

RestFS: Resources and Services are Filesystems, Too

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Presentation Outline

- Motivation
- Web service composition
- Local machine software composition
- Inter Process Communication
- Bridging the Gap: RestFS
- The Filesystem as a Connector Layer
- Examples and exploration

Motivation

- Currently, web services can be accessed through HTTP clients and HTTP libraries over network sockets
- While some web services are accessible over filesystem interfaces, there is no general support or uniform filesystem interface
- RestFS's goal is to provide a general filesystem interface to manage configuration, authentication, and interaction with RESTful web services

Service Composition

- Mashups / Remixes
- WS-BPEL - Web Services Business Process Execution Language
- CORBA - Common Object Request Broker Architecture

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Local Software Composition

- Libraries
- Shared files
- Pipes
- Domain Sockets
- Shared memory pages / memory mapped files

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Filesystems That Abstract a Web Service

- GmailFS - stores data in a GMail webmail account
- FlickrFS - abstracts the Flickr photo service as a filesystem (available on Ubuntu)
- davfs2 - a WebDAV filesystem

Types of Web Service Filesystems

- Application Filesystems - filesystems that provide convenient interfaces for programs to interact. A good example is FlickrFS presenting image files
- Object or storage abstraction - Using a web service as a storage location for a filesystem. Two good examples are GMailFS and SSHFS
- Connector filesystems - Filesystems that abstract a method of IPC or a network protocol. Two good examples are Plan 9's netfs and RestFS

RestFS

- A connector filesystem that provides a filesystem abstraction for RESTful web services
- Requests to and responses from web services are made through filesystem system calls
- Connections are initiated through manipulation of configuration files in the filesystem
- OAuth authentication can be established by manipulating authentication files

RestFS - Configuration Files

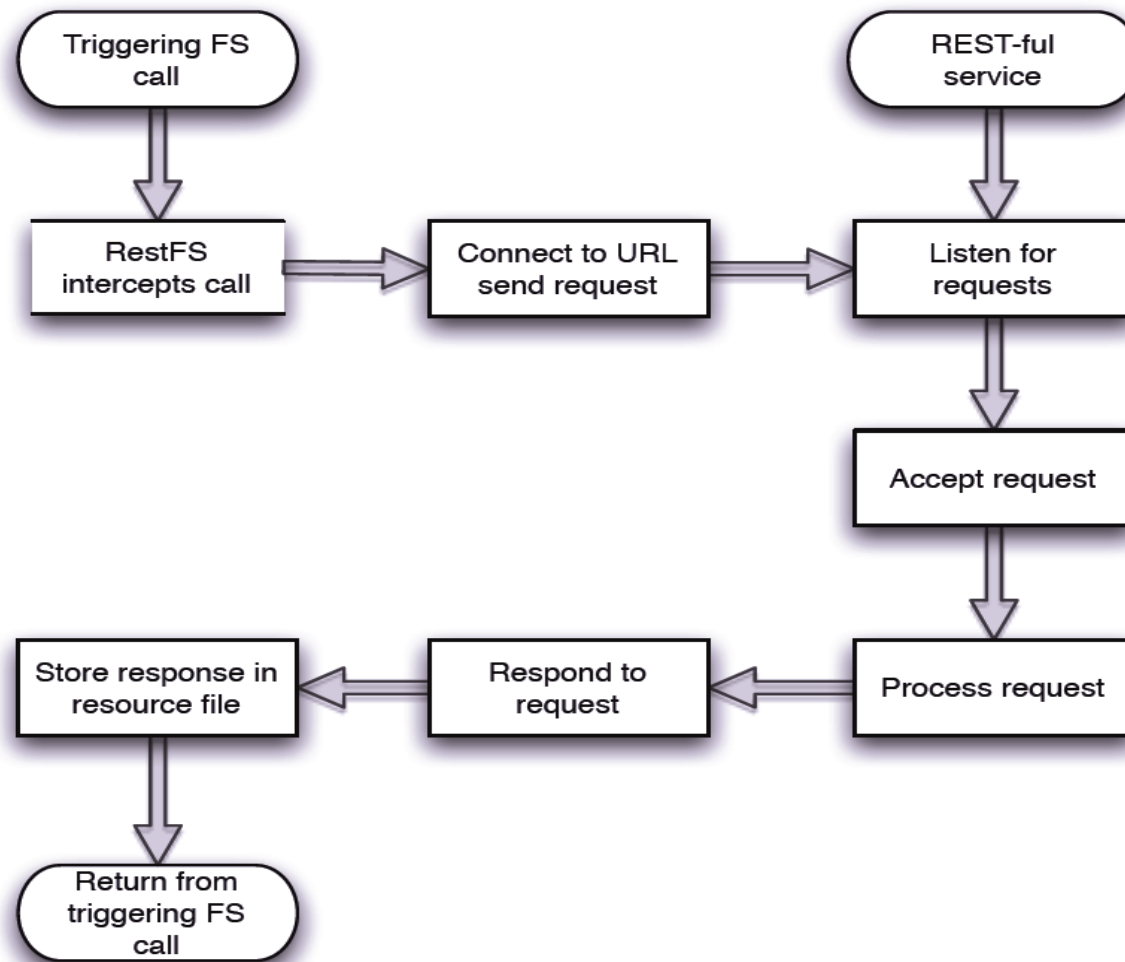
- Configuration files specify the host, port, resource, and triggering FS call
- Triggering FS call is the system call that triggers the web service method

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<RestfulSetting>
  <FsMethod>utime</FsMethod>
  <WebMethod>GET</WebMethod>
  <FormName></FormName>
  <Resource>/1/users/show/joekaylor.json</Resource>
  <Host>api.twitter.com</Host>
  <Port>80</Port>
  <OAuthTokenPath>/auth/twitter</OAuthTokenPath>
</RestfulSetting>
```

RestFS - Resource Files

- Programs can read and write to resource files in a normal way
- When the triggering filesystem system call is issued on the resource file a HTTP method call will be issued.
- If the resource file contains data, it will be sent along with the call
- The response will be written back to the resource file

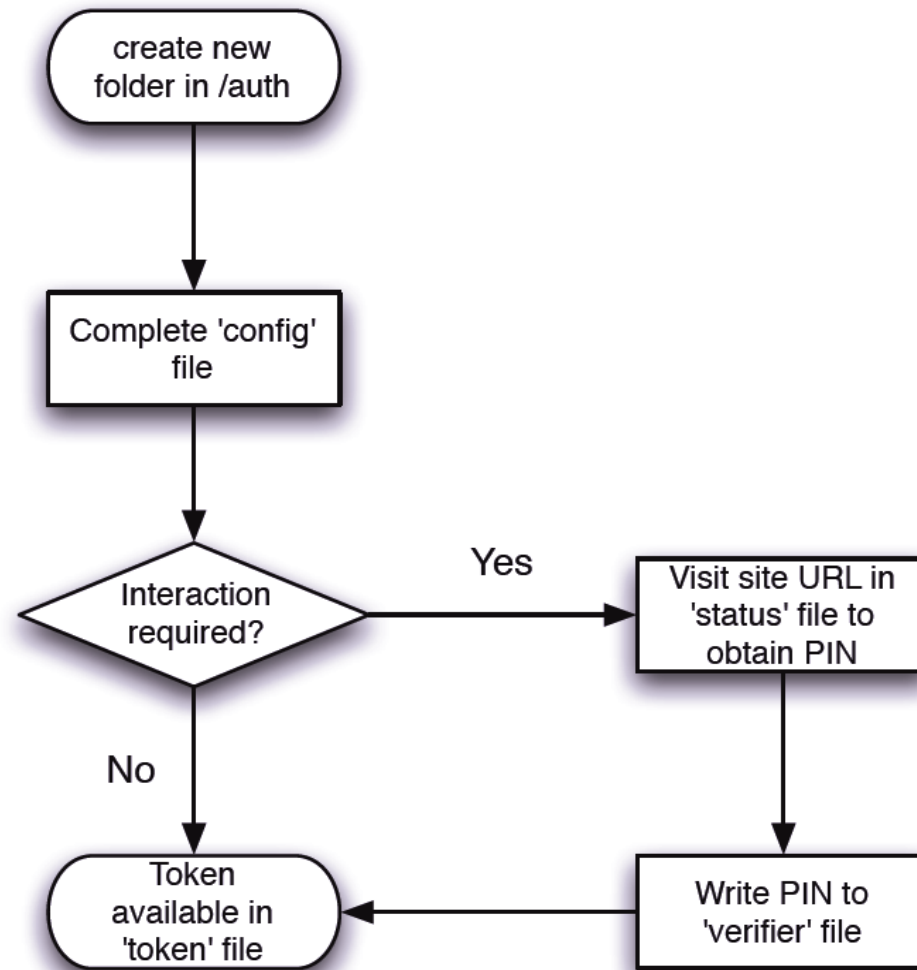
RestFS - Triggering Call Timeline



OAuth Authentication in RestFS

- A special '/auth' folder exists in every RestFS mount.
- When a user creates a folder in '/auth', 4 files are created:
 - **config** - contains Access Token, User Auth, and Request Token URLs
 - **status** - contains the current progress or errors encountered during authentication. If a manual step is required (such as a CAPTCHA test), this file contains the URL to visit
 - **verifier** - if a manual step is required, any PIN that needs to be associated with RestFS can be written to this file
 - **token** - after successful authentication, this file contains the authentication token
- The token file can then be referenced in configuration files
- The associated resource file will automatically work with OAuth

RestFS - Authentication Process



OAuth Files (config)

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>  
<OAuthConfigFile>  
  <Key>asdf3244dsf</Key>  
  <AccessTokenURL>https://api.twitter.com/oauth/access_token</AccessTokenURL>  
  <UserAuthURL>https://api.twitter.com/auth/authorize</UserAuthURL>  
  <RequestTokenURL>https://api.twitter.com/oauth/request_token</RequestTokenURL>  
  <Secret>147sdfkek</Secret>  
</OAuthConfigFile>
```

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OAuth Files (token)

```
<OAuthTokenFile>  
  <AccessToken>2534534asdf2348</AccessToken>  
  <RequestToken>aql2343</RequestToken>  
  <TokenSecret>adfjds124522</TokenSecret>  
</OAuthTokenFile>
```

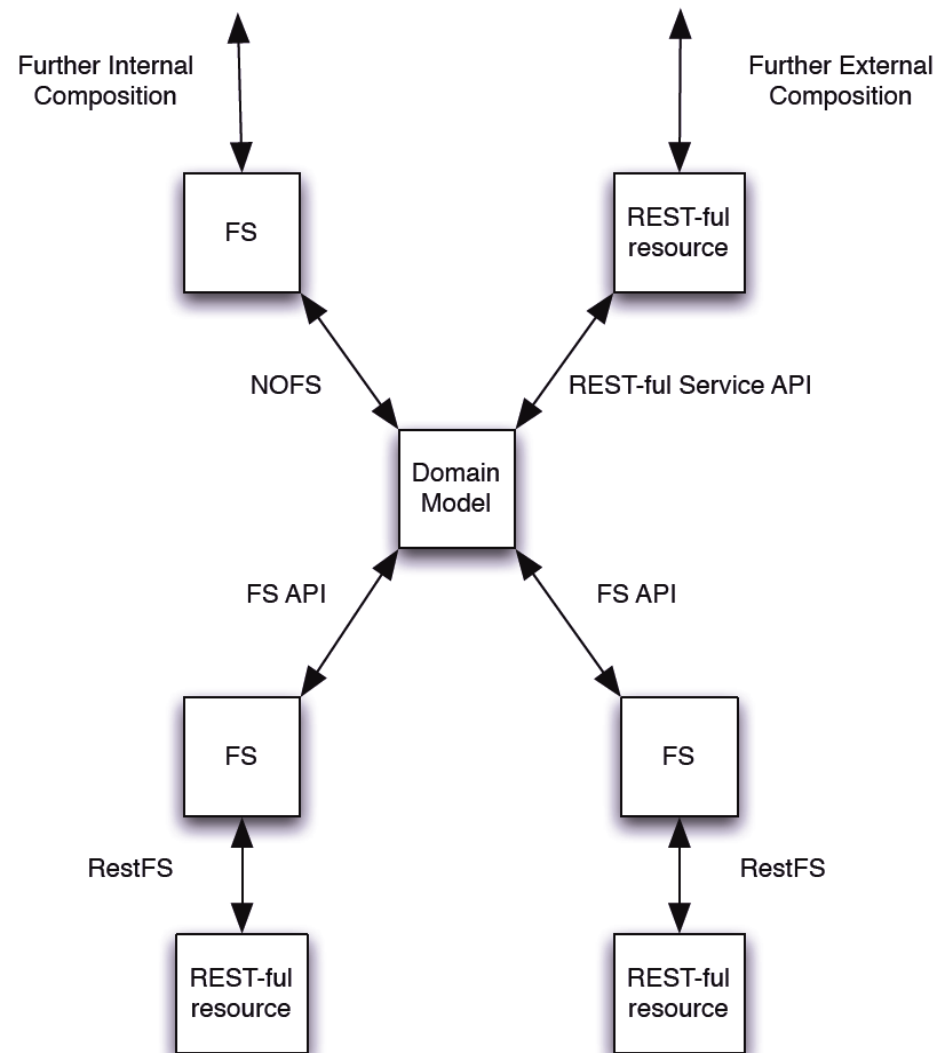
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Software Composition with RestFS

- With RestFS, it is possible to compose remote web services with local software
- This software can then be recomposed into new RESTful web services or other local software compositions
- Can allow many computers to participate in local software compositions of a RESTful service by mounting a RestFS volume as a network filesystem over Samba or NFS

Software Composition with RestFS



Demonstrations

- Google Search
- Yahoo! Place Finder
- Twitter

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