shown in **Figure 1**.

NOTE: As you type the 'Application Name', the 'Launch URL' updates to reflect the changes. The 'Launch URL' is the URL to give to the end users to launch the Web Start version of the application.

6. In 'Application Description', type the program name and any additional program arguments in the 'Program and Arguments' field.

Additional options further down the dialog screen provide more configuration settings for the application as required.

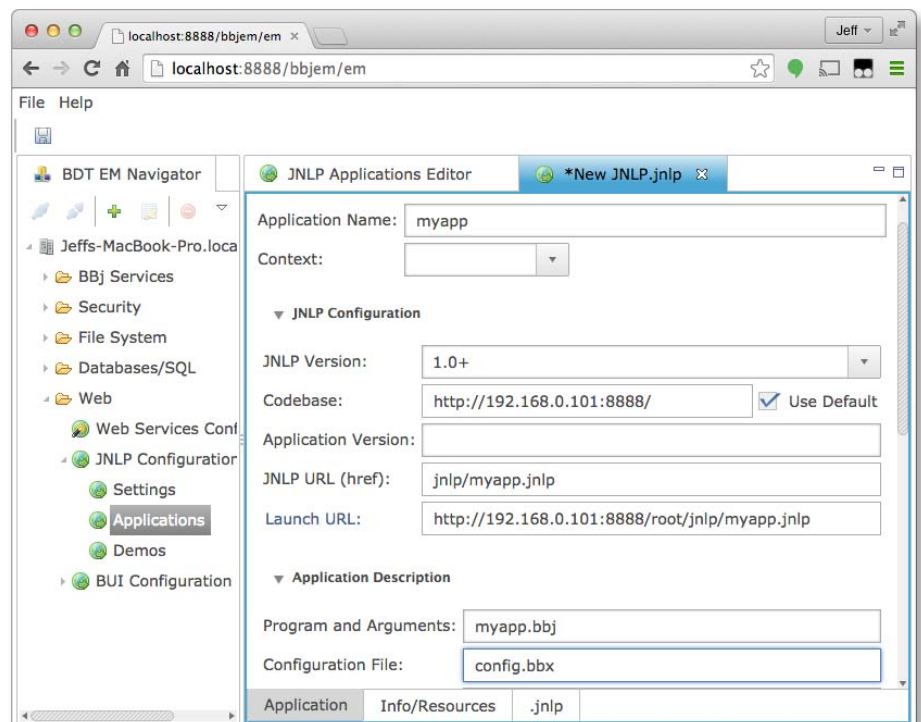


Figure 1. The top portion of the 'JNLP Application Editor'

Note the three tabs at the bottom of the editor – ‘Application’, ‘Info/Resources’, and ‘.jnlp’. Because of the many configuration options available for JNLP deployments, the editor splits the information into multiple tabs for better organization. The ‘Info/Resources’ tab provides the ability to include additional resources such as icons, additional JAR files, and even native libraries. Further, administrators can include different resources such as platform-specific JARs or native libraries based on the client’s operating system. **Figure 2** shows an example of two such JAR files included by default in each JNLP application. Applications require one JAR for Windows (**webstart2166.jar**) and an alternate JAR for Mac (**webstart2120.jar**).

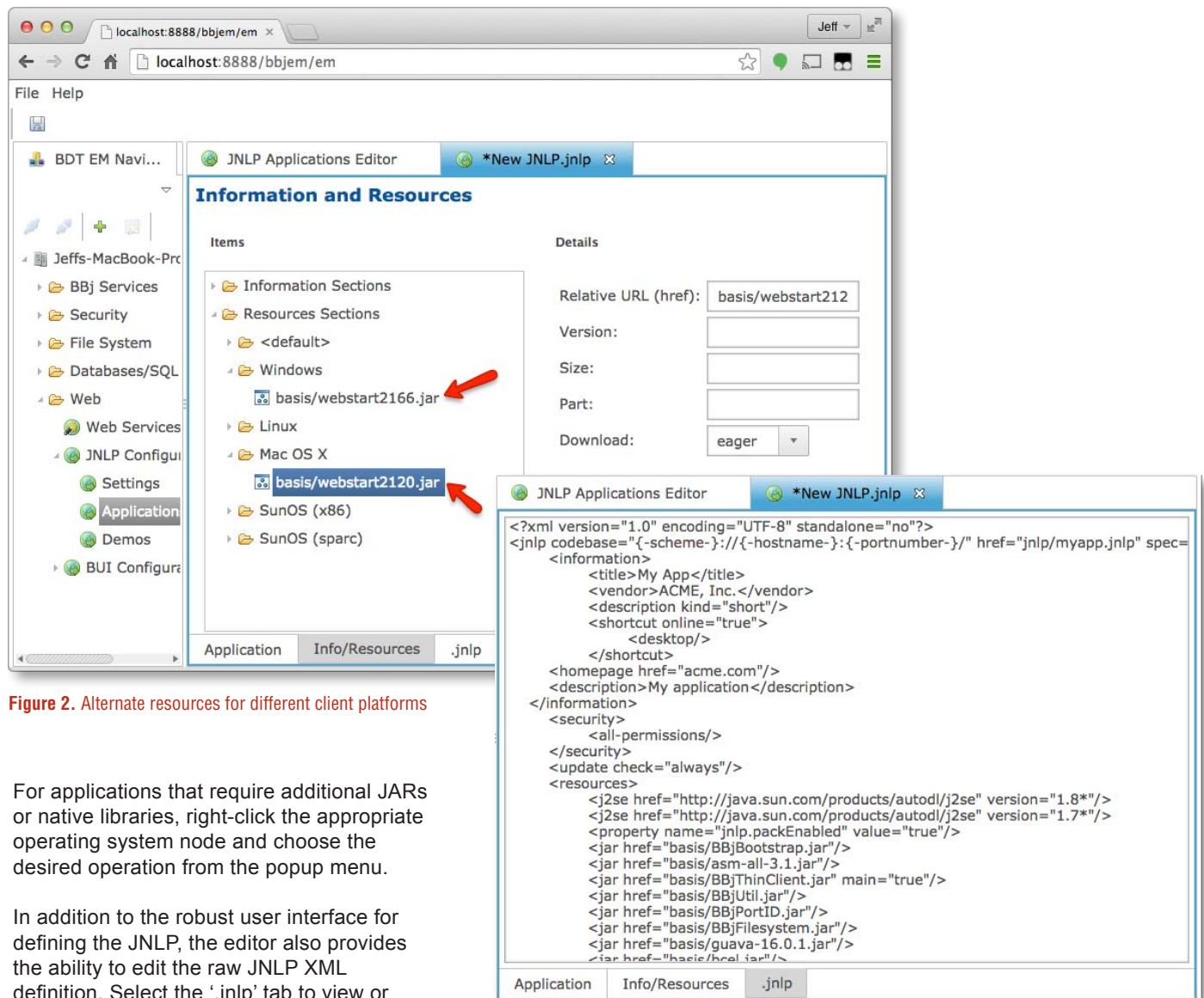


Figure 2. Alternate resources for different client platforms

For applications that require additional JARs or native libraries, right-click the appropriate operating system node and choose the desired operation from the popup menu.

In addition to the robust user interface for defining the JNLP, the editor also provides the ability to edit the raw JNLP XML definition. Select the ‘.jnlp’ tab to view or edit the XML definition (see **Figure 3**).

Figure 3. XML definition for the JNLP file

Summary

Java Web Start provides a number of powerful features that make deploying BBJ applications throughout the enterprise a snap. There is no need to install a BBJ thin client on each machine manually when Web Start can handle this automatically. Instead, using the EM, configure those enterprise applications to run from Web Start quickly and safely. Save time managing deployment, installation, and updating applications and put that time to better use making that already great application even better! ■



- For more information regarding the use of Java Web Start, refer to
 - [Configuring Web Start During a BBJ Installation](#)
 - [Running BBJ Thin Client with Java Web Start](#)
- Read these related Advantage articles
 - [Enterprise Manager Admin Only “Safe” Mode](#)
 - [Don’t Put All of Your Jetty Eggs in One Context](#)