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Business Process Management with Activiti

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As the world's largest particle physics laboratory, with more than ten thousand users from more than a hundred countries, working either locally at the CERN premises, or remotely at their home institutions, it is critical for CERN to minimize the overhead of administrative procedures, and ensure they are handled efficiently, thus allowing users to focus on their core activities. For this purpose, an administrative application (named EDH for Electronic Document Handling) was developed in-house, covering more than a hundred official procedures, ranging from purchasing orders and travel claims, to training and absence requests.

At the core of each EDH document lies a workflow process, which defines the sequence or route that a document must follow to be completed, forwarding the electronic document to the persons who are required to approve it. For instance, for a financial document, several routing paths can arise, depending on the type of the document, its creator, and the amount of money involved.

In this presentation, we aim at describing the approach followed by the EDH team to develop workflows for administrative procedures, using BPMN 2.0 (Business Process Modeling Notation) to model and describe business processes, and how we leverage Activiti, an open-source, Java-based workflow engine, for the execution and automatic testing of the aforesaid processes.

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