

E Distributed Objects in CORBA

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E.1 Overview

- Motivation
- Architectural Overview
- Application Objects
- Object Request Broker
- Portable Object Adaptor
- CORBA Services

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E.2 References

E.2 References

OMG99. Object Management Group, OMG: *The Common Object Request Broker: Architecture and Specification*. Rev. 2.3.1, OMG Doc. formal/99-10-07, Oct. 1999.

Pope98. A. Pope: *The CORBA Reference Guide*. Addison-Wesley, 1998.

Linn98. C. Linnhoff-Popien: *CORBA, Kommunikation und Management*. Springer, 1998.

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E.3 Motivation

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- Location
 - ◆ Transparency of location
- Heterogeneity
 - ◆ Different hardware,
 - ◆ different operating systems, and
 - ◆ different programming languages are used in distributed systems.
- ◆ Transparency of heterogeneity
- Services
 - ◆ Name server
 - ◆ Time server
 - ◆ ...

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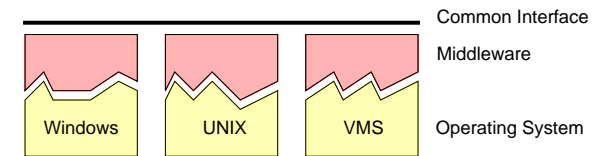
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1 Middleware Approach

E.3 Motivation

- Middleware: a piece of software between operating system and application



- ◆ Middleware provides services for distributed programming
- **We need:** middleware for distributed object-based programming
- ★ CORBA – Common Object Request Broker Architecture, a standard of the OMG

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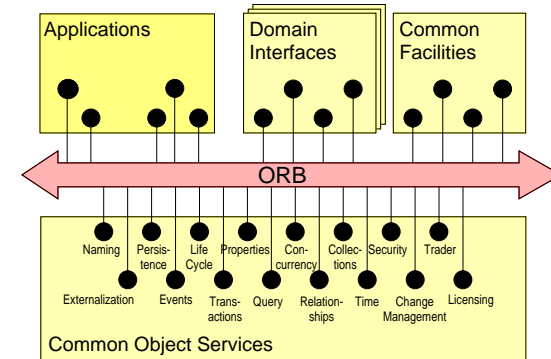
2 CORBA Design Goals

- CORBA is a standard
 - ◆ There are standard documents
 - ◆ Definition of CORBA compliance
- ◆ Vendors build implementations of the standard (e.g., VisiBroker, Orbix, Orbacus, MICO, etc.)
- CORBA builds abstractions from
 - ◆ hardware,
 - ◆ operating system, and
 - ◆ programming language.

2 CORBA Design Goals (2)

- Interoperability
 - ◆ An application shall run on different CORBA implementations without major changes
 - ◆ Applications on different CORBA implementations shall be able to communicate
- Embedding of legacy applications
 - ◆ Legacy applications can be encapsulated and can act as CORBA objects
- Vision of business objects or components
 - ◆ CORBA objects represent all kinds of business data in a company
 - ◆ By communicating to these objects business data can be manipulated

E.4 Architectural Overview



1 OMA – Object Management Architecture

- Application objects
 - ◆ Centralized-object approach for distributed objects
 - ◆ Client/server architecture
- Object Request Broker (ORB)
 - ◆ Communication backbone
 - ◆ Enables objects to communicate
- CORBA Services
 - ◆ Basic services for distributed programming
 - ◆ Extends the ORB's functionality
 - ◆ Services look like objects

1 OMA – Object Management Architecture (2)

- CORBA Facilities
 - ◆ Application-specific services
 - ◆ Usable in multiple application domains
 - ◆ e.g., Compound Document Services, Graphical User Interface
- CORBA Domains
 - ◆ Application-specific services for a particular domain
 - ◆ e.g., CORBAmed

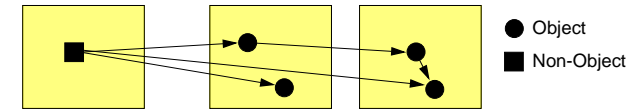
2 CORBA Implementations

- A CORBA implementation must contain
 - ◆ the implementation of the core architecture
 - ◆ one language mapping (e.g., for C++)
- A CORBA implementation may contain
 - ◆ an arbitrary number of services
 - ◆ functionality for interoperability with other CORBA implementations (GIOP/IOP)
- The implementation is free **how** it realizes the requirements of the standard
 - ◆ Many different implementations are possible
 - Daemon-based
 - Library-based
 - ...

E.5 Application Objects

1 Distributed Object

- ◆ Identity
- ◆ State
- ◆ Operations (methods)
- ◆ CORBA objects can be invoked (implement server side)
- ◆ CORBA objects may act as clients



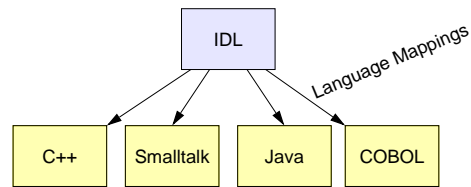
- Clients do not need to be CORBA objects
 - ◆ CORBA clients can be processes, etc.

2 Distributed Object (2)

- Distributed objects form an application
 - ◆ Objects cooperate by communicating with each other
- ★ Example: printer management system
 - ◆ Client objects
 - ◆ Spooler objects
 - ◆ Printer objects
- "Centralized object approach"
 - ◆ Client-side stub can contact the server object
 - ◆ RPC-based method invocation
 - ◆ **At-most-once / exactly-once** semantics

3 Interface Definition Language (IDL)

- Language for describing object interfaces
 - ◆ Independent of implementation language of an object
 - ◆ Language mapping defines how IDL primitives are mapped to the concepts of a specific programming language
 - ◆ Language mapping is part of the CORBA standard
 - ◆ Language mappings exist for C, C++, Smalltalk, COBOL, Ada, and Java
 - ◆ IDL is similar to C++



3 Interface Definition Language (3)

- Example

```

module MyModule
{
  interface MyInterface
  {
    attribute long lines;
    void printLine( in string toPrint );
  };
}
  
```

IDL to Java

```

package MyModule;
public interface MyInterface extends ... {
  public int lines();
  public void lines( int lines );
  public void printLine( java.lang.String toPrint );
  ...
};
  
```

3 Interface Definition Language (2)

- Example

```

module MyModule
{
  interface MyInterface
  {
    attribute long lines;
    void printLine( in string toPrint );
  };
}
  
```

IDL to C++

```

namespace MyModule {
class MyInterface : ... {
public:
  virtual CORBA::Long lines();
  virtual void lines( CORBA::Long _val );
  void printLine( const char *toPrint );
  ...
};
}
  
```

3 Interface Definition Language (4)

- ★ Advantages

- ◆ Transparency of implementation language
- ◆ Enables interoperability

- ▲ Disadvantages

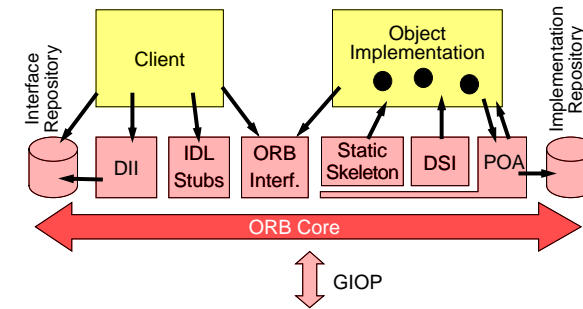
- ◆ Object interface must be defined in the target language **and** in IDL
- ◆ IDL is quite expressive
 - Language that do not provide the right mechanisms will have a complex language mapping (e.g., sequences)
- ◆ If a language has special features they cannot be used because they are not part of IDL

4 Process of Creation and Binding

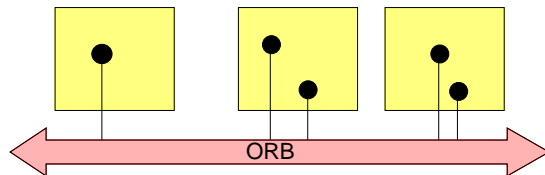
- Creation of a server object
 - ◆ Description of the object interface in IDL
 - ◆ Programming the server object in an implementation language
 - ◆ Registration of the object at the ORB (the OA respectively)
 - The ORB creates an Interoperable Object Reference (IOR)
- Binding to the server object at client side
 - ◆ Retrieval of an object reference to the server
 - Result of a name-server query
 - Return parameter of a method call
 - Retrieval from outside of the system: user knows the reference as a string (IORs can be converted to strings and back)
 - ◆ Creation of the client stub
 - ◆ Method invocations using the stub object

1 Architecture

- Central components of an ORB



E.6 Object Request Broker – ORB



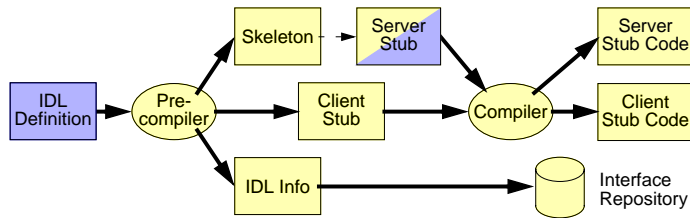
- The ORB is the communication backbone of a CORBA implementation
- All communication is handled by the ORB
 - ◆ ... within an address space / process
 - ◆ ... between address spaces / processes
 - ◆ ... between address spaces / processes of different ORBs
- The ORB implements location transparency

2 Static Stubs

- Stubs on client and server side
 - ◆ As soon as we exactly know the interface of an object, we can create static stubs from it.
 - ◆ Static stubs are automatically created from the IDL description
 - ◆ Server side stubs are called *skeletons*
 - CORBA skeletons have to be filled with the actual implementation
- Tasks of the stubs
 - ◆ Marshalling of parameters
 - ◆ Send and receive of request and reply messages using the ORB core

2 Static Stubs (2)

■ Stub creation

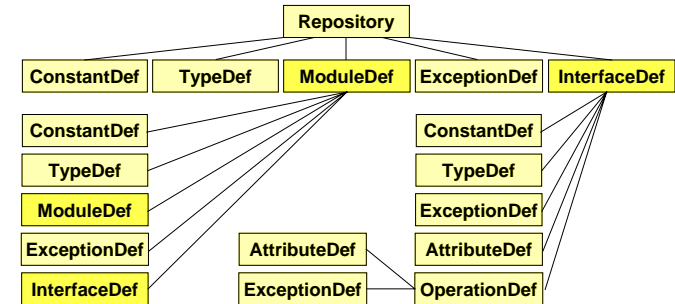


- ◆ From IDL, a precompiler generates a number of output files.
- ◆ The skeleton contains a frame for filling in the actual methods of the object implementation. The skeleton already contains the server-stub functionality.
- ◆ The client-stub file contains the code for the client stub.
- ◆ An additional file may contain data for the interface repository.
- ◆ Usually the stubs have to be compiled by the target-language compiler.

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3 Interface Repository (2)

■ Stored information / composition of an IDL file



- ◆ Hierarchy of the components of an IDL file, and of the interface repository respectively

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3 Interface Repository

■ Database for interface definitions in IDL

■ Query the database for

- ◆ Type checking
 - Does the stub's type match the object's type?
 - Inter-ORB operations: insertion into multiple repositories
- ◆ Retrieval of meta data by clients and tools
 - Dynamic invocations
 - Debugging
 - Class browser
- ◆ Implementing method *get_interface* of each object

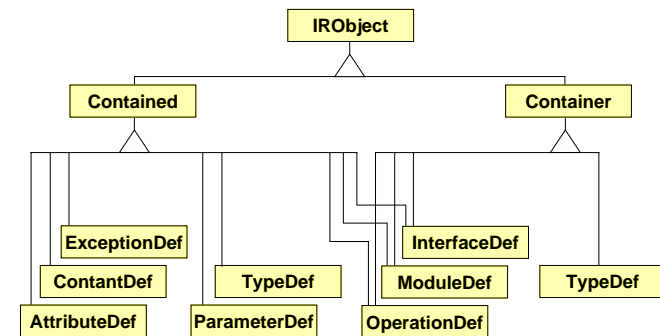
■ Writing to the database using

- ◆ IDL compiler
- ◆ Write methods

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3 Interface Repository (3)

■ Inheritance hierarchy of the IDL interfaces of IR objects



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3 Interface Repository (4)

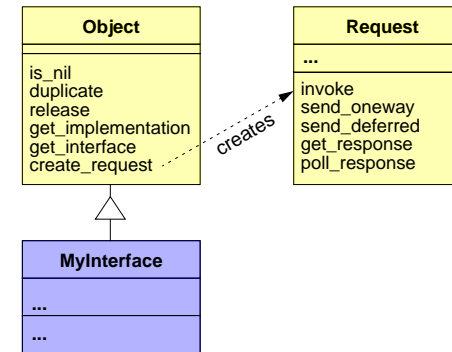
- Standard types are represented by so-called *type codes*

TypeCode

- Representation of basic types: **int, float, boolean**
 - Representation of composite standard types: **union, struct, enum**
 - Representation of template types and complex declarators: **sequence, string, array**
 - Representation of IDL-based object types (using an interface repository ID)
- Type codes represent type and structure as objects with an standard IDL interface
 - Operation for comparing type codes
 - Operation for obtaining the description of the type

4 Dynamic Invocation Interface (2)

- IDL definitions for the DII



4 Dynamic Invocation Interface (DII)

- DII allows the invocation of methods whose object interface was not known at compile time
 - Interface description can be retrieved using the interface repository
- Single steps of an invocation (which have to be mapped by the language binding)
 - Retrieve signature of the method from the interface repository
 - Create list of parameters
 - Compose request
 - Invoke method
 - with RPC (synchronous call)
 - with asynchronous RPC (asynchronous call)
 - with datagram message (no reply, no reliability)

5 Dynamic Skeleton Interface (DSI)

- DSI allows a CORBA server to accept method invocations for objects whose interfaces are only dynamically retrievable, e.g., in
 - Bridges to other ORBs
 - CORBA-encapsulated data bases
 - Dynamically created objects and interfaces
- The DSI identifies the object for which the invocation is made for
 - A call-back function is invoked that gets all the necessary information
 - The call-back function has to invoke the corresponding object
- Note:**
DII and DSI are not distinguishable from static stubs, i.e., they are fully interoperable with static stubs.

6 Object Adaptor

- The object adaptor is a local representative of ORB services
 - ◆ It generates object references (for new objects)
 - ◆ It maps object references to implementations
 - ◆ It forwards incoming method calls
 - ◆ It authenticates the caller (implementing CORBA's security functionality)
 - ◆ It activates and deactivates the object and its implementation
 - ◆ It registers server classes within the implementation repository
- CORBA defines the mandatory Portable Object Adaptor
 - ◆ Basic functionality
- Another example: an OODB Adaptor
 - ◆ Connecting an object-oriented data base to CORBA
 - ◆ The OODB Adaptor represents all objects in the data base as CORBA objects and mediates invocations

8 Inter-ORB Communication

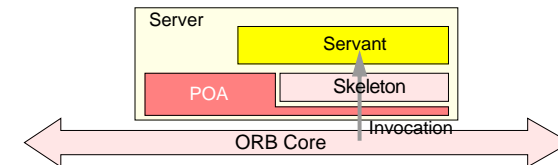
- GIOP – General Inter-ORB Protocol
 - ◆ Basic protocol for the interaction of two ORBs
 - ◆ Common Data Representation (CDR) converts IDL-compliant parameters into a serial byte stream
 - ◆ IIOP – Internet Inter-ORB Protocol (GIOP over TCP/IP; implementation is mandatory)
 - ◆ Other implementations of GIOP are possible
- ESIOP – Environment Specific Inter-ORB Protocols, e.g., DCE/ESIOP
 - ◆ Inter-ORB protocol on the basis of DCE RPC
- IOR – Interoperable Object Reference
 - ◆ String representation
 - ◆ Several profiles (one of it is IIOP)

7 Implementation Repository

- Data base for object implementations
 - ◆ Data to localize and activate object implementations
 - ◆ Information for debugging and administration
 - ◆ etc.
- Implementation repository is highly implementation dependent.
- Query the data base
 - ◆ Implementation of the method *get_implementation* of each object
- Writing the data base by
 - ◆ External tools
 - ◆ The object adaptor at creation time of an object

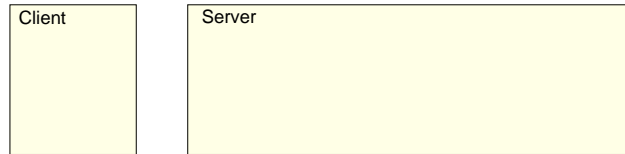
E.7 Portable Object Adaptor (POA)

- Terminology
 - ◆ **Server:** Process hosting CORBA objects
 - ◆ **Servant:** Language object representing the implementation of a CORBA object
- Each servant knows one POA instance within a server
 - ◆ The object reference includes the identifier of this POA instance
 - ◆ The POA creates and identifies *its* CORBA objects
 - ◆ The POA forwards requests to its objects



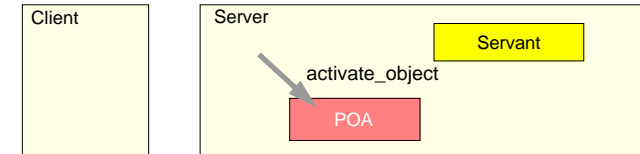
1 Creation of an Object

- Application creates an object



1 Creation of an Object

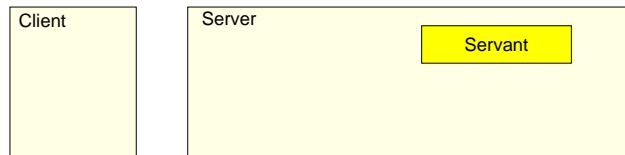
- Application creates an object



- ◆ First, the servant is created
- ◆ Second, the CORBA object is activated (can now be remotely invoked)

1 Creation of an Object

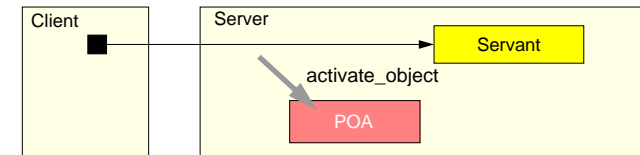
- Application creates an object



- ◆ First, the servant is created

1 Creation of an Object

- Application creates an object



- ◆ First, the servant is created
- ◆ Second, the CORBA object is activated (can now be remotely invoked)
- ◆ Then, the servant can be passed as parameter or returned as a result, which creates a client stub (CORBA object reference) at the receiver side

2 Alternative Activations

- Implicit activation
 - ◆ POA automatically creates an object reference if servant reference is passed as parameter or result
- Activation on demand
 - ◆ Object references can be created without having an active servant
 - ◆ In case of incoming requests some alternatives are possible:
 - A registered default servant handles the request (e.g., for wrapping database objects)
 - A user-supplied servant manager returns a servant (servant manager can create the servant on demand)

4 Policies

- Policies apply to one POA instance
 - ◆ There may be many (named) POA instances within a server each with different policies
- Activation method is encoded in such policies
 - ◆ Servant retention policy
 - ◆ Request processing policy
 - ◆ Implicit activation policy
- Other policies
 - ◆ Thread policy: multi-threaded or single-threaded
 - ◆ ID uniqueness policy: unique IDs or not
 - ◆ ID assignment policy: user- or system-provided IDs
 - ◆ Object lifespan policy: transient or persistent

3 Deactivation and Activation

- Objects may survive a POA instance: persistent objects
 - ◆ Servant can be deactivated
 - ◆ POA can be deactivated
 - ◆ Server can be shut down
- POA cooperates with a location forwarding service and the implementation repository
 - ◆ On deactivation the necessary information for activation is retained in the implementation repository
 - ◆ Requests for deactivated servants trigger a forwarding service to launch a new server
 - ◆ The server gets the forwarded requests and activates a POA for it
 - ◆ The POA activates a servant for the request

E.8 CORBA Services

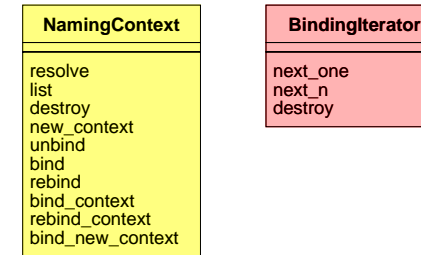
- Basic services of a distributed system as extensions of the ORB
 - ◆ Naming service
 - ◆ Transaction service
 - ◆ Persistent object service
 - ◆ Life cycle service
 - ◆ etc.
- Services are accessible by IDL interfaces
 - ◆ No additional primitives necessary; method invocation is enough

1 Naming Service

- CORBA defines an hierarchical naming service similar to the UNIX file system
 - ◆ Name space forms a tree
 - ◆ Names consist of multiple components (syllables)
 - e.g., < "usr"; "home"; "myobject" >
 - (UNIX: "/usr/home/myobject")
 - ◆ Interface to the naming service is defined by IDL

1 Naming Service (3)

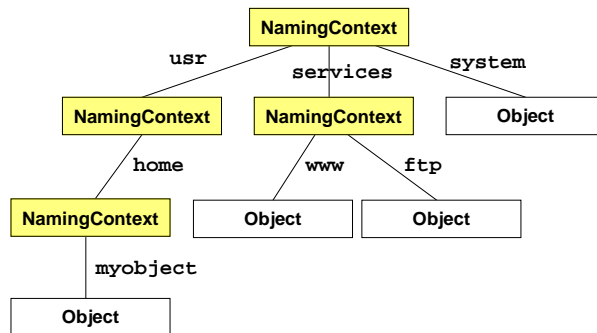
- Interface of a Naming Context and the Binding Iterator



- ◆ Naming Context acts like a directory
- ◆ Objects or other contexts can be bound to a name
- ◆ Listing the context returns an array and an iterator that allows you to look at the next entries

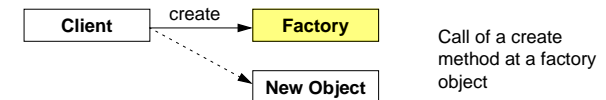
1 Naming Service (2)

- Example of a name tree



2 Life Cycle Service

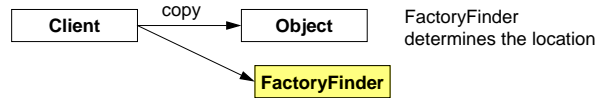
- Controls the life cycle of an object
 - ◆ Creation
 - ◆ Copying, Migration
 - ◆ Deletion
- Life Cycle Service defines the common interface for controllable objects
- ★ Model of the life cycle
 - ◆ Creation of an Object:



- Protocol and interface of the factory is not defined and probably dependent on the kind of object to create

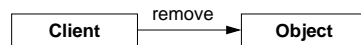
2 Life Cycle Service (2)

◆ Copying and migration:



- Locations can be a specific computer or a group of computers, etc.

◆ Deletion:



- With the call of remove the object is deleted.

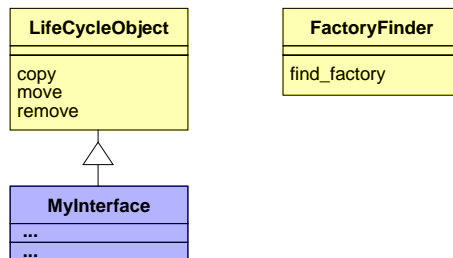
2 Life Cycle Service (4)

■ Example: implementation of the copy method

- ◆ Client invokes copy method and passes a reference to a FactoryFinder
- ◆ The copy method is provided by the programmer **or** by the CORBA implementation
- ◆ The copy method calls the FactoryFinder and selects a suitable factory that is used to create a new object
- ◆ The new object will be initialized with the data of the existing object
- ▲ To the outside: clearly defined interface
- ▲ To the inside: open and implementation dependent, e.g., protocol between copy method and factory
- In CORBA 2.0 relationship between objects is considered for copying and mobility: part-of relationship, etc.
 - ◆ Parts of the object are also copied or migrated (deep copy vs. shallow copy)

2 Life Cycle Service (3)

■ Objects need to implement the LifecycleObject interface



- ◆ copy and move need a FactoryFinder object to find a factory object which in turn will create the copy or migrated object