

SOAP standard is core protocol used in web services. Web services open new possibilities in application interaction over the network. In connection with web services there has been much discussion of service oriented architecture. The main goal of this thesis is to show possibilities of SOAP in the context of small and medium businesses. To achieve this goal SOAP and accompanying norms are described as well as the mechanism through which SOAP can be and is extended. Several standard extensions are shown. Furthermore this thesis points out the pros and cons of such usage as well as similar alternative approaches. The usage of SOAP is documented on several real life examples. Part of this thesis concerns with fundamental principles of service oriented architecture and the connection between web services and service oriented architecture. The need of web services alignment with business processes and coarse grained interfaces are discussed as well.