

# The Definitive Guide to Apache MyFaces and Facelets



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## **The Definitive Guide to Apache MyFaces and Facelets**

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*My parents, Rustom and Avan,  
whose guidance and encouragement mean the world.  
—Zubin Wadia*

*For the prophet Muhammad,  
from whom I learnt all the good things in my life.  
—Hazem Saleh*

*Ainhoa, my wife,  
whose support and patience made this book possible.  
—Bruno Aranda*

# Contents at a Glance

About the Authors .....	xiii
About the Technical Reviewer .....	xv
Acknowledgments .....	xvii
Introduction .....	xix
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> An Introduction to JavaServer Faces .....	1
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> The Tomahawk Project .....	21
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> Facelets .....	67
<b>CHAPTER 4</b> The Trinidad Project .....	111
<b>CHAPTER 5</b> Conversations and Scoping with Orchestra .....	165
<b>CHAPTER 6</b> Layouts and Themes with Tobago .....	199
<b>CHAPTER 7</b> Antipatterns and Pitfalls .....	229
<b>APPENDIX A</b> Facelets Tag Reference .....	271
<b>APPENDIX B</b> View State Encryption .....	285
<b>APPENDIX C</b> Custom Dependency Injection .....	287
<b>INDEX</b> .....	289

# Contents

About the Authors .....	xiii
About the Technical Reviewer .....	xv
Acknowledgments .....	xvii
Introduction .....	xix
<b>CHAPTER 1 An Introduction to JavaServer Faces .....</b>	<b>1</b>
The Evolution of Java Web Frameworks .....	1
Servlets .....	2
JavaServer Pages .....	3
Struts and Web Development Patterns .....	4
A Brief History of JSF .....	4
JSF Features .....	5
The JSF Life Cycle .....	6
Life Cycle Phase 1: Restore View .....	7
Life Cycle Phase 2: Apply Request Values .....	7
Life Cycle Phase 3: Process Validations .....	7
Life Cycle Phase 4: Update Model Values .....	8
Life Cycle Phase 5: Invoke Application .....	8
Life Cycle Phase 6: Render Response .....	8
Moving from Struts Frameworks to JSF .....	8
JSF Shortcomings .....	10
Apache MyFaces .....	10
MyFaces Installation .....	11
Configuring MyFaces .....	12
Writing Your First MyFaces Application .....	13
Summary .....	19
<b>CHAPTER 2 The Tomahawk Project .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Tomahawk Setup .....	21
Tomahawk Features .....	22
The forceId Attribute .....	23
The displayValueOnly Attribute .....	23
Tomahawk's Major Components .....	24

Component Examples . . . . .	25
The Calendar Component . . . . .	25
The DataScroller Component . . . . .	29
The DataList Component . . . . .	34
The NewspaperTable Component . . . . .	38
The JSCookMenu Component . . . . .	40
The TabbedPane Component . . . . .	42
The ValidateRegExpr Component . . . . .	44
The Tree2 Component . . . . .	47
The Schedule Component . . . . .	52
The SubForm Component . . . . .	57
Putting It All Together . . . . .	58
Summary . . . . .	65

<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>Facelets . . . . .</b>	<b>67</b>
	The Gap Between JSP and JSF . . . . .	67
	Why Use Facelets? . . . . .	68
	Creating an Application with Facelets . . . . .	68
	Downloading Facelets . . . . .	69
	Adding Dependencies . . . . .	70
	Creating a Project Structure . . . . .	70
	Configuring the Web Descriptor (web.xml) . . . . .	71
	Faces Descriptor (faces-config.xml) . . . . .	72
	Creating JSF Views . . . . .	72
	Migrating an Existing Application from JSP to Facelets . . . . .	79
	Unified Expression Language . . . . .	80
	Inline Text . . . . .	80
	Tag Libraries . . . . .	81
	Other Tag Libraries . . . . .	81
	Creating a Tag Library . . . . .	81
	Functions . . . . .	83
	The jsfc Attribute . . . . .	85
	Facelets Templating and Template Clients . . . . .	85
	Creating Composition Components . . . . .	86
	Creating the Custom inputTextLabeled Component . . . . .	86
	Creating the simpleColumn Custom Component . . . . .	89
	Creating the scrollableDataTable Custom Component . . . . .	91
	Creating the editableColumn Custom Component . . . . .	96
	Reusing the Custom Tag Library . . . . .	98

Extending Facelets . . . . .	99
Facelets Architecture . . . . .	99
Custom Tag Development . . . . .	100
Using Metatags . . . . .	103
Extending the ViewHandler . . . . .	110
Summary . . . . .	110
<b>CHAPTER 4 The Trinidad Project . . . . .</b>	<b>111</b>
Trinidad Setup . . . . .	111
Why Use Trinidad? . . . . .	113
Extended JSF Capabilities . . . . .	113
RequestContext . . . . .	114
pageFlowScope . . . . .	114
Partial Page Rendering (PPR) . . . . .	121
Dialog Framework . . . . .	130
Client-Side Conversion and Validation . . . . .	140
Components . . . . .	150
Chart . . . . .	150
Table . . . . .	153
Skinning . . . . .	157
Creating a Custom Skin . . . . .	158
Tuning and Configuration . . . . .	161
Tuning Trinidad . . . . .	163
Summary . . . . .	164
<b>CHAPTER 5 Conversations and Scoping with Orchestra . . . . .</b>	<b>165</b>
Why Use Orchestra? . . . . .	165
Creating an Application with Orchestra . . . . .	166
Dependencies . . . . .	166
Configuring the Web Descriptor (web.xml) . . . . .	167
Configuring the Spring Framework . . . . .	168
Conversations . . . . .	171
Conversation Examples . . . . .	172
Conversation Lifetime . . . . .	174
Managing Independent Windows . . . . .	175
The Role of Spring . . . . .	176
Configuring Conversation-Scoped Managed Beans . . . . .	177
Conversation-Related JSF Tags . . . . .	179

Managing Events with ViewController .....	181
Mapping Views to Beans .....	182
Finding the Life Cycle Methods .....	182
Mapping via Annotations .....	182
Customizing the ViewController .....	183
Requiring Conversations .....	184
Managing Persistence in Orchestra .....	185
Quick Overview of the Java Persistence API .....	185
Using Orchestra's Persistence Support .....	186
Using Persistence with Annotations .....	187
Using Persistence Without Annotations .....	188
Transaction Management .....	188
Using Non-JPA Persistence Implementations .....	189
JSF Converters and Persistence .....	190
The DynaForm Component .....	191
Orchestra's Architecture .....	194
ConversationManager .....	194
ConversationContext .....	194
FrameworkAdapter .....	195
RequestParameterProvider .....	195
RedirectTrackerNavigationHandler .....	195
UrlParameterNavigationHandler .....	196
Application Programming Interface .....	196
Summary .....	198
<b>CHAPTER 6</b> <b>Layouts and Themes with Tobago</b> .....	199
Trying Out Tobago .....	199
Online Demo .....	200
Creating an Application with Tobago .....	200
Dependencies .....	200
Configuring the Web Descriptor (web.xml) .....	201
Configuring Tobago (tobago-config.xml) .....	202
Creating a Basic Tobago Page .....	202



Controls	203
Basic Controls	203
Sheet Control	206
TabGroup Control	209
Menu Control	209
Toolbar Control	210
Pop-ups	211
File Upload	211
Layout Management	212
Themes	214
Resource Management	216
Adding Markup	217
Creating Your Own Tobago Control	218
The UIComponent	219
The Renderer	220
The Tag and the Tag Declaration	223
Building and Using the Control	224
Security	224
Virtual Forms	226
Partial Rendering	226
Advanced Assembly	227
Summary	228
<b>CHAPTER 7 Antipatterns and Pitfalls</b>	<b>229</b>
N Plus One	229
The Map Trick	233
The Déjà Vu PhaseListener	234
XML Hell++	235
The Myth of Static Typing	236
Thread Safety	239
Facelets Migration Challenge: Tags with Behavior	240
The Law of Demeter	241
Master-Detail	242
Vendor Lock-In	250

AJAX 101 .....	251
Code to Interface .....	260
View State Encryption .....	262
Portlet Issues .....	266
The Validating Setter .....	267
Summary .....	269
<b>APPENDIX A Facelets Tag Reference .....</b>	<b>271</b>
<ui:component/> .....	271
<ui:composition/> .....	272
<ui:debug/> .....	273
<ui:decorate/> .....	273
<ui:define/> .....	276
<ui:fragment/> .....	277
<ui:include/> .....	277
<ui:insert/> .....	278
<ui:param/> .....	280
<ui:remove/> .....	282
<ui:repeat/> .....	283
<b>APPENDIX B View State Encryption .....</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>APPENDIX C Custom Dependency Injection .....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>INDEX .....</b>	<b>289</b>

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Finally, we would like to thank the MyFaces and JSF community as a whole for their tireless support and contributions to a variety of subprojects. Without this anarchic collaboration, MyFaces would cease to be competitively differentiated against the Sun Reference Implementation.

# Introduction

In the four years that the Sun, IBM, and MyFaces implementations have been available, the MyFaces project has arguably been the front-runner when it comes to innovation and dexterity. It also is the most responsive to user issues and has a vibrant community that ensures progression (you can always find free support on the mailing lists). With JavaServer Faces (JSF) 2.0 around the corner, preparation is already under way as the committers quickly review the early access draft and plan for MyFaces 2.0.

This “anarchic collaboration,” a term coined by Roy Fielding, is the essence of the Apache MyFaces project: many talented people share information with a single-minded objective to make JSF a pleasurable developer experience for all. The Tomahawk, Trinidad, Tobago, Orchestra, and MyFaces implementations have been downloaded over a million times. Before the Sun JSF 1.2 implementation was released, we could safely say the MyFaces implementation was the only reliable way to build production JSF applications. Even today, many developers are happy with simply using MyFaces 1.1.x and Facelets to form a potent combination.

This book assumes you are interested in JSF and component-oriented development. It takes you through a journey beginning with the unique aspects of JSF, introduces you to the MyFaces specification, and continues with building your first application. Once you’ve mastered that, this book advances your skill set further by taking you into the world of the Tomahawk component library. Here, you learn the power of componentization in JSF (you will be able to build a complex application with a few lines of code) and see the advantages of having a vibrant community like MyFaces continually developing new components into the sandbox like CAPTCHA-, media-, exporter-, and AJAX-enabled UI widgets.

Next, we take you into one of the most important chapters in the book—learning to leverage Facelets’s powerful view-definition capabilities within your JSF application. After absorbing the material in this chapter, you will be able to write JSF view tiers with greater efficiency and yield more performance out of your applications, as compared to similar applications leveraging classic JSP. The patterns we encourage in this chapter are a result of our more than ten years of cumulative experience with JSF across two of the major Reference Implementations: Sun and MyFaces.

The second half of this book focuses on smaller but equally critical projects to the future of MyFaces: Trinidad, Tobago, and Orchestra. Trinidad and Tobago offer high-quality component libraries that are particularly adept at custom rendition, themes, and layouts. Trinidad’s presence is also a testament to the commercial support of MyFaces

by Oracle for its Application Development Framework (ADF). Although a relatively young project, Orchestra offers powerful functionality like conversation scope for persistence-rich JSF applications.

The final chapter weaves together all your newfound knowledge and shows how to avoid some of the common antipatterns new JSF developers often end up pursuing. JSF is a complex specification augmented by a significant number of support frameworks to assist with development. We make sure the details in this book allow you to make educated decisions on which ones to leverage.

Finally, be sure to take advantage of the book's modular nature. We tried to strike a natural balance between this book being a *guide* and a *reference*. Refreshing your memory on a particular topic is extremely easy because of the atomic nature of each chapter. Enjoy!