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## SOFTWARE

# Java tool trebles developer speed

By Liz Tay

Jun 26, 2009 12:15 AM

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## Display application program interfaces by popularity.

American researchers have launched a Java programming tool that trebles developer productivity by using the wisdom of crowds.

Jadeite enhanced Javadoc documentation with human-centred features to help coders navigate API classes and methods.

It uses Google to decide which classes are most common and displays them alphabetically in big fonts if they are popular.

Users can add placeholders to include methods, notes and hints for other programmers.

Brad Myers, who designed it with researchers at Carnegie Mellon University in the US, said Jadeite fixes a "fundamental problem" for those faced with thousands of program interaces.

There were more than 35,000 methods in 4100 classes in the Javadoc library; Myers said even the savviest developer can't know them all.

"We studied professional and novice programmers and we had a grant from SAP to study some of the work they were doing with their clients too," Myers said.

"From all this background research, we identified a few problems and built tools to address them."

The team also released Apatite, a tool to browse APIs by association.

It investigates which packages, classes and methods are used together. And like Jadeite, it uses popularity to suggest relevant items.

"Apatite is designed for more exploratory sort of times," Myers said, describing cases where a developer may perform an action on an unknown object.

He said the tools appeal to developers who are pressured to lift productivity to keep their jobs.

The number of [Jadeite](#) users has grown 500 a day since it was made available last week; [Apatite](#) is used by "hundreds".

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 Participants did achieve a threefold speed increase, although the ..."

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**Liz Tay**  
 Jun 26, 2009 8:54 AM

A research paper describing a study of Jadeite vs standard Javadoc documentation is here: <http://edelstein.pebbles.cs.cmu.edu/jadeite/Jadeite2009Submitted.pdf>

Participants did achieve a threefold speed increase, although the sample size is small.

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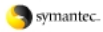
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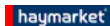
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