

Need to share data asynchronously between ASP.NET and Legacy System

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Hello:

I am using ASP.NET as our front end. I also have to interface to some legacy systems that use a callback mechanism. The legacy systems use callbacks (via CORBA) to communicate back to clients. The ASP.NET web pages will initiate communication with the legacy backend, but results from the backend will often take quite some time and will be asynchronous in nature in their return. We have successfully created a prototype that integrates .NET and ASP.NET with the CORBA backend using the IONA Artix product. It works very nicely and is fully based on Web Services and is transport agnostic.

I want to take this prototype and create an application, or separate thread in IIS that can access the legacy systems, handle the callbacks, and store the results of the callbacks so that subsequent requests can access the data, or client based applets or J# Browser Controls on the client can listen for the data. I am looking for a method to share data between the standard ASP.NET HTTP pipeline and this legacy handling thread, or application. Things that come to mind is the ASP.NET cache, application state, or some other state mechanism. The issue is this is really not state, but data that is returned from the asynchronous callbacks. I have looked into IHTTPAsyncHandler but it looks like that mechanism really exists to offload the CLR threadpool so more requests can be handled (makes perfect sense). What I need is a thread running that is not associated with any specific request. This thread should run in the IIS process space, but needs to share data with requests. This is somewhat like what the Shared Property Manager did in MTS.

The ultimate goal would be to implement the Observer pattern. That is, a request can execute a synchronous method and register for some work to be done asynchronously by the back end system. Then the browser clients would be notified when the work has completed. Things that come to mind here are applets and web services.

Any suggestions here would be greatly appreciated. Thanks.

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Patrick

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