



THE ADOBE VISION FOR 2007-8 AND BEYOND

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Web Developer's & Designer's Journal

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BUILDING ENGAGING APPLICATIONS AND CONTENT WITH ADOBE TECHNOLOGIES

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- Multiple Inheritance in ActionScript 3.0
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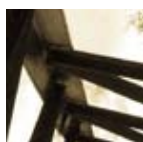


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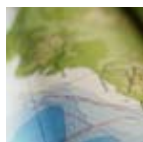


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The Adobe Vision for 2007-8 and Beyond Is Huge

by Jeremy Geelan

digital content is exploding; video on the Web is booming; Web 2.0 is hurtling toward us; and Adobe believes "engagement" is the one word that best captures its strategy and encapsulates the competitive advantage that its fast-expanding product set gives to the developers and designers who use it.

But there's always an inherent danger for any company getting behind a meta-theme like "revolutionizing how the world engages with ideas and information - anytime, anywhere and through any medium," that it defines a wish rather than a reality. So the thousands of developers assembled in the keynote hall of the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas last month at MAX 2006 were undoubtedly united in a desire to decide for themselves which applies in Adobe's case.

Adobe SVP and chief software architect Kevin Lynch, who emceed the conference and gave it his unmistakable trademark (as in, complete and utter mastery of his subject), reminded the keynote audience how the Flash Player is now on over 700 million Internet-connected desktops and mobile devices worldwide, and how in less than a year a new version of the Player can now be rolled out - faster than any Web browser or operating system.

Lynch then showcased some of the early apps that have already been created using Apollo, showing Flex applications running inside Apollo, and a combination of PDF and Flash all running harmoniously. eBay has created a neat little app for managing eBay transactions and sports-car-loving Lynch even put in a live bid for a Jaguar - a miniature model. An experimental MySpace app was next, and then a word processor app from Virtual Ubiquity called Nimbus. He closed with an Internet TV application being developed in-house at Adobe, called "philo" - if anyone had any doubt that Flash video is at the center of the Adobe vision for 2007-8 and beyond, Lynch's slick demo will have showed them that

it will be.

He then announced the \$100M venture capital fund that Adobe is creating to invest over the next 3-5 years in companies leveraging Adobe platform technologies, particularly companies delivering applications via Apollo. But the final prop in Lynch's performance was a shiny new Jaguar. Life-sized, this time.

"The largest mobile device in the world running the Flash Player," he called it. And in case anyone thought he was bluffing, he immediately jumped into the Jag and demo'd how Flash technology was running all the on-board information and entertainment systems.

With moves like those announced at MAX, Microsoft needs to look out that Adobe's chief software architect and his colleagues don't drive down the participation superhighway of Web 2.0 and overtake them. The Adobe Vision for 2007-8 and beyond is huge, including a move aimed at giving North American developers the chance to get their content on phones and out in the market. This was the big mobile news of the conference - a partnership with Verizon and three new mobile content aggregators. If you weren't able to be at MAX, check out this page: <http://www.adobe.com/devnet/devices/verizon.html>. And/or watch and read the coverage of MAX 2006 on SYS-CON.TV and at WebDDJ.com.

There's a longer report on MAX in this issue, too, written by Adrian Bridgwater whom we welcome to the writer roster of *Web Developer's & Designer's Journal*. Adrian, a seasoned cross-platform technology journalist, is based in the UK where he edits International Developer. We also have regulars this month like Jeff Tapper and Darron J. Schall; the co-founders of Blue Instant, Laura Arguello and Nahuel Foronda; as well as a helpful how-to piece from Danilo Celic, a partner at Community MX. If you are interested in joining our fast-expanding pool of developer-writers, please don't hesitate to drop an e-mail to editorial (at)

Jeremy Geelan is Sr. Vice-President, Editorial & Events, of SYS-CON Media. He is Conference Chair of the AJAXWorld Conference & Expo series and of the "Real-World Flex" One-Day Seminar series. From 2000-6, as first editorial director and then group publisher of SYS-CON Media, he was responsible for the development of all new titles and i-Technology portals for the firm, and regularly represents SYS-CON at conferences and trade shows, speaking to technology audiences both in North America and overseas.

Meet Robert

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Aral Balkan

Aral Balkan is founder and managing director of Ariaware, a London-based company offering products like Ariaware Optimizer and the open-source Ariaware RIA Platform (ARP 2.0) for Flash developers. Ariaware also offers RIA development process and usability consulting and development services. Aral holds an MA in Film and Electronic Media, is a Macromedia Certified Instructor and is celebrating his 20th year as a programmer (he's only 27!). His passions include software architecture and Human-Computer Interaction - in other words, building solid, usable applications. He's co-author of "Flash MX Most Wanted Components" and "Flash 3D Cheats Most Wanted," as well as author and editor of numerous articles for Adobe Developer Center and Ultrashock.com.



Erik Bianchi

Erik Bianchi is a software engineer with more than five years of experience developing Flash-based RIAs and enterprise-wide applications for Fortune 50 and 500 companies. In his spare time he enjoys building Flash-based games, writing or tech editing Flash-related books, and when burned out on code, playing video games on his PC/console systems. You can get more info about Erik and his latest projects on his blog at www.erikbianchi.com.



Craig Goodman

Craig Goodman is the executive editor of Adobe's Developer Center. He and his team publish the tutorials and articles in the area. Craig joined Macromedia in 1995 and his past roles include managing web support and supervising product technical support for Macromedia Flash.



Jim Phelan

Jim Phelan is vice president of development for Stream57, a New York City based firm specializing in communication solution development for the enterprise. Jim's expertise in creating solutions for consolidation and collateralization of business communications has allowed his team to create applications for the management and delivery of live and on demand rich media content. Jim is a strong proponent of the Adobe Flash Platform and is a member of the editorial board of MX Developer's Journal.



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Darron J. Schall

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Jesse Randall Warden

Jesse R. Warden is a senior Flash developer at Surgical Information Systems, an operating room software company, where he currently uses Flash MX, Flash Remoting, .NET, and Oracle to create next-generation rich Internet applications for the OR. He contributed four chapters to the Flash Communication Server MX Bible and has written articles for various publications, including one for Macromedia for a DRK. 

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Multiple Inheritance in ActionScript 3.0

Despite popular belief that it's not supported,
multiple inheritance is actually possible with AS3

by Darron J. Schall

did you know ActionScript 3.0 supports multiple inheritance? Here's how...

Multiple inheritance is actually possible with AS3, despite popular belief that it's not supported. It's not really multiple inheritance in the true sense of the word going by the strict definition... but there's a way to get the job done in AS3 that behaves almost like the real thing.

What I'm about to show you is not something I would advocate as best practice. Nor is it something that should be (ab)used simply because it's available. I'm not going to get into the debate about Composition versus Inheritance and how Multiple Inheritance fits into the picture. If you're here, it's probably because you want to know how to use this technique. I assume you also know then the various repercussions (and if not, at least have the ability to Google them). As they say, "with great power comes great responsibility."

Various disclaimers aside, here we go...

When you simulate the use multiple inheritance, there are three things you need to do:

1. You need to create an interface that defines the methods you want to use.
2. You need to create a default implementation for that interface.
3. You need to merge the default implementation for the interface into the class you want the methods available

in, and mark the class as implementing the interface.

It's the last step, the merging of the default implementation, that simulates multiple inheritance. "But Darron," you say, "an interface can't have a default implementation!" To which I say, "You're absolutely correct!"... now what?
...drum roll...

Did you forget that ActionScript 3.0 is a dynamic language and supports a long-since-forgotten-about-since-ActionScript-1-days but still-supported-because-its-in-the-spec #include pragma?

This is where it gets ugly, but stay with me. We'll create an interface, and then write the implementation for that interface in a free-standing .as file that contains just loose ActionScript code. Then, like magic, we'll include that file in our class and have the compiler automatically insert the code. The result? A class that implements an interface, with a default implementation that's separate from the class, and re-usable through many classes.

Here's a concrete example to further drive home the idea:

```
// In CartoonCharacter.as

interface CartoonCharacter
{
    function setSpeechBubbleText(
        text:String ):void;
```

```
}

// In CartoonCharacter_impl.as
public function setSpeechBubbleText(
    text:String )
{
    trace( "setting speech bubble text
to: " + text );
}

// In CartoonDog.as
public class CartoonDog extends Sprite
implements CartoonCharacter
{
    // Check out that bling bling.. fo
    shizzle!
    #include "CartoonCharacter_impl.
    as";

    public function CartoonDog()
    {
        // Constructor
    }
}

// In CartoonCat.as
public class CartoonCat extends Sprite
implements CartoonCharacter
{
    // Here it is again... oh no he
    didn't!
    #include "CartoonCharacter_impl.
    as";

    public function CartoonCat()
    {
        // Constructor
    }
}
```

From the above series of code blocks, hopefully you can see what happened. In our “impl” file we just have a method name and a method body. The method body is the default implementation for the CartoonCharacter interface. In our CartoonDog and CartoonCat classes, we include that default implementation and implement the interface.

If you ask the dog if he’s a CartoonCharacter, he’ll surely respond that he is. Likewise with the cat...

```
if ( dog is CartoonCharacter )
{
    trace( "bow to-tha wow, yo!" );
}
```

... but by having the implementation in a separate ActionScript file, it allows us to pretend that both dog and cat inherit from CartoonCharacter. When we change the “impl” file, we change the behavior for all of the classes that #include the file. This is important because in this use case, we have to extend a display object class so we can be added on screen.


Now, I know the first question will be “Why not just make CartoonCharacter a class that extends Sprite and have Dog and Cat extend that?” to which I say, “you completely missed the point of this article.”

All that aside, there are a few gotchas to using this technique. In no particular order:

- You can’t override the default implementation. Since we’re #include-ing, using the override keyword and trying to roll your own won’t cut it.
- If you include many “impl” files and they have naming collisions (methods with the same names), you’ll get a compiler error and the class won’t compile. This is a good thing in my book.

- If your default implementation uses other classes, you have to be careful of the “import” statements since the class that’s #include-ing the file needs to import those classes.
- No real help from FlexBuilder, but that’s to be expected.
- .. add your own “you suck, this technique is stupid and doesn’t work because of XXX” reason here.

In the import case, I’ve been keeping a separate “MyInterface_imports.as” file, and then #include-ing it at the top of the class with the other imports. There can still be some issues here with multiple inclusion of the same class, but that’s not a compiler error (at least, not yet anyway).

Anyway, like I said, use with caution. There are definitely cases where this approach works well, and there are other cases where it’s better to change your architecture and avoid it. I leave it as a thought exercise to you to know when to use it and when not to. Don’t go crazy, kids, you might want to keep the training wheels on for this one... 

Darron J. Schall, an Editorial Board member of Web Developer’s & Designer’s Journal, has been programming long before he could drive. In school he studied programming languages, ranging from Basic to Pascal to C++ and eventually moving into Java and C# throughout college. Somewhere in the middle he got hooked on Flash 5 and it’s been a crazy love affair ever since. Darron is an independent consultant specializing in RIA development. He maintains a Flash Platform related weblog (www.darronschall.com) and is an active voice in the Flash and Flex communities.

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**“When we change the ‘impl’ file,
we change the behavior
for all of the classes that #include the file”**

Vene, Vidi, Adobe!

Adobe takes it to the MAX

by Adrian Bridgwater



Adobe staged its MAX 2006 developer and customer conference under the theme “Beyond Boundaries” to showcase the company’s emerging technologies and provide a glimpse of future innovations. Adrian Bridgwater attended to drink it all in.

Adobe’s MAX 2006 event was held at The Venetian Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas from the 23rd to the 26th of October – the company’s first event of this kind since joining forces with Macromedia. Adobe’s focus was directed at highlighting the newest breed of rich applications and what it likes to call “engaging content and experiences” under the banner of its next-generation technology.





“Deployment of Flash has probably grown more than any other mobile technology in the world over the last three years...”

— Anup Murarka

Described by Adobe as a chance for its community of developers and customers to reinvent the future of the Internet and design in virtually every medium, MAX 2006 was billed as both a milestone in the integration of Adobe and Macromedia and a reflection of what's possible when all these creative forces come together.

Typical to large-scale events of this kind, MAX 2006 featured over 100 workshops and hands-on sessions. The event included technical support labs, partner exhibits, certification programs, birds-of-a-feather networking events and presentations from industry experts as well as in-depth technical sessions that covered a range of Adobe products and solutions.

Community Spirit

In addition to the various certification programs it supports, it's encouraging to see a company like Adobe engendering a vibrant level of shared participation in technology among the developer community. The Acrobat User Community (you can sign up at www.acrobatusers.com) has over 5000 users and is growing strong. Spread over 75 countries, the site's users benefit from blogs, news, articles, tips and tutorials. The Web site, Adobe says, is a gathering place where developers can share and exchange ideas and tap into the broad expertise that characterizes the Acrobat community. And most important of all is the long-established Adobe Developer Center (developer.adobe.com), which hosts blogs, articles, tutorials, SDKs, and sample applications, attracting thousands of users every day. The Adobe developer community contributes a large percentage of this content, which makes the Developer Center the “face” of the community.

Adobe held pre-conference sessions for both delegates and press. The press sessions were well presented and the speakers themselves were keen to insist on “interactive” meetings with as many questions as possible. Adobe is far more open than the likes of Apple or Intel – and sets realistic goals in areas where “ubiquitous mass market roll out” (a term it is especially fond of!) of its technologies is still some way off.

The Mobile/Devices Perspective

In mobile, Adobe continues to leverage relationships with handset manufacturers, operators and content aggregators to offer developer communities the fully-integrated technologies necessary to deliver what it calls “breakthrough mobile experiences.”

Adobe's mobile and devices guru Anup Murarka gave us an insight into the company's work in the mobile space. He explained that Flash and PDF deployment has proliferated in Asia mainly due to the specific alignment with the mobile phone market – but that increasing growth is starting to show in Europe and the USA. “Deployment of Flash has probably grown more than any other mobile technology in the world over the last three years,” said Murarka.

- Over 150 mobile devices have now been certified to utilize Flash Lite. Many more are expected in the coming twelve months.
- 210,000 registered users have signed up for Adobe's mobile developer program and this number is expected to mushroom with newly announced handset support for the USA.
- Flash is increasingly being used to deploy the complete UI for new phones...

...and, UIs are being developed to target precise demographics as the UI can be rolled out so much faster now. New phones have night-and-day backgrounds that feature a sky that changes from sunshine to stars with the time of day. They are also location-aware and will show a picture of the Arc de Triomphe as you travel through Paris and the Opera House when you land in Sydney for example. Commercially, this is good news – as new UIs could also be sold online.

Adobe's partnerships with mobile media publishers who include Flash Lite software in product portfolios present developers with additional opportunities to commercialize Flash mobile content. Also interesting is Flash Cast, originally from the Macromedia side of the bed; this is a flexible client-server solution that effectively delivers rich, intuitive, branded mobile data experiences. Server-hosted

broadcasts push content to the phone such as stocks and shares data, your favourite television channel schedule or even games. With content developed in Flash, it could also be used to connect to RSS feeds and download content that has been reformatted for phones.

"This is the kind of rich experience that changed the way the way the Web worked – and now we see that happening in mobile," said Muraka. As yet, NTT DoCoMo is the only company to have made significant headway with this technology. That said, more than two million mobile phone subscribers have signed up for NTT DoCoMo's i-channel news and information delivery service since it was launched in Japan last September.

"We have been astonished by the unprecedented success of i-channel, which proves that consumers embrace data services when they are automatically delivered and presented in a compelling and interactive way," said Takeshi Natsuno, senior vice president at NTT DoCoMo.

In terms of strategy, Adobe's Flash Player technology is installed on over 700 million Internet connected desktops and mobile devices worldwide and it is aiming to see the same level of mass ubiquity on mobile phones. The recently announced acquisition of vector graphics technology developed by Actimagine will help considerably in reaching mass ubiquity on mobile phones.

So mobile is crucial, then. "Flexible user interfaces are a key differentiator and a significant part of the value creation on devices," said John Jackson, senior analyst at Yankee Group, in a statement issued by Adobe. "Flash Lite 2 and Flash Player SDK 7 expand vendors' and operators' U/I options and open the mobile market to a broader base of content and prolific developers."

Day One Keynote

The morning of the keynote came – and we were colorfully awakened by an intro from the Blue Man Group (who by no coincidence play at the Venetian). Adobe president and chief operating officer Shantanu Narayan welcomed an

extremely enthusiastic crowd still whooping from the shock of seeing plastic blue men playing rock music at 8:30 in the morning.

Narayan described the acquisition of Macromedia by Adobe as having been rather like any other traditional marriage: the respective chiefs first went into a period of "dating" before the deal was finally sealed. It's true to say, this has been one of the better-received examples of the industry coming together. Not just because the number of employees affected was relatively small (compared to say, the HP-Compaq scenario) – but also because the reaction from users was almost completely positive given the synergy the two companies shared and the opportunity it presented for a better set of tools to soon be developed.

At a high level, the keynote presentations were projected not only to present working examples of emerging Adobe technologies, but also to set the scene for the company's "Apollo" project, which continues to generate pre-release interest among developers and businesses due to its promise to extend the reach and capabilities of today's rich Internet applications, freeing them to run outside of the browser, across multiple operating systems on desktops and devices.

Adobe plans to invest approximately US\$100 million in venture capital over the next three to five years in companies leveraging Adobe platform technologies, particularly companies delivering applications via Apollo, as part of Adobe's commitment to building an ecosystem for what it terms the Adobe Engagement Platform.

Narayan closed by introducing the hugely popular Ben Forta, who presented a portion of the keynote. Forta, Adobe's senior technical evangelist, is the author of books on ColdFusion, SQL, Windows 2000, JSP, WAP, Regular Expressions and more. His work emphasis is on Adobe's application server and software development framework ColdFusion as he strives to provide feedback to help shape the future direction of the product. His personal Web site is listed at the end of this feature and is a must-read for self-con-

"We're starting to see productivity applications being developed inside the browser (such as Google spreadsheets) – and Adobe is actively working to bridge the gap between the Web and the desktop here."

– Kevin Lynch



**“We are
well on our way
to our goal
of attaining one
million Flex
developers”**

— Jeff Whatcott

fessed geeks of all shapes and sizes.

eBook Worms

Also making a splash at this year's event (and featuring up front in the keynote) was news of Adobe Digital Editions, a rich Internet application (RIA) built from the ground up for digital publishing. With native support for PDF as well as an XHTML-based reflow-centric publication format, Digital Editions promises to deliver an engaging way to acquire, read and manage content, including eBooks, digital magazines, digital newspapers and other digital publications.

Initially available as a free public beta for Windows, Digital Editions will support Macintosh systems as a universal binary application, Linux platforms, as well as mobile phones and other embedded devices in future versions.

“Adobe Digital Editions builds on the ubiquitous reach of PDF and Flash and will further energize the eBook and digital publishing market,” said Narayan. “By creating a specialized, consumer-friendly application like this, Adobe is ensuring publishers can securely deliver high-impact content to the widest possible audience, across hardware platforms, operating systems and devices.”

This is Adobe's first Flex 2.0 application to go commercial and, as Bill McCoy puts it, “Digital publishing has reached a tipping point.” McCoy is general manager of the company's ePublishing business and in a later breakout session he explained why consumers are now demanding electronic delivery of data that was previously only published in print data in this way. His justifications included the following points:

- Public libraries are now lending out eBooks.
- Textbooks in eBook format are now being used in education.
- eBooks have been embraced by well-known technical publishers such as O'Reilly.
- Young people are demanding that their content be delivered digitally.
- ePublishing brings with it new capabilities such as on-demand, portability, searchability, etc.

- Sales of laptops and other devices with improved ergonomics are now far outstripping PCs.

Digital Editions delivers a straightforward user experience for reading and managing commercially published digital publications. It builds on the Adobe eBook capabilities that were integrated into previous versions of Adobe Reader and takes them further by adding the ability to incorporate Flash interactivity and rich media, enabling publishers to create next-generation digital publications that McCoy would argue surpass digital forms of paper books.

Digital Editions' support for Flash SWF will enable new levels of interactivity and rich media delivery, McCoy notes. The Digital Editions beta includes integration with Adobe Acrobat 8 and Reader 8, which can install and launch Digital Editions from within their user interface.

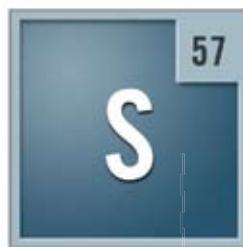
Why hasn't ePublishing mushroomed before now, I asked McCoy. “Consumers and content publishers still suffer from format confusion,” he replied. Other factors include client software, digital rights management hassles, inordinate costs and Web browser limitations, he added.

“As a result, a whole host of proprietary formats has sprung up (at least a dozen) so that the authoring tools the publishers use could not viably work commercially up until this point,” McCoy continued.

Digital Editions aims to rectify this problem as it assures content portability and is lightweight as well as being both consumer-optimized and content-centric rather than application-experience-centric. (As a sidenote, Adobe InDesign will be augmented to embrace and support this technology.)

Flexible Business Model

Digital Editions will integrate with a new, hosted content authorization service to protect publisher's rights while maintaining superior ease-of-use for consumers. This new Adobe Digital Editions Protection Service, based on Adobe LiveCycle Policy Server, will allow publishers to choose from a flexible array of business models, with user-ID-based



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Fast Facts

- If you search Google for file types and extensions (.pdf filetype:pdf) you get 1,530 million hits
- Over a billion people in China & India will never use a PC to connect to the Web so development of rich Internet experiences on “devices” will be fundamental to the success of emerging technologies.
- Flash Player and Adobe Reader software is now installed on more than 700 million Internet-connected desktops and mobile devices – creating a versatile foundation for capturing and holding audiences’ attention through more active and effective applications and media.
- All the top video sites on the Web such as YouTube are using Flash Player to deliver their video experiences.

“This was one
of the best
developer
events
I have attended
in the last three
years”

authorization that provides an improved user experience over competitive DRM models. Digital Editions also supports Adobe Content Server DRM, delivering full compatibility with existing protected PDF content and infrastructure.

Adobe notes that Digital Editions is designed to support a wide range of business models including public domain texts (open content), advertising-supported content, library lending and other borrowing/subscription models, and the purchase of eBooks and digital content.

Digital Editions, it says, will integrate with a new hosted content authorization service to protect publisher’s rights while maintaining ease-of-use for consumers. This new Adobe Digital Editions Protection Service, based on LiveCycle Policy Server, will allow publishers to choose from a flexible array of business models, with user-ID-based authorization that provides an improved user experience over competitive DRM models.

The Digital Editions download is less than 3MB (including Adobe Flash Player 9) and typically takes less than two minutes to install over a broadband connection. With an RIA service model, users will have access to the latest version of Digital Editions, so they can take advantage of new features and security enhancements.

A Developer Renaissance

In breakout sessions with Adobe’s SVP and chief software architect Kevin Lynch we learned more about the company’s long-term vision for technology diversity.

“We’re starting to see productivity applications being developed inside the browser (such as Google spreadsheets) – and Adobe is actively working to bridge the gap between the Web and the desktop here,” said Lynch. “So now I think we’re going to see a renaissance in application development as this new breed of rich online applications emerges,” he added.

I put it to Lynch that, while this is all great news, Adobe must surely be aware of the inherent security and privacy issues that are thrown up as people start to expose increasing amounts

of personal and corporate data online in this form. Lynch agreed that this is the case, but that Adobe has a dedicated security team working to address these issues with monthly security updates and the company is embracing security standards such as SSL (Secure Sockets Layer technology) to resolve, or at least corral, these problems where possible.

Adobe Extends Support to Macs and Linux

Adobe also announced it is extending its toolset for designing and deploying a new class of rich Internet applications to the Apple Macintosh platform. The pre-release version of Adobe Flex Builder 2 for the Mac enables developers on the Macintosh platform to build RIAs – which Adobe defines as “next-generation Web applications that combine the benefits of desktop software with the reach of the Web to create more engaging user experiences.” With support for both Intel and PowerPC hardware, pre-release versions of Flex Builder 2 for the Mac and the Flex Builder 2 Eclipse Plugin for the Mac are now publicly available at Adobe Labs.

Adobe also recently introduced the public beta of the Flash Player 9 for Linux, extending the reach of rich Flex applications to Linux desktops. The combination of the Flex 2 SDK and the Flash Player 9 for Linux comprises a fully supported, free rich Internet application development platform. With an update to the free Flex 2 SDK that includes the debug version of the Flash Player for Linux, the company will enable developers to develop, debug and deploy Flex software-based applications entirely on Linux. The Flex 2 SDK update is expected to be available in early January.

“With Flex 2, Adobe has listened to the needs of the development community by providing a solid framework for rapidly developing applications deployable to a majority of users,” said Chafic Kazoun, chief software architect at Atellis and author of *Programming Flex 2*. “Now with Flex Builder for the Mac, developers are able not only to deploy applications

across platforms, but also to develop Flex applications with a modern IDE on their platform of choice.”

Out-of-the-Box

Adobe Flex 2 software includes dozens of out-of-the-box components for UI, data, and security to help developers build applications faster. The growing Flex developer community can now build on this foundation by creating custom components and posting them on the Flex Component Exchange. Adobe also is working with leading commercial component developers to deliver components that will help further expand the Flex ecosystem.


“We are well on our way to our goal of attaining one million Flex developers,” said Jeff Whatcott, senior director of product marketing for Adobe’s Enterprise and Developer Business Unit. “By extending our support to the Mac and Linux platforms, we are showing our dedication to helping developers everywhere join in on the next wave of Web application development.”

The Flex 2 product line provides developers with a comprehensive, integrated set of tools and technology for fast, end-to-end development of rich and innovative Web applications. With free versions of the Flex 2 SDK and Flex Data Services 2 Express, a single-CPU production license that provides powerful message-based data management services, developers have everything they need to build and deploy complete rich Internet applications with no software licensing costs. Flex Builder 2, a powerful Eclipse-based IDE, includes a library of built-in controls and services for application development and UI design. Flex Data Services 2 empowers developers to create data-intensive applications that improve application performance, real-time data synchronization and collaboration capabilities.

Genuine Excitement

In summary, this was one of the best developer events I have attended in the last three years. The management of the



keynotes, the quality of the breakouts, the access to spokespeople and – judging by the comments of most of the developers I spoke to – the quality of the sessions and classes that were available allowed the total package to set an enviable standard. There was genuine excitement among the attendees and that really came through. 

Adrian Bridgwater is a seasoned

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- labs.adobe.com/wiki/index.php/Apollo
- labs.adobe.com/technologies/digitaleditions



Show and Hide Content Based on User Access Levels

Dreamweaver can help
by Danilo Celic

dreamweaver's native Log In User server behavior combined with the Restrict Access to Page server behavior can help you protect your pages from prying eyes. However, when it comes for more fine-grained control of content on pages viewable by users from multiple access levels, Dreamweaver doesn't have anything built in to offer any assistance to you.

Imagine you want to build a content management system (CMS) for your client. They could have three, or more, access levels defined for logged-in users of their site. There may be a systemAdmin user (probably you), a few admin users that perform basic administration work of the site such as approve new content, then you have several author users that create the content that the admin users approve, and finally you have a bunch of subscriber users that can view articles and also change and modify their own account info.

As part of the CMS that you're building, you might have a control panel page that contains the main navigation links for common tasks performed by all users, such as updating the user password and contact information. All of this is easily handled by the Restrict Access to Page server behavior so that all logged in users can see your common content. If you have links to pages that have special significance only, for example, the admin users such as approving

articles, you'd probably rather not create a special log in just for admin users, and you'd rather not show links that user access levels shouldn't see, and probably can't even visit if you're properly restricting access to those pages using the Restrict Access To page server behavior.

Note: To read up on using the server behaviors mentioned above, take a look at Using the Log in Server Behavior (<http://www.communitymx.com/content/article.cfm?cid=A222302CBCA928EB>) and Access Level and Login for PHP (<http://www.communitymx.com/abstract.cfm?cid=78EEB>) and ASP (<http://www.communitymx.com/abstract.cfm?cid=DFB68>).

Or check out our Liverpool JumpStart (<http://www.communitymx.com/abstract.cfm?cid=3777A>), which contains a page set design that includes password-protected pages. So how do you balance the two competing needs: a main control panel page that displays common links and also displays links that only specified users can access? One way to do this would be to analyze the code Dreamweaver uses to determine if a user can log in, or check out the code that is used to determine if a logged-in user can access a restricted page. We've taken a close look at these server behaviors for you and determined that Dreamweaver's Log In User and Restrict Access To Page server behaviors write code to your page that use session variables to maintain information about

a user if they are logged in, and what access level they have assigned to them when logged in.

Note: CF users make sure you have sessionmanagement turned on in your Application.cfm to enable sessions.

For an article on doing this, check out: "Enabling Session Variables in ColdFusion" (<http://www.communitymx.com/content/article.cfm?cid=62595>). ASP and ColdFusion use a session variable named MM_UserAuthorization and PHP uses a session variable named MM_UserGroup to identify the access level for a logged-in user. So checking that a user's MM_UserAuthorization, or MM_UserGroup, value is part of a list of valid access levels (or alternately checking that their access level is not part of the list) will help you determine if you need to show or hide a particular piece of content. In the sample code, we're using Access levels for our users where 1 = System Admin, 2= Admin, 3= Users. ASP VBScript does things a little differently than ColdFusion and PHP, so we'll tackle PHP and ColdFusion together and then get on to VBScript further down the article. The sample pages within the support files contain pages written in ColdFusion, PHP and ASP VBScript that show content based upon the access level examples. You can use the included Access MDB file to test with the .sql file to create your own MySQL table.

Article courtesy of
Community MX. For
more quality articles such
as this one, go to
www.communitymx.com

Showing Content for ColdFusion and PHP

To show content when a user is a System Admin (1), use the following to wrap around your content:

ColdFusion:

```
<cfif ListContains("1", Session.MM_
UserAuthorization)>
Content to show if user in proper
access level.
</cfif>
```

PHP:

```
<?php
$accessLevels = array("1");
$validLevel = $_SESSION['MM_
UserGroup'];
if(array_search($validLevel, $access-
Levels)>-1){
?>
<p>System Admin users (1)</p>
<?php
}
?>
```

If you want to show content to System Admins (1) and to Admin (2) users, wrap your content with the following:

ColdFusion:

```
<cfif ListContains("1,2", Session.
MM_UserAuthorization)>
Content to show if user in proper
access level.
</cfif>
```

PHP:

```
<?php
$accessLevels = array("1","2");
$validLevel = $_SESSION['MM_
UserGroup'];
if(array_search($validLevel, $access-
Levels)>-1){
?>
Content to show if user in proper
access level
```

```
<?php
}
?>
```

Please note that in the code being used here Coldfusion uses a quotes comma separated string such as "1,2" and PHP uses comma-separated quotes strings as in "1","2".

Hiding Content for ColdFusion and PHP

To hide content when a user is not part of the System Admins (1), use the following:

ColdFusion:

```
<cfif Not ListContains("1", Session.
MM_UserAuthorization)>
Content to show if user *not* in prop-
er access level.
</cfif>
```

PHP:

```
<?php
$accessLevels = array("1");
$validLevel = $_SESSION['MM_
UserGroup'];
if(array_search($validLevel, $accessLe-
vels)===FALSE){
?>
Content to show if user *not* in prop-
er access level.
<?php
}
?>
```

Please note: The hiding for PHP is handled a little differently than the showing is. The array_search function returns the key of the item if it exists in the array of values, however, it returns FALSE when it doesn't find the value. As such, when checking for a value to not be within the array, you have to use the Identical operator (===) to check that the value is FALSE. If you just used the equal operator as in if(array_search(\$validLevel,

\$accessLevels)===FALSE), that could equate to a true statement if the value *is* found within the array at the zeroth element in the array. This is because 0 is equivalent to FALSE, however, the Identical operator can handle the difference between 0 and FALSE

To hide content when a user is System Admins (1) or a Admin (2) users, wrap your content with the following:

ColdFusion:

```
<cfif Not ListContains("1,2", Session.
MM_UserAuthorization)>
Content to show if user *not* in prop-
er access level.
</cfif>
```

PHP:

```
<?php
$accessLevels = array("1", "2");
$validLevel = $_SESSION['MM_
UserGroup'];
if(array_search($validLevel, $accessLe-
vels)===FALSE){
?>
Content to show if user *not* in prop-
er access level.
<?php
}
?>
```

ASP VBScript and Searching Arrays

As mentioned earlier, VBScript handles things a little differently. The big difference is that it doesn't have built-in such useful functionality as the ListContains function in ColdFusion, or the array_search function from PHP. Because of this, the code needed to show content in VBScript is slightly more complicated. There are two pieces of code that need to be inserted: a function that determines if an item is within an array, and the code that runs the function to check if a user-access level belongs to a list of access levels.

“Dreamweaver does a great job of protecting pages with its Log In User and Restrict Access To Page server behaviors”

InArray Function

Place the following code above any content that you wish to be able to show or hide. The function takes two parameters: an array a and a string str. The code loops over the array and determines the 0 based index within the array the string matches, and returns that index if found. If the string isn't present:

```
-1.  
<%  
Dim accessLevels  
Function InArray(a, str)  
Dim idx  
For idx = 0 to UBound(a)  
If CStr(a(idx)) = CStr(str) Then  
InArray = idx : Exit Function  
Next  
InArray = -1 'Not found, set to -1  
End Function  
>%
```

Tip: Place the InArray function into an include that contains your commonly used functions.

Showing Content for ASP VBScript

To show content when a user is a System Admin (1), use the following to wrap around your content:

```
<%  
accessLevels = Array("1")  
If InArray(accessLevels, Session("MM_UserAuthorization")) > -1 Then  
>%  
Content to show if user in proper  
access level  
<%  
End If  
>%
```

If you want to show content to System Admins (1) and to Admin (2) users, wrap your content with the following:

```
<%  
accessLevels = Array("1", "2")  
If InArray(accessLevels, Session("MM_UserAuthorization")) > -1 Then  
>%  
Content to show if user in proper  
access level
```

```
<%  
End If  
>%
```

Hiding Content for ASP VBScript

To hide content when a user is not part of the System Admins (1), use the following:

```
<%  
accessLevels = Array("1")  
If InArray(accessLevels, Session("MM_UserAuthorization")) = -1 Then  
>%  
Content to show if user in proper  
access level  
<%  
End If  
>%
```


To hide content when a user is System Admins (1) or a Admin (2) users, wrap your content with the following:

```
<%  
accessLevels = Array("1", "2")  
If InArray(accessLevels, Session("MM_UserAuthorization")) = -1 Then  
>%  
Content to show if user in proper  
access level  
<%  
End If  
>%
```

Conclusion

Dreamweaver does a great job of protecting pages with its Log In User and Restrict Access To Page server behaviors. This article has shown you how to take the information stored as part of the log in process and use it to allow you to show and hide content in ColdFusion, PHP and ASP VBScript pages so that you can have fine-grained control over content that is displayed to visitors of all types to your pages.

Tip: Add these short bits of code to your Snippets panel for easy access to your access level show hide code. For more info on using the Snippets panel, check out: Exploring the Snippets Panel in Dreamweaver (<http://www.communitymx.com/abstract.cfm?cid=AB7D1>).

Happy Coding! 

```
function optimizeRIA() {  
    if (omniture.actionsource == true) {  
        businessSuccess();  
    } else {  
        if (javascript.futile == true) {  
            businessFail();  
        }  
    }  
}
```

businessSuccess();



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Internationalizing Flex Apps

Part 1 of 3

by Jeff Tapper

One of the many features available in Flex 2.0 is a `ResourceBundle` class, which allows for a standardized approach for internationalizing applications. Many recent projects of mine have required that applications be built that can easily be ported to other languages. Traditionally, I've used a series of XML files for this, one for each of the various languages that need to be supported. This strategy is still viable, and I still use it on some of my projects. However, I've recently discovered a different approach, which is available natively in Flex. Flex provides a `ResourceBundle` class, which allows you to set up your text in properties files (the identical structure that you would use for internationalizing Java applications). These properties files are arranged in a folder structure, relating to the language and country, so the properties file for US English would be in a folder called `en_US`, the file for the UK would be `en_UK`, while the French would be in `fr_FR`. The structure of the files is very simple; they look like this:

```
hello = Hello World
welcome = Welcome!
```

Or, in the French version:

```
hello = Bonjour Monde
welcome = Bienvenue
```

To use these in an application, you have two options: you can use the `@Resource` command each time you need a value, or you can declare a variable for the `ResourceBundle` and use the

`getString()`, `getNumber()`, `getBoolean()`, etc., methods. In Listing 1, you can see both being used. In this example, the top label uses the `@Resource` directive to specifically pull the `hello` key from the `helloWorld` bundle. If the application is compiled for `en_US`, that key will show "Hello World," compile the same app for `fr_FR`, and read "Bonjour Monde."

The remaining trick is to tell the compiler which language to use, and where to find the files. You can do this from the command line like this:

```
mxmclc -locale en_UK -sp ../locales/
{locale} -o HelloWorld_en_UK.swf I18N_
HelloWorld.mxml
```

```
mxmclc -locale fr_FR -sp ../locales/
{locale} -o HelloWorld_fr_FR.swf I18N_
HelloWorld.mxml
```

Or, you can specify compiler arguments in Flex Builder:

```
-locale en_US -sp ../locales/{locale}
```

Now let's explore how you can use XML files as an alternative to this. We will explore the use of multiple instances of the `ResourceBundle` class to allow for runtime switching of locales.

As we have already discussed, the native use of the `ResourceBundle` class requires separate compiled SWFs for each language. This is not always desirable, and there are times when you may want to allow for switching of languages at runtime. One strategy I've used successfully for this is to trick the Flex compiler


and have several different properties in the same locale folder, and to create separate instances of the `ResourceBundle` class for each of them. This way, it's a fairly simple process to determine what the current locale is, and to pull the labels from that `ResourceBundle`.

To start, I took three properties files and placed them in a single directory. Listing 2 is a simple example of how to get it working.

I named each file based on the language it was there to support (`helloWorld_fr.properties`, `helloWorld_uk.properties`, `helloWorld_us.properties`). Notice that there is `ResourceBundle` instance for each of the three files. I've also added some simple functions to get the data from these files (`geti18nText`, `geti18nDate`). Keep in mind, this is a simplistic example. In real world apps, I tend to have a singleton responsible for embedding and retrieving the data from the files. But, even in this simple case, you can see the power of it – switching the selected language in the combo box instantly translates the labels and dates to the appropriate format.

Remember to add a compiler argument to specify the proper directory for the locale files. In my case, all three files were in a `locales/multi` directory, so I added the argument:

```
-sp ../locales/multi
```

Look for the follow-up parts to this article in the next issue of *Web Developer's & Designer's Journal*. 

Jeff Tapper, co-founder of Tapper, Nimer and Associates, has been developing Internet-based applications since 1995 for a myriad of clients including Toys R Us, IBM, Allaire, Dow Jones, American Express, M&T Bank, Verizon, and Allied Office Supplies. He is certified to teach all of Adobe's courses on Flex, ColdFusion, and Flash development. He has worked as an author or technical editor for several books, such as "Object Oriented Programming with ActionScript 2.0" and "Flex 2 Training from the Source."

Listing 1

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<mx:Application xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml"
layout="vertical">
  <mx:Script>
    <![CDATA[
      import mx.resources.ResourceBundle;
      [ResourceBundle("helloWorld")]
      private static var rb:ResourceBundle;
      private function geti18nText(key:String):String{
        return rb.getString(key);
      }
    ]]>
  </mx:Script>
  <mx:Label fontSize="50" text="@Resource(key='hello',
bundle='helloWorld')"/>
  <mx:Label fontSize="50" text="{geti18nText('welcome')}" />
</mx:Application>
```

Listing 2

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<mx:Application xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml"
layout="vertical" creationComplete="doLangChange()">
  <mx:Script>
    <![CDATA[
      import mx.formatters.DateFormatter;

      import mx.resources.ResourceBundle;
      [ResourceBundle("helloWorld_us")]
      private var rb_us:ResourceBundle;
      [ResourceBundle("helloWorld_uk")]
      private var rb_uk:ResourceBundle;
```

```
      [ResourceBundle("helloWorld_fr")]
      private var rb_fr:ResourceBundle;
      [Bindable]
      private var today:Date = new Date();
      [Bindable(event="langChange")]
      private function geti18nText(key:String):String{
        return this["rb_"+lang.selectedItem.lang].getString(key);
      }
      [Bindable(event="langChange")]
      private function geti18nDate(dt:Date):String{
        var formatter:DateFormatter = new DateFormatter();
        formatter.formatString = geti18nText("dtformat");
        return formatter.format(dt);
      }
      private function doLangChange():void{
        var e:Event = new Event("langChange");
        this.dispatchEvent(e);
      }
    ]]>
  </mx:Script>
  <mx:DateFormatter id="smeNme" formatString="MM/DD/YYYY" />
  <mx:ApplicationControlBar dock="true">
    <mx:ComboBox id="lang" change="doLangChange()">
      <mx:dataProvider>
        <mx:Object label="US English" lang="us" />
        <mx:Object label="UK English" lang="uk" />
        <mx:Object label="French" lang="fr" />
      </mx:dataProvider>
    </mx:ComboBox>
  </mx:ApplicationControlBar>
  <mx:Label fontSize="50" text="{geti18nText('hello')}" />
  <mx:Label fontSize="50" text="{geti18nText('welcome')}" />
  <mx:Label fontSize="50" text="{geti18nDate(today)}" />
</mx:Application>
```

Personal Branding Checklist

Gaining success in business

by Jesse Warden

this is a checklist of items you need for an all-encompassing personal branding strategy. Personal branding is the process of marketing and selling yourself as a brand in order to gain success in business. Personal branding is a continual process just as knowing yourself is a continual process. As you grow, so does your brand. The need for personal branding arises from the fact that globalization has increased competition in the workplace. As the wheat is separated from the chaff, if you are left standing, you are left standing with others of good caliber. The playing field is now that much more challenging since your competition is as good as, or better, than you.

To paraphrase David Samuel, the bloke who got me into personal branding after I saw him speak a few years ago; he spoke about why you need personal branding. His audience was a group from a large telecom:

"If we were to classify people based on aptitude, they are As, Bs, Cs, and Ds. Because of globalization the Cs and Ds have been outsourced. They're gone. All that's left is you. You are now in competition with a bunch of As and Bs. You are now clamoring for attention amongst a talented group of people. How do you now get noticed? How can you shine and be recognized for additional opportunities? How can you be successful when everyone around you is just as talented, or more so, than you? If every-

one around you is capable and of A or B caliber, how do you compete with that?"

You build a personal brand and sell it. You sell not just yourself, but your brand, to your superiors, or clients in the case of contractors and consultants.

The same reason people buy Coke instead of Pepsi, or American Eagle instead of Abercrombie & Fitch where the products are extremely similar, is because of the brand. The public perception of the company's product is created and marketed in such a way as to enhance the product, or even be the product. Soda is soda, pop is pop for those of us with less-sensitive taste buds. The similarities end, however, when you compare Coke versus Pepsi. Even taste tests are meaningless; it's the brand that sells it.

Checklist

1. Know what you want
2. Be able to articulate what you do
3. Elevator pitch
4. Be positive
5. Have a blog / website / MySpace, or other online presence
6. Business card
7. Multiple e-mail addresses
8. Phone
9. Signature
10. Logo
11. Personal logo
12. More than one resume
13. Mentor
14. Networking outlets / contacts

15. Wardrobe style
16. Multiple IM accounts
17. Alias
18. Mantra
19. Speaking and PowerPoint template
20. Passion

Let's start with some brief definitions.

Checklist Definitions

1. **Know what you want:** Identify what you want, and start walking toward it.
2. **Be able to articulate what you do:** When someone asks what you do, answer them immediately with a clear, concise, and confident response.
3. **Elevator pitch:** Be able to describe who you are and what you do in the time it takes to ride an elevator.
4. **Be positive:** Be positive.
5. **Business card:** A 3x5 piece of paper or mini-CD that has your personal contact information clearly printed on it.
6. **Have a blog / Website / MySpace, or other online presence:** Get your brand online.
7. **Multiple e-mail addresses:** Get more than one e-mail address.
8. **Phone:** Get a phone.
9. **Signature:** Your signature is who you are, your title, and your contact information. You should put this on everything you touch.
10. **Logo:** A visual image that positively identifies your brand.
11. **Personal goals:** Set goals for yourself that help you reach what you want.

12. **More than one resume:** Customize your resume to the potential employer or client.
13. **Mentor:** Find a guru and have them teach you.
14. **Networking outlets / contacts:** Continually develop your network by attending industry meetings and conferences.
15. **Wardrobe style:** When you are going to be near people who you wish to sell your brand to, dress to impress.
16. **Multiple IM accounts:** Get more than one IM account.
17. **Alias:** Obtain a positive nickname.
18. **Mantra:** Collect sayings that enforce your brand.
19. **Speaking and PowerPoint template:** Speak about what you do and have a hot-looking PowerPoint template to show.
20. **Passion:** Love what you do.

Thorough Definitions

Now, let's get more thorough in our definitions.

1 Know What You Want

The most important thing is to know what you want. If you have a clearly identified target of desire, you can walk that path with confidence.

One of the biggest problems with management is the delegation process; the process where someone in the position of authority asks someone else they are in charge of to accomplish a task. The delegation process is a series of steps that must be followed in order to ensure success. The first step is personal: "Know what you want." If you don't know

what you want, you cannot articulate to others how to accomplish the task, because you don't know what it is. You are setting them up to fail because you cannot define success. If you don't know what you want, you'll be walking in aimlessly with no purpose.

Identify what you want, and start walking towards it.

2 Be Able to Articulate What You Do

When advertising a product, people need to be able to identify what the product is to garner context. Sometimes this works in reverse where by not advertising the purpose, you create a mystique that has been proven effective. This doesn't work, however, when you are meeting someone new for the first time, and they ask what you do. Simply saying, "Jesse Warden, man of mystery" doesn't accurately portray what I do. The business world revolves around work. While jobs may decrease, the amount of work will not; there is always work to be done. You are a cog in the machine, whether corporate or independent, and you want to sell yourself as an effective part of that whole.

By giving a clear, concise description of what you do, the other party immediately can identify an applicable value if any. If they are a potential employer or client, you want them to have this clear impression of you. If

they don't have an immediate need for your skills, they may later. They will remember you and what you do later if you left a good and clear first impression. "I remember that networking engineer that I met at that conference; she'd be a good candidate for this opportunity."

The interest in what you do is at its apex when the other party asks; be ready to immediately answer, and thus take the most advantage of it. This also sometimes spawns additional conversation, which in turn leads to more rapport-building opportunities.

If you cannot articulate what you do, others will perceive it negatively. It doesn't matter if you're the hottest C++ programmer out there; if the other party doesn't get that from your description, they have no knowledge of that. They'll think things like: "He's some type of developer." If a C++ job comes up, they are more apt to immediately think of the person who accurately described that they coded C++ first.

"What do you do?"

"Yeah, I like do computer stuff..."
versus

"What do you do?"

"I live, eat, and sleep programming in C."

In addition, not being able to articulate what you do presents a host of other negative perceptions. It makes you sound inarticulate. Communication is key in globalization and in business in general. It's a flawed process to begin with; someone who is good at it immediately has perceived value and personified charisma. Finally, trust is conveyed if you quickly and confidently describe what you do.

When someone asks what you do, answer them immediately with a clear, concise, and confident response.

3 Elevator Pitch

Now that you know what to say, how do you say it? You use an elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a short description of who you are, what you do, and it's spoken in the time it takes to ride in an elevator with someone – usually three sentences. They are designed to be short so you can quickly and effectively describe who you are and what you do. If you meet an important person in passing and are in the elevator, this is one scenario. Another is when someone, who may have a potential opportunity for you, is at a conference or meeting. You could utilize the 20 seconds after the meeting to introduce yourself and create a good, informative first impression in a limited timeframe. It's called a pitch because you are trying to sell yourself to the other person. That also means this can change depending on who you are talking to. Just like sales pitches can change based on the audience and demographic, so can elevator pitches. It helps if you can figure out a little about the other person before you give your pitch. You often can't, so don't plan on it. If you can, make the most of it.

"Hi, my name is Jesse Warden."

"What do you do, Mr. Warden?"

"I'm a computer programmer."

"Oh really? I used to work in the IT division. What type of programming do you do?"

"I specialize in Adobe Flex, which creates Rich Internet Applications. I typically work with server-side developers as well as designers in various design agencies. Working with a variety of people who have different skill sets rocks!"

I like to add my feelings so people immediately know I am passionate about it. That's just my style. Your elevator pitch should show your style as well, if applicable. I like to talk, a lot. Therefore, elevator pitches are hard for me. I want to spew details to people. However, it is best to give them the synopsis, and let them ask for more details.

Remember:

- Who you are
- What you do
- What type of industry

Be able to describe who you are and what you do in the time it takes to ride an elevator.

4 Be Positive

No one likes negative people. People like positive people. If you are positive, people will want to work with you. A positive attitude implies you can provide solutions, will be successful when thrown into the fire, and will generally raise the morale of those around you.

Be positive.

5 Business Card

While old school, it's still effective. Business cards should be personalized without being annoying. It's okay to have a weird shape, for example, but the card better fit in someone's wallet. If not, they will immediately have a negative impression of you. Those little CD ones are hot and will make people think you've got it together.

Having your first and last name, professional title, company name if applicable, phone number(s), e-mail(s), and Website on your card are the bare minimum. These help drive people to your Web presence. They, too, should match your brand. If you are a Spartan, clean, no nonsense programmer, a clearly readable and Spartan card that matches the style of your Web presence, if any, should match.

Misspellings are unacceptable. If you accidentally printed out 300 cards with the wrong e-mail, take the loss and get it done right. It's unprofessional to get a card with a verbal disclaimer.

"Just ignore the top number... it no longer works, use the bottom."

...bad, bad.

A lot of local FedEx, Mailbox Etc., and others can make a large number of custom business cards, cheap. Cheaper than Kinko's, too!

Finally, your Website can go down. A business card doesn't require a server, nor power to be viewable; it's just paper and ink, and that works reliably on its own.

6 Blog /Website / MySpace Page

Being accessible anywhere, anytime is now technologically possible. In the past, you'd slip your business card to someone, hoping it wouldn't get lost in their already overflowing wallet; they'd see it, and remember to associate the card with the hopefully good impression you made.

Now, you can have who you are immediately accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. A personal Website allows you to collect the good things about you in one accessible place. You can then use that as a tool whenever you travel...and it's larger than 3x5.

"Do you have a resume?"

"Do you have examples of your work?"

"What type of work have you done in the past?"

All questions can be answered verbally, via IM, or even phone by:

"Sure, just point your laptop's Web browser you have open there to www.jessewarden.com."

The best is if you have a previously prepared Web page that showcases your work nicely. You can then guide the potential employer/client through your site. Self-guided are cool as well. A lot of designers have portfolio sites, Websites that showcase their design work online. They can both stand alone, allowing anyone to see their work without any handholding, or used onsite during an interview in a guided presentation.

You can also upload multiple resumes to your Website to be always available. It's just really handy to have all of that in one place. Depending on your industry, any associated files and documents can be there as well, either hidden (non-linked to) or protected so only you can access them. There are many sites out there devoted to storing your data, but this is stuff you want people to see so it's okay if it's found.

A blog is great too. It shows a history of you writing about your industry. That immediately sends a powerful statement. It implies you are knowledgeable in your industry, if not a cut above the rest, if you can write a lot of

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content over a long period of time. You will also have a long record that can showcase your vast amount of knowledge and even growth in the industry. If you have multiple blogs, one for personal stuff and one for professional postings, it's easier because you don't have to explain away personal posts that may be uncomfortable to talk about in an interview.

Remember, you're never sorry for something you didn't say. If you said it on the Internet, you can be sure it's saved, somewhere. People have been pretty harsh about such things on the Internet since there is more accountability for what you write being in the public domain as it were. That said, those of us in tech recognize and appreciate things in context, and should take that into account. Most don't, so be warned.

Blogs are also nice because of their communal nature. If you have a comment to show, this gives the impression that you are involved in the industry. Again you are being perceived as knowledgeable. Comments that show positive feedback or thanks are even sweeter. You can even play on the negative ones if you responded in a professional way, attempting to initiate a dialogue or a healthy debate.

Leaving comments that point out weaknesses in your arguments or are just plain corrections on your inaccurate reporting show that you are not afraid to admit you're wrong, and have documentation of such. Anything racist, offensive, or politically incorrect should be deleted unless it applies to the industry you are in. Some people don't understand that an anonymous commenting system allows anyone to comment, and yet they can hold you accountable for content on your Website. I feel the risk is worth it, though.

Finally, My Space pages. When I was in college studying multimedia, one of my respected professors told me that you need your own domain if you want to apply for a Web designer job. Local companies like Mindspring (now Earthlink) and others wouldn't take you seriously if you put geocities.com/~cablesland as your portfolio URL versus jessewarden.com.

I think times have changed. Creating a Website takes a lot of time and a wide array of skills to set up and maintain. If this isn't your primary discipline, it's kind of ridiculous to do so in a day and age where a plethora of Web applications exist for solving these various

needs. If you are a Web designer, sure, I can see how it's relevant, but battling hackers, blog spam, and shoddy Web hosting providers is time-consuming, expensive – both monetarily and time-wise – with little perceived return on investment.

Why pay for Website space when places offer it for free? Why go through the laborious process of setting up a blog when many services exist that make it easy to set up and handle all the spam and hacker issues for you? To me, people who do that are effective, not lazy. In a day and age where time is precious, and attention sparse, anything that helps you get things done quicker seems good. Effectively using those tools to develop your brand seems like a good thing. Web mail, too, is nice versus a domain-specific one. Access anywhere with built-in spam protection is great! While it is professional to have "jesse@jessewarden.com" versus "m00g0076y@aol.com" when in communication with a client, having something like gmail or others is fine; they handle the spam so you don't have to. That shows you're smart...or at least appear so, and that's what matters.

Get your brand online in some fashion.

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7 Multiple E-Mail Addresses

While it can be a pain and cause confusion to clients, it's worth it, even if you only advertise one. If your mail server goes down, you can at least be in e-mail communication via another e-mail address. In addition, you don't have to use work e-mail for job offers that could get you fired.

You don't have to let everyone know all of your e-mail addresses. You can tell clients which one you want them to use, and friends the rest. E-mail filters, however, will triumph over these efforts.

Finally, some e-mail addresses can have more than one purpose. For example, I have a Gmail address not just for the spam filtering and Web browser access, but because I can check it through my cellphone's Web browser. Since you can't always control which types of e-mail people send you, you can set the tone that your Blackberry cannot view PDF documents, so people won't even try and instead will stick to text only. Flickr has a creative use of this. You can send an e-mail with an attached image to an address they give you for your account. It'll extract the image from the e-mail, and post it to your Flickr account.

8 Phone

Having a phone is good for many reasons. First, e-mail and IM conversations aren't that great. They are not as effective as actually talking to the person. If you can't talk in person, voice communication is the next best thing. Having yet another way to be accessible via a decent form of communication is a good thing. Phone calls are instantaneous, assuming you're awake and your phone is on, garnering immediate results. You have opportunities

to use the aforementioned tools like your elevator pitch, as well as being positive and passionate over the phone. It's hard with shoddy cellphones not to interrupt people sometimes, but that's the nature of the beast.

In addition, text messages have the benefit of being quiet. If you are in a meeting or someplace where you cannot make a phone call, a text message is a way to communicate using the same device. They are quicker on some phone networks, and more reliable than multimedia and e-mail messaging (at least at the time of this writing). You can use one hand, and immediately pause mid-typing without being rude. The send / receive methodology allows you to send a quick message and go do other things while the message is being responded to. The latency can work in your favor.

While it may be painful, try not to use Leet with people you don't know. Leet, also spelled l33t and l77t, is a loose Internet language. It replaces some words with symbols and has other colloquialisms. It's handy for devices that make it hard to type, but again, you need to portray a professional impression. People hear you speak in their head when reading text messages, and bad leet grammar doesn't leave a mature impression.

"lol, y0r da m@n n0\// d0g!"

versus

"Ha ha, that was quite funny, Dr. Watson."

However, unless your device has a keyboard, prudence can come through after a decent rapport has been established, you can begin with the abbreviations. "yes" versus "Yes." No capitalization and no period. No problem. "I'll be there b4 8." versus "I'll be there before 8." It's okay if you are on a personal basis with the other party, but it's not okay if it is a potential employer or client. Use your best judgment; typing proper sentences without a proper keyboard is tough. Get a phone.

9 Signature

Next to knowing what you want, I think this is the most important, regardless of the industry. Your signature is what identifies you. People associate your signature with you, thus it is a direct reflection of you. Signatures give context to who you are, and provide people with valuable information, namely, an e-mail address and Website. When people are searching on Google for answers to their questions, they may come upon a forum posting or archived e-mail list thread where you answered the question they are seeking answers for. If your signature stands out, you've just gained a new fan.

At a bare minimum, they should include your name and e-mail. That way, when e-mails are forwarded, it's immediately apparent who wrote something, and how to get in contact with them.

Having your Website is nice too because sometimes it can differ from the domain your e-mail is on. While my current work e-mail is jesse@universalmind.com, my Website is jessewarden.com, thus, I include both my company's Website and my own.

Any extra is up to you. I personally like short and sweet signatures.

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In an age where screen real estate is in high demand, even with multi-screen and widescreen dis-

plays, if it fits in an e-mail window, you are visible, and having your brand visible and recognized is a good thing!

Some people like to add their mantras or a favorite quote. Be careful in your choices though. When in doubt don't put one in, as you could offend or alienate someone based on your literary or movie character preference.

The most important thing is that your signature needs to be text. Accompanying an image with your signature is dangerous. We're going for reach here, trying to get your brand everywhere. Not all e-mail clients, Web apps, nor devices support images and HTML layouts the same. You cannot depend on an accurate representation of your brand and that is a bad thing. What you can depend on is that if you make your signature text, it'll show up correctly in Outlook, Outlook Express, Thunderbird, Gmail, Hotmail, and even Gmail on my phone.

Temper that Spartan, lowest-common denominator approach with your industry and technological reach. If you are building your brand in a big company like IBM, for example, you can be sure most have Lotus notes. If you design it, you can depend on, for the most part, that others will see it. If most of your customers have Outlook, you can get away with a lot of HTML and CSS formatted designs. Temper the value of the visual perception with the reach of your audience.

One last thing to watch out for: canned responses. They are rude, non-personal, and dehumanize your brand. You are a person building a unique and personal identity. You want to ensure that your signature is separate from your response. People are not machines and shouldn't be treated as such. Seeing this shows I'm sending mixed messages, and have apathy toward my signature's perception:

I'll get that file to you right away!

- Thanks

Thanks,

Jesse Warden

Closures to e-mails are similar to letters, thus you need to tailor closings to the situation. "Love, Jesse" to my wife; "Sincerely, Jesse

R. Warden" to those in business; and "Peace Out!" to my homies. Don't let a machine write sincerity for you; it's cold, shallow apathy at that point.

If you are a programmer, every piece of code ever written by you in the public domain via some open source license or merely uploaded to your blog should have your name, e-mail, and Website listed in it, visibly. If you have code floating around in the wild that you've written that does not have your name in it, fix it now. I built my career by putting my name, e-mail, and Website URL in my code. You can too! There is nothing better for a programmer than looking on the Net for that one piece of example code to help, finding yours, and immediately recognizing that it's exactly what they are looking for. They are henceforth your biggest fan.

Your signature is who you are, your title, and your contact information. You should put this on everything you touch.

10 Logo

Shape and color are the two most important things in design. They evoke emotions, and shape people's perceptions toward what they represent. Brands have a visual representation in the form of a logo. While "Coca-Cola the product" is a bubbling, syrupy black liquid that extinguishes any flame that comes near it, "Coca-Cola the brand" is the white script text on a red background. The logo is the visual bridge of association for the brand, the mnemonic device people have in their heads of what the brand represents. If they see a logo, they should immediately recognize the brand it represents. That is the litmus test of a successful logo.

Nicknames are even invented around the logo, thus completing the loop of brand recognition. IBM's referred to as "Big Blue"; their logo is blue, and they are a big company.

Zorro had his trademark "Z" scratched with a rapier into his victim's clothing, or places of interest for the antagonists to see. It sent a clear message that he meant business, and struck with quick, fierce resolve. So much so, his logo required quite an impromptu canvas, written in swashbuckling candor. That same "I mean business" logo also struck hope into the hearts of down-trodden thousands.

It wasn't just the letter "z."

11 Personal Goals

Life can be measured by how many breaths you take. A journey can be measured in how many steps you take. In working toward what you want, you do so via milestones. Personal milestones are a set of goals. Setting personal goals for yourself helps gives your desire purpose, shows trackable progress, and helps build your self-esteem as you build up a set of personal accomplishments through attaining goals.

My greatest stretch of personal programming growth was a span of two years. In those two years, I had a set of goals for myself. My overall milestone was to be able to duplicate a favorite game of mine in code. The deeper I dug, the more complex things I found that I didn't know how to do. Every day after work, I'd pick something I didn't know how to do.

"These characters in the game somehow know how to walk to a point I click on the screen."

Then I'd dive in for hours, researching online, writing my own test code to compare my results with others. When I'd get a final result, the rush was awesome. I'd do it other ways to see if there were better ways of doing things. Then, I'd do it again.

"These characters seem to know how to walk around things. How in the heck do they know how to do that?"

The abyss of complexity was open at that point. Sometimes I'd take two steps backward in order to relearn the exact same approaches. The whole time I had a file structure that was proof of my accomplishments. It also showcased how far I had come. I'd open code just six months old and go, "I wrote that!?" What an idiot...you do it this way now...". It made me feel really good to see I was making progress. A lot of the time I'd get angry that I wasn't progressing fast enough, but I could not deny the reasonable proof of progress.

By having a goal to shoot for, you have a clear path, and thus purpose in your day-to-day work life.

BALANCE

Designer/developer, front-end/back-end, clients/sanity. . . web development is a balance and we can help you maintain it. Join now and experience a wealth of training resources tailored to the tools you use every day.

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12 More than One Resume

You do not “have a resume.” You have a template of your skills in digital form that appears as a resume at first glance, but in fact is a living, breathing document. Every single potential employer or contract should receive a customized resume. This can be as minute as a modified objective, the top part of your resume, to an entirely different design and set of content.

When applying for an “in the trenches” job, your resume’s objective should clearly express your desires to work hard, get your hands dirty, and yearn for the approval of your employers on a job well done. If your objective showcases you enjoy leading teams, enjoy managing multiple teams, and are also skilled at delegation, an employer will question why you are applying for a hands-on job when you are clearly looking for a management position instead.

You never lie. Lying is wrong, immoral, and shows that you are not being true to your brand. If you are a trench warrior, proudly announce it as such, and having your objective on your resume clearly indicates your bayonet is ready for duty. If you are a leader, and want to guide your troops to victory, articulate that you are more than ready for marching orders. Life is too short to shortchange yourself and others. Happiness is the ultimate goal. An honest goal, both to yourself and others, will help you attain goals toward that path.

You shouldn’t be all over the map, either. Your objective should be directly related to your ultimate want. If your objectives are all over the map because your wants are, this isn’t necessarily a bad thing. You will attain goals quicker, with more satisfying results, if you focus your wants into a singular purpose. It makes things a lot easier to articulate, at least to an employer. If you have grander goals in your head, no problem. Just make sure your employer reads an objective that is applicable to the job you are applying for.

Skills can be readjusted based on the job. For example, I sell myself 100% as a client developer. I make no illusions that I want nor am I willing to do server-side development. Flex? Yes. Ruby? Hell, no. If I have a dry run of contract / consulting, you can be sure I’ll be changing my tune to adapt to market conditions. I’ll only do so, however, when I’m extremely broke. Even so, even Flex jobs can be tailored to. For example, consider the following scenario: “We’re looking for someone with experience with Flex to interface with some legacy systems as well as Spring and Hibernate.”

I am not going to showcase Flash first in my list of applicable skills. They are looking for Flex, why did you put Flash first? Yes, yes, those of us in the software industry know that job ads are typically not written by geeks, thus are the dumbest things ever written because they don’t accurately represent the job in question. Thus, we are of the opinion not to take them seriously, assuming we’ll hash out the details in the interview. Don’t make that assumption. At the very least, give them the benefit of the doubt, take them seriously, and organize your skill set to the job. If you are clearly not qualified, don’t apply, nor try to finagle your skill list to match. Again, all of these edits and modifications done per job / client are honest and sincere.

Each potential employer or client gets their own, unique resume.

13 Mentor

Every great warrior had a mentor. Daniel LaRusso had Mr. Miyagi. Plato had Socrates. Riker had Captain Picard. Albert Einstein once said he was not great, but stood on the shoulders of giants. Great teachers have great disciples. Great students have the aptitude to be great. Someone who can remove obstacles to your learning, who has valuable experiences which can be passed on, and can proficiently convey them to you are mentors. They guide you along your chosen career path, nurturing you, and warning you of common pitfalls.

Surrounding yourself with people who are better than you ensures you will

be positively influenced. You want to be surrounded by people who raise you up, not drag you down. I quit smoking, not by my willpower alone, but rather the support group I had surrounded myself with. In the software industry, you have ample opportunity to be confronted with people who are insanely smart, have multiple degrees, and/or are brilliant in some fashion. This industry is extremely hard and changes often. By its very nature, it ensures that only reasonably smart people can stay successful for any length of time. From day one your skills are marginalized. Every day your knowledge becomes out of date. Our brains are a depreciating asset that we can’t write off.

Collectively, however, we flourish amidst no or competing hardware / software standards, varying economic climates, and an overall young industry still finding its way.

The same can be said for you. Your personal brand should allow you to be surrounded by people of similar mindset. They should be better than you. Together you positively grow.

That’s slow, though. The best way to become better, quickly, and with less hardship and wasted time is a mentor – someone who has “done this before” and “done it well.” Mentors are naturally hard to find. Some do it out of philanthropy, or by circumstance. They just happen to be a lead on a project, and end up becoming someone who you learn a lot from. Depending on how the management structure is set up, they may even have an opportunity to do a form of MBOs, or management by objective where they allow you to do learning exercises dictated by them that help you grow, quickly. Having an expert accessible for questions and support while you’re doing something new is invaluable when the early first steps can be intimidating, anxious, and downright frustrating.

Transformational leadership is the best kind. Making another a better person is one of the coolest gifts you can receive in your professional life. If you find someone who can be your mentor, you don’t need to be formal about it, just find some way to work with him or her. It can be a risk on new jobs where

you have no guarantee the person even has any desire to fulfill such a role, or that they won't quit and you'll be left wondering what's left for you at your current position now that your mentor is gone. I personally think it's worth it. The number one reason for turn over in companies is because of changes in management. If you don't click with your leader, you won't be able to perform at your optimal ability, nor will you grow.

Find a mentor, and become a groupie.

14 Networking Outlets

Most of my jobs nowadays come from referrals. Meaning, someone I know knows someone who needs my skills. They act as a liaison to connect us. That friendship, whether genuine unconditional or purely business rapport, is generated from networking events. These are basically anytime where you can meet people. They don't have to be applicable to your industry, but that's typically where I've had success. I go to local industry meetings because they are fun. A lot of times, however, I meet someone new. They could be another developer like me, a designer who does similar work, or a business owner looking for talent. All of these people have value in multiple ways, and you have value to them.

They can tell you about their work, and thus their real-world experiences. Since we're all in the same business, you can learn new things, challenge old beliefs, and merely reaffirm the current ideas. You can identify the person by name and skillset. If he or she has a skillset similar to yours, you can later leverage that when you cannot take anymore work and someone is looking for help. I'd love to say

yes to all the work I get, but I can't. Still, clients are ultimately looking for someone to perform the job, even if you were their first choice. They will be happy to get someone to perform the tasks. If you refer a good candidate to them because you are currently unable to do the work, that makes you look valuable in their eyes... and you didn't even code anything, you just sent them an e-mail!

The same goes for someone of a different skill set. One of my weaknesses is that I know too many people like me. I don't know enough designers or server-side coders beyond a blog I read regularly. That doesn't allow me to make a personal recommendation, which makes the referral not as valuable, nor can I guarantee the quality of the referral's work. That could make me look bad.

Both allow you leverage on bigger projects. If you are involved in an initiative where you need a multiple amount of talent, you suddenly are looked at as an extremely valuable member if you pretty much hand pick the entire team... that also gives you more control over who you work with on projects. Both are great things.

This works both ways. People refer me, both contractors and clients, to those in need of talent.

I make this easy for them. My personal brand is clear: Jesse Warden is a Flex Developer.

That way, when whomever, wherever is talking about how they need a Flex developer, I want to make sure I'm the first person they think of. I don't want them thinking, "Oh yeah...that Jesse guy, I wonder if he's a Flex dude." That would be a failure on my part of clearly not articulating and selling my brand. You want to be the first person they think of for a particular job, whether it be as precise as a Mach-2 ColdFusion developer or a "dude who knows server-side technology."

It's really nice having people get you work so you don't have to stress about it!

15 Wardrobe Style

Business is a game – you either play it or get played by it. Part of that game is knowing when to dress for success. When it's 2:00 am and I'm deep in debugging some jacked code, there is no way in hell I'd be wearing a tie, nor shoes for that matter.

When I'm in an interview? Suit, tie, and a haircut. You cannot be overdressed to an interview, only a club or party. While I've heard of some successful sales meetings done by those not following the norm, they are an exception to the rule and definitely unique edge cases. Like good hygiene, you want people to perceive you as confident, have a rudimentary recognition of style, and overall like you have it together. You do that by looking good.

There are times when conforming to play the game is good. Suit to an interview, tux to a wedding, sensible hiking boots on the trails; you dress to the occasion where it is reasonable and generally appropriate to do so. You look hot at a club, comfy when chillin' at home for the weekend, and your normal attire while in public for nothing special.

The style you choose reflects you. Times, fashions, and the attitudes toward them change over time. There is a wide gamut of clean cut and unkempt. Do what feels right when it's appropriate. When you are at an industry event, interview, or other occasion where you may have an opportunity to make a professional encounter, dress to impress. If you can't do that, dress so you feel confident; preferably the first, but the second is a great plan B. Looking good is part attitude; the clothes can only do so much.

Wear the clothes, don't let them wear you.

16 Multiple IM Accounts

Communication is a flawed process. That said, being accessible makes business easier. Easy to reach helps contribute to "easy to work with." Your brand wants to be perceived that way. Yes, I hate being called on Saturdays too, but that doesn't mean you have to answer the phone, just that your message is cordial and you sound professional, and you actually do return phone calls.

Instant Messaging accounts have a few pros and cons. You can have multiple IM accounts easier than you can have multiple e-mails with multiple services, all for free. Spam is easier to control than with e-mail and text messages. There is less security risk, more context to your online status for others to see in real-time, and you can carry on many conversations with many people simultaneously. There are a few minor cons like people not respecting the status, giving the impression you are there but not answering IMs, and not being online. There are a few others, but overall, instant messaging, whether by PC, phone, or some other device, is a great way to be connected, with more control.

Just about everyone is on IM. That is a good thing; you want your brand to be known and thus accessible by everyone when you deem it appropriate. Again, we're going for reach here. That can also be a bad thing. I sign on IM at random times because when I do, I get swarmed. I can spend an entire afternoon and evening just IM'ing. Therefore, at least one professional IM is good to have in addition to your personal one. This way, you can control access.

The more accounts you can get, the better! The most

common are AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, and Microsoft's MSN Messenger. Trillian is a decent, free client for the PC that allows you to use one program to sign into all three versus three programs at the same time. Adium is one of many equivalents for the Mac.

17 Alias

An alias is a nickname. One or more is useful. Some are bequeathed by co-workers, childhood friends, or other associates. Usually, they are meant to identify and thus label a personality quirk that uniquely identifies you. You can utilize that to develop a subculture for you. Those who know you identify you by that alias.

Lucky Number Slevin's "Happy Cat," Scarface, Borris the Bullet Dodger; all add a mystique, identify a strength, and/or clearly set a tone and style. You want something that is positive in some way. While negative ones do have sensationalism and sometimes garner attention, you want to be able to have it come up in a client meeting and not get too nervous trying to explain it. Like what you do, the reasons behind it should flow off the tongue.

"Why is he called Borris the Bullet Dodger?"

"Cause he can dodge bullets."

These are useful in a lot of areas, some non-professional, which can draw ties to your professional life. E-mail address prefixes, IM names, signatures... or you can just keep it on the down-low. There is nothing wrong with your given name. There is everything right with building a club that "knows" your alias.

You can develop a subculture for your brand via those knowing your alias.

18 Mantra

Mantras, sayings, and quotes are all good to associate yourself with. At the very least, you can gain inspiration from them in times of need. Many have come before us, and as Carl Sagan said when referring to the 0.12 blue pixel that was earth in the last picture Voyager 1 took 4 billion light years from our planet: "Earth is where we make our stand." Like a mentor, a lot of great authors and poets exist that you can garner good lines from that represent your attitude toward life, or just situations in general. They can give you purpose, put things into perspective, or just garner a light-hearted laugh. Whatever matches your style; it should enhance your brand (say, on your not-so-concise signature), and help some get a better context of who you are by who inspires you.

"Live long and prosper."

– Spock

"Just do it." – Nike

"Nuts!" – 101st Airborne

Division, Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe in response to the Nazis asking for their surrender at Bastogne, France

19 Speaking and a PowerPoint Template

If you are building a brand, it is best if you go out and speak about what you do. This builds the perception that you are an expert in your field. You typically do this via good ol' PowerPoint presentations. They get a lot of flak but it's how things are, like it or not. Therefore, to make the most of it, it is best to have one that has a design that is loyal to your brand. If you have the dough, hire a designer to create one for you or get a networking contact to do so for free, perhaps in return for a favor or future referrals, or as a portfolio piece for them. You could show their name on their design in your intro slide, for

example. Exposure for artists is a good thing so play on that.

Speakers can speak at 120 words per minute on average. Audience members can listen to and comprehend 500. Therefore, there is no way you can retain all of their attention via words alone. It helps to have a consistent brand image that they associate with you to help keep their attention. If they've read the slide for the third time, at least they are viewing the composition and associating its positive design with you.


Get a branded PowerPoint Template, and go speak about what you do.

20 Passion

This makes or breaks a lot of people. Without passion, all of the above really doesn't work. People can see if you have passion on a subject. When you speak about something you love, that glow comes through. Even if your audience doesn't love it like you, there is no denying when someone is passionate about something. It is what drives you, and everything you do in building your brand should erupt from that passion. When you give your elevator pitch to someone, the words will be strong with confidence, emboldened by love. You dig this stuff, and people will hopefully be as excited about it as you are.

Some people don't know what they want. They have a will to find it out, though, and that is just fine. In that case, you fall back to what you are good at; what you bring to the table. Everyone has something to bring to the table, unless you are a C or D. In that case, find out how to become a B or A.

Some know what they want, but aren't there yet. This could be a position, a new job, or they are just learning. This is fine too. Personal brands change and grow just like people do. Just stay on top of it as you transition, and you're good to go. I marketed myself as a Flash Developer in the past, and now I'm a Flex Developer.

Life is short. Follow your dreams. Love what you do. If you don't know what it is you want, see #1. 

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What You Will Learn...

Overview of AJAX Technologies

- HTML vs. DHTML
- Network Concerns
- Asynchronous Conversations with Web servers
- The characteristics of high-quality AJAX applications
 - The Web page is the application
 - What the server provides
 - User interaction

Understanding AJAX through the basics of AJAX

- Asynchronous server communication
- Dynamic HTML
- Javascript Design patterns
- User interface strategies for building elegant, highly addictive Web sites and applications
- The Essential AJAX Pieces
 - Javascript
 - Cascading Style Sheet (CSS)
 - Document Object Model (DOM)
 - XMLHttpRequestObject
- The AJAX Application with Javascript
- Using CSS
- Structuring the View Using the DOM
 - Applying Styles with Javascript
 - Communicating with the Web Server in the Background
 - Designing AJAX Applications
 - Design Patterns
- Introduction to AJAX Frameworks
 - Dojo, script.aculo.us, Prototype
 - Over of framework capabilities
- Examples of frameworks in use
- Best Practices

Hand-On Development The Fundamentals:

Building the Framing for an Ajax Application

- Review the courseware code with the Instructor
- Begin building a working AJAX application and start applying technique and technologies as introduced in class
- Create the basic AJAX application by creating HTML, Javascript, and CSS files
- Learn Best Practices and Validation
- Learn and add script.aculo.us effects
- Learn and add the Dojo Framework

Adding Basic Ajax Capabilities to a Web Page:

Going Deep Into the AJAX User Experience

- Elements on the Rich Internet Experience
 - Interactivity
 - Robustness
 - Simplicity
 - Recognizable Metaphors
 - Preservation of the Browser Model Bookmarks/Back Button
- Background operations
- Building a AJAX Notification Framework
- Provenance and Relevance
- Rich Experience Support with Third-Party AJAX Client - Framework
- Using AJAX layouts, containers, and widgets
- Patterns for Animation and Highlighting
- User Productivity Techniques
- Tracking Outstanding Network Requests

Hands-On Development:

Expand the Application with more Advanced Ajax

- Review the courseware code with the Instructor
- Expand the Mural Application
- Add Features using Dojo
- Add specific Dojo Libraries to support Ajax widgets

Advanced AJAX Concepts

- Create a tabbed layout
- Create a submission form to upload to the server, all without reloading the page
- Create an Ajax submission form that will take uploads on one tab.
- Create a form validation that ensures only the right information is submitted.
- More Stretch work for those who want to learn additional concepts
- Review Ajax Concepts
- SOA and Mashups
- Current state of Ajax Frameworks
- Web 2.0 and the Global SOA
- Ajax Constraints
- Design Patterns
- Javascript Timers
- Ajax Programming Patterns
- Performance and Throttling

Hands-On Development:

Working with Advanced Ajax Capabilities

- Review the courseware code with the Instructor
- Work with the Accordion control
- Learn how to use the Tree control
- Explore Dojo's animation capabilities
- Explore how the debug output can be used in <div> elements
- Tour Dojo and RICO demos
- Experiment with new Dojo features from the Dojo demos source code and attempt to add them to various parts of the Mural application
- Overview of Future of AJAX and Rich Internet Applications

What Attendees Are Saying...

“The trainer was excellent.
The material too!”

“The hands-on, although long,
was useful and educational!”

“The instructor was good. He
answered questions thoroughly!”

“Well designed and organized.
Good mix of lecture vs lots of
hands-on!”

*ALL RELEVANT COURSE MATERIALS WILL BE OFFERED ON DVD AFTER THE EVENT

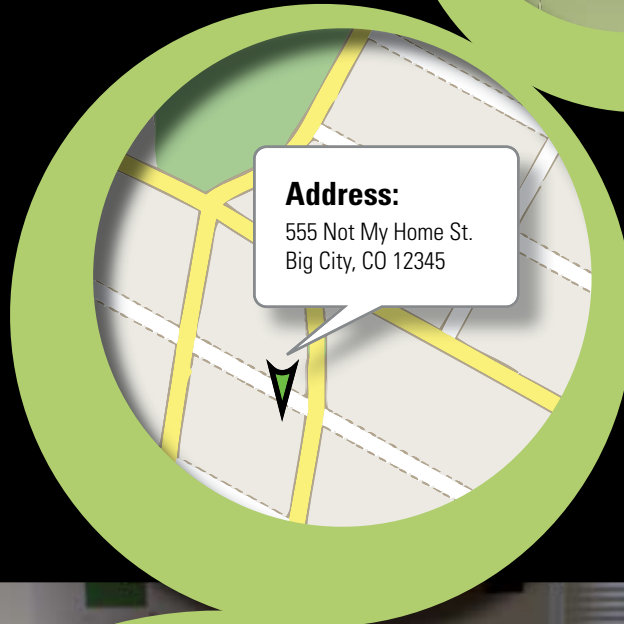
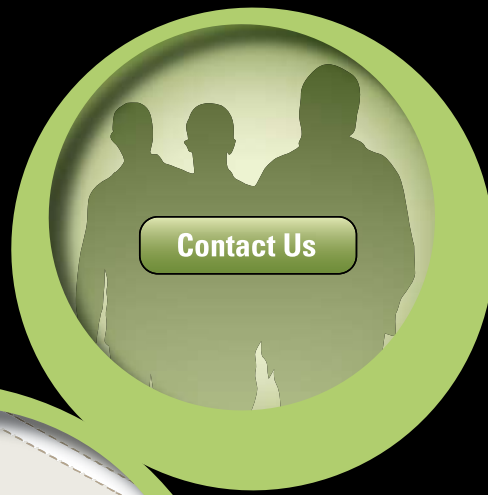
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Create a Photo Slide Show

...with Flex 2 and Picasa
by Laura Arguello & Nahuel Foronda

all applications, simple or complex, online or desktop, are composed of many elements: screens, forms, menus, etc. In a Rich Internet Application, those elements can also include video, audio, or images. From the programmer's standpoint, it would be great to be able to reuse those parts so that they can be incorporated into different places of the application, or in different applications, using the same component.

In Flex, creating custom MXML components is a very easy task; whenever you create a new component, simply drop it in your application as many times as you want. You can also easily use it in other Flex applications.

In this tutorial, you'll learn how to build a small photo slide show Flex component that reads XML output created by Picasa's export feature. Picasa is a free photo organizer created by Google (www.google.com/picasa/) (see Fig. 1).

Creating a New Project in Flex Builder

Start by creating a new empty project with the default settings in Flex Builder called PhotoshowExample. When a new project is created, Flex Builder also creates an MXML file with an empty Application tag (`<mx:Application>`). This file is the main starting point of your application. In this tutorial, only use it as a container as if it was a bigger application in which you wanted to include a slide show.

Photo Show MXML Component Layout

To keep your files organized, create the following folder structure in your Flex Builder project: `com/asfusion/controls`, then choose `File > New MXML Component` from the menu. When the dialog opens, ensure that the file will be added to the `com/asfusion/controls` folder. Write `Photoshow` as the file name, make sure it's based on `Canvas`, and remove the width and height values from the input fields in that dialog. Basing your component on `Canvas` gives you a very simple empty component that has the functions and properties of a UI component in Flex. This will make it possible to drop your component inside any other UI object.

At this point, the `Photoshow.mxml` file will look like this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<mx:Canvas xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml">

</mx:Canvas>
```

Now go to the Design view by clicking on the Design button on the top of the file editor. You'll see only a scary blank canvas, but don't be afraid; you'll soon fill it out.

Pick a `Canvas` from the Components view on the left side of the editor and place it in the middle of your empty

white canvas (see Figure 2). Make it as big as your pictures will be. Mine are 640 in width and 480 in height.

Tip: If your design window doesn't show everything, choose a custom size in the dropdown menu called Design Area in the top right corner of your design window and set it to 800x600.

Then, drag an `Image` to show the photo inside the `Canvas`. Place a `Button` on the right of the canvas and a `Button` on the left of the canvas for the next and previous functions. Finally, place a `Label` at the bottom of the image for the caption. Once all the main elements are in place, the component source will be:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<mx:Canvas xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml">
  <mx:Canvas y="10" width="600"
    height="460" horizontalCenter="0">
    <mx:Image x="0" y="0" width="600"
      height="460"/>
  </mx:Canvas>

  <mx:Button y="210" width="58"
    height="60" />
  <mx:Button y="210" width="58"
    height="60" x="740" />
  <mx:Label x="100" y="478" width="600"
    height="43"/>
</mx:Canvas>
```

Now that you have the main layout of the photo slide show (see Figure 3), you will need to add the functionality.

Laura Arguello is one of the founders of AsFusion, a development firm specializing in Rich Internet Applications. She holds a BS degree in information and computer science from the University of California, Irvine. With over six years of experience with ColdFusion, she now focuses on the integration of ColdFusion and Flex as tools for building Rich Internet Applications. She maintains a blog on these and other topics at <http://www.asfusion.com/blog>

Nahuel Foronda is one of the founders of AsFusion, a development firm specializing in Rich Internet Applications. During his six years of experience in the Internet industry, he has created award-winning applications and websites. He also maintains a blog on Flex, ColdFusion and other Web technologies at <http://www.asfusion.com/blog>

The Image Class

The Photoshow component shows a sequence of images. Each image is composed of the file name, a caption text, and its width and height. All these properties will be contained in an ActionScript class called `PhotoshowImage`. You will create this file in the same folder as your Photoshow component by choosing from the menu `File > New > ActionScript Class`. Its package name will be `com.asfusion.controls`. In this class, add the public properties: name, caption, width and height.

```
package com.asfusion.controls
{
    [Bindable]
    public class PhotoshowImage
    {
        public var name:String;
        public var caption:String;
        public var width:int;
        public var height:int;
    }
}
```

As short as it seems, you just created an ActionScript class. This class doesn't have any methods and has only four public properties. You could add some private properties or functions if needed. The four properties you added are public because that makes it easier to use in bindings as you'll see later. If you prefer not to break encapsulation, you could also use public setters and getters for private properties that would serve the same purpose, but possibly execute additional business logic. However, you still need to make your class `Bindable` so that all the public properties of the class

can be used in bindings.

Navigating the Images

The Photoshow component will contain an array of `PhotoshowImage` objects. Define this array in the `Photoshow.mxml` file and another variable to hold the index of the currently shown picture. In addition, you'll need to store the current picture in a `Bindable` variable (`currentPicture`) so that you can use it to get the file name and the caption and sizes in the layout containers.

```
<mx:Script>
<![CDATA[
    import com.asfusion.controls.
    PhotoshowImage;

    private var pictures:Array;
    private var currentIndex:int = 0;
    [Bindable]
    private var currentPicture:
    PhotoshowImage;
    ]]>
</mx:Script>
```

Within the same Script block, create two functions: `goNext()` and `goPrevious()`. These two functions will respond to the next and previous buttons, respectively, and change the current picture using the `currentIndex` variable. In these functions you will also probably want to ensure the index never goes beyond the available pictures or below 0. In those cases, you could make them circular such that if the user is at the end of the show, the "next" button will load the first picture.

You'll also need a set function that allows external components to set the pictures array (see Listing 1).

Last, your buttons must respond to user interaction. To make them respond to click events, set their click attribute to `goNext()` and `goPrevious()`. Then, the `mx:Image` component you placed in the middle of the canvas must have its source attribute as the current image, as well as the width and height of the current image. You can use the binding syntax (the curly brackets) to set these

Figure 1



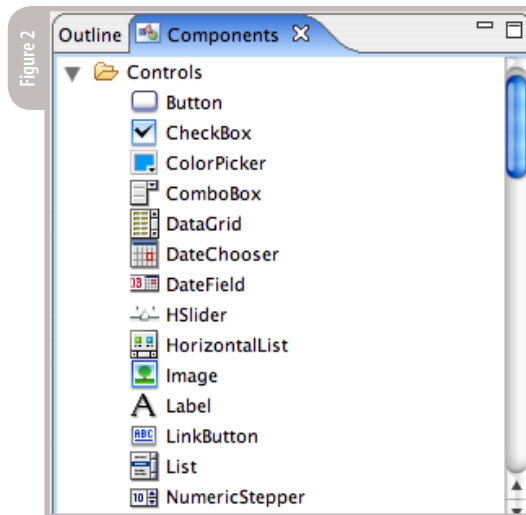


Figure 2

attributes. If you're not familiar with bindings, you should get to know them because they are very useful. They allow you to use variables as attributes; whenever those variables change their values, the values of the attributes are automatically changed. In this case, whenever the user changes the picture selection (by clicking on next or previous buttons), the source, width, and height attributes of the `mx:Image` tag will automatically get the values corresponding to the newly selected image.

```
<mx:Image source="assets/photo-
show/images/{currentPicture.name}"
width="{currentPicture.width}"
height="{currentPicture.height}"/>
```

Exporting Pictures from Picasa

Picasa lets you import pictures from a local folder or directly from your camera. Once they are imported, the pictures are organized by albums and folders.

Open Picasa and select the album or folder you would like to export. You can also make a selection of specific images from your library to export by selecting them using the `ctrl` key and clicking on the images. From the Folder menu, select the option `Export as HTML` page. When the Export dialog opens, choose 640 pixels. You can use a different size, but that's the size you're using in the Photshow component. Enter a name for the export folder (or leave the default) and click Next. In the last and most important step, choose `XML Code` as the template name for your export.

Once you click on the Finish button, Picasa will generate an XML file with the names and captions of your images and a folder with scaled versions of the photos. Create a folder in Flex Builder in your project called `assets` with another folder called `photoshow` inside (`assets/photoshow`) and place the XML file and images folder inside `assets/photoshow`. Now you have a set of pictures and the XML file containing the image's names, captions, and dimensions that can be shown in the Photshow component.

Not so fast! The data is contained in an XML file and the slide show doesn't know how to use it.

Parsing the XML

The XML output from Picasa is very simple in structure. It contains a root called `album`, which has a node called `images`. The `images` node contains all the pictures in this album; each picture is an `image` node with several properties. You only need four of all the properties the images have: `itemName` for the file name, `itemCaption`, `itemWidth`, and `itemHeight`.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"
?>
<album>
<images>
<image>
<itemWidth>640</itemWidth>
<itemHeight>480</itemHeight>
<itemName>img_0279.jpg</itemName>
<itemCaption>A flower</itemCaption>
</image>
</images>
</album>
```

You could add the XML parsing functionality in the same Photshow.mxml file, but the principle of separation of concerns tells us that we should favor specialized classes or components over classes that do many different things. Create another component, `XMLPhotshow.mxml` that will be in charge of getting the XML file from the server, parsing it, and passing the array of `PhotshowImage` objects to the Photshow component you created earlier. This allows you to change the XML, or even use a different method, such as `Flash Remoting` or `Web services`.

“In Flex, applying an overall style to your application can be accomplished by assigning style names to the different components”



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<i>.NET Developer's Journal</i>	<i>Symbian Developer's Journal</i>
<i>LinuxWorld Magazine</i>	<i>WebSphere Journal</i>
<i>Linux Business News</i>	<i>WLDJ</i>
<i>Eclipse Developer's Journal</i>	<i>PowerBuilder Developer's Journal</i>

Figure 3

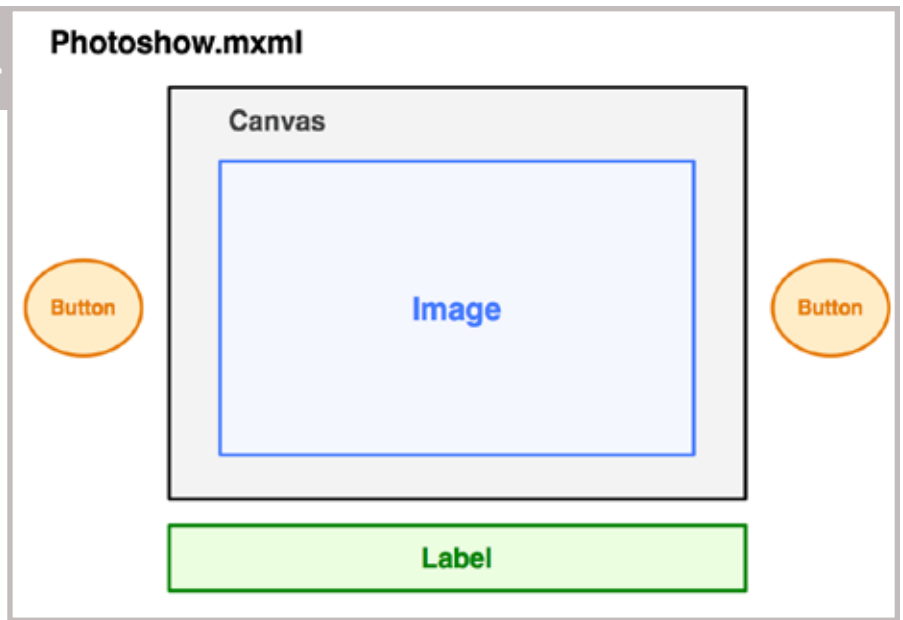
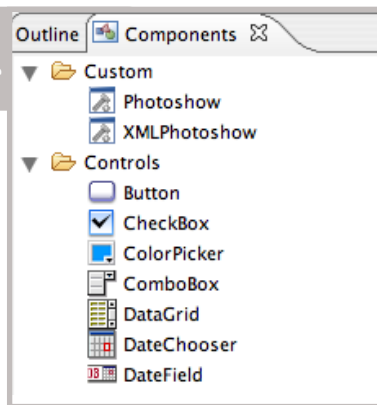


Figure 4



by simply switching the wrapper class without modifying the core `Photoshow` component. Inside `XMLPhotoshow` add an instance of that core `Photoshow` component. Once you create the new component, you can use the design view and find the `Photoshow` component under the Custom group in the Components View (see Figure 4). This instance will need an ID that can be referenced in other parts of the component whenever the pictures are loaded from the XML file. Set that ID to `photoshowContainer`. Note that the namespace controls refers to the folder `com/asfusion/controls` defined in the top MXML tag as `xmlns:controls="com.asfusion.controls.*"`

```
<controls:Photoshow
id="photoshowContainer" />
```

The first tag you need in this component is the `HTTPService` tag that will

allow you to retrieve the XML file from the server.

```
<mx:HTTPService id="xmlService" result=
"xmlReceived(XML(event.result))"
method="post" resultFormat="e4x" />
```

Note that the `result` attribute is set to call a function (`xmlReceived`) that you haven't defined yet. Its `resultFormat` attribute is set to `e4x` because the file that the `HTTPService` is retrieving is an XML file. Because this won't compile yet, create a Script block and implement the `xmlReceived` function and the actual XML parser. The body of the `xmlReceived()` function simply casts the result to an XML document to parse it.

```
//function that gets called when
the xml file arrives and needs to be
parsed.
private function xmlReceived(result:
ResultEvent):void{

xmlSource = XML(result.result);
}
```

The meat of the parser is in the `xmlSource` setter function where it loops over all the image children of the document using E4X format:

```
for each( var image:XML in xml..image
) {
//create each image object
}
```

Inside that loop, it sets each of the properties of the pictures and stores them in the `pictures` array that will be used as the `dataProvider` of the `Photoshow` component at the end of the loop (see Listing 2).

At this point, however, no XML file is requested to the server yet. Not only that, but nowhere do we tell the `HTTPService` where to get this file. Create a private variable, `_xmlFile`, along with a setter that other components can use to set or change the location of the XML file. In this case, you have only one file, but you can imagine that this would be useful if you wanted to show a list of albums and change the XML file according to which album is currently selected. In that same function, set `xmlfile`, call `getXML()`, a simple function that sets the `HTTPService`'s destination address (`url`) and actually sends the request to get the XML file from the server.

```
private var _xmlFile:String;

public function set xmlfile(value:
String):void {
_xmlFile = value;
//make http request
getXML();
}

private function getXML():void{
xmlService.url=_xmlFile;
xmlService.send();
}
```

Now the circle is complete: when the `xmlfile` attribute is set by the calling component, an HTTP request is fired to get the XML file from the server. When the request comes back (asynchronously), the `xmlReceived` function is called, receiving the contents of the XML file. At that point, the XML is parsed and an array of `PhotoshowImage` objects is created and passed to the `Photoshow` component, which will immediately show them.

The last bit will be adding the `XMLPhotoshow` component to the main application `MXML` file, `PhotoshowExample.xml`, passing the name of the XML file that contains the pictures as an attribute:

```
<mx:Application xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml"
    xmlns:controls="com.asfusion.controls.*"
    width="100%" height="100%"
    layout="absolute">

    <controls:XMLPhotoshow
        xmlfile="assets/photoshow/index.xml"
    />

</mx:Application>
```

Note: If you experience problems loading the XML and the debug player shows you a “security sandbox” error, try placing the generated `swf`, `HTML` files and `MXML` file in a local Web server and access them using `http://localhost` or `http://yourdomain` instead of running the file directly. You can make Flex Builder output the generated files there automatically by setting the project’s output folder to your local Web root.

Styling the Application

In Flex, applying an overall style to your application can be accomplished by assigning style names to the different components, such as buttons, panels, or containers. You might be familiar with the `class` attribute of `HTML` elements, where you specify a class name, and then define styles in a style sheet. If so, then it will be easy for you to understand how styles work in Flex. When using the `styleName` attribute in an `MXML` tag, Flex will look for the style definition in either inline Style tags or in

Style tags containing references to external style sheets. Syntax within a style (be it inline or external) is the same as in `HTML CSS`, with selectors and properties specific to Flex, such as `backgroundColor` or `borderColor`. The following code shows how to add a reference to an external style sheet located in the folder `assets/styles`:

```
<mx:Style source="/assets/styles/main.css" />
```

The following code shows how to set the style for the previous button, which has a `styleName` called `previous`:

```
.previous{
    upSkin:Embed("/assets/images/previous_up.gif");
    overSkin:Embed("/assets/images/previous_over.gif");
    downSkin:Embed("/assets/images/previous_down.gif");
}
```

If you look at the finished application, you’ll see that we set the background color to a dark gray. Many times, however, when the application loads, you’ll see a different background color. To avoid that, use this compiler command in `Project > Properties > Flex Compiler` in the Additional compiler arguments text input:


```
-default-background-color=0x161616
```

The hexadecimal number `0x161616` can be changed to the color of your choice.

Digging into the Code

It would be impossible to show every detail of the construction of an application, no matter how small the application is. We invite you to look at the code and find the missing bits and pieces or whenever you get stuck or wonder how something works. You can download the code and see the application running at <http://www.asfusion.com>.

Once you feel comfortable with the code, you could even add fading effects and transitions between each picture, use a timer for auto-play, add a loading indicator, or let the user navigate the

photos using the arrow keys. We just hope this application inspires you to go further than what we’ve shown you in this tutorial. 

Listing 1

```
private function goNext():void {
    if (currentIndex != pictures.length){
        currentIndex++;
    }
    else {
        currentIndex = 0;
    }
    //set the current picture
    currentPicture = pictures[currentIndex];
}
```

```
private function goPrevious():void {
    if (currentIndex != 0){
        currentIndex--;
    }
    else {
        currentIndex = pictures.length;
    }
    currentPicture = pictures[currentIndex];
}
```

```
public function set dataProvider(value:Array):void {
    pictures = value;
    currentIndex = 0;
    currentPicture = pictures[currentIndex];
}
```

Listing 2

```
//public setter for xmlSource. Typically called by xmlReceived when the xml file
// has been loaded, but it can be used to set the xml directly

public function set xmlSource(xml:XML):void{
    var index:int = 0;
    var pictures:Array = new Array();

    for each( var image:XML in xml..image ) {
        pictures[index] = new PhotoshowImage();
        pictures[index].name = image.itemName;
        pictures[index].caption = image.itemCaption;
        pictures[index].width = image.itemWidth;
        pictures[index].height = image.itemHeight;
        index++;
    }
    photoshowContainer.dataProvider = pictures;
}
```



MAXimum Burn

Andrew Brown, John Nack,
Rich Tretola, Simeon Simeonov
by WebDDJ News Desk

It's not often that I wish I was in America," writes one (UK-based) developer, "but this week sees the MAX 2006 show in Las Vegas."

He was not alone in wishing he'd been able to make it: around the Web world, bloggers both outside the US and inside have been discussing the many announcements made at this year's MAX and their implications for working developers and designers everywhere.

Web Developer's & Designer's Journal presents a brief but representative round-up.

Starting with Design

"You are designing an experience, which the coding language is there to support."

by Andrew Brown

<http://www.wherisab.co.uk/blog/>

"It's not often that I wish I was in America, but this week sees the MAX 2006 show in Las Vegas. To read a review of the keynote on Day 1, visit <http://au.sys-con.com/read/289527.htm>.

I've heard Kevin Lynch speak a few times online, but never in person. For me though, he seems to be approaching things from the right direction. Take for example his discussion about web design starting in Photoshop - I have long held the principle that web design ought to start from a 'design' point of view rather than a 'language' point of view. For me this is central. I want to first

think of the experience I want to convey online, before thinking through how best this can be achieved. When Maggie and I first received professional training in Dreamweaver, our tutor laboured this point - start with big bits of paper and magic markers. You are designing an experience, which the coding language is there to support.

I was particularly pleased to hear about the future native support of Photoshop PSD files in Flash, and was not surprised by this. Integration of Adobe's powerhouse was long overdue with Macromedia's strongest application. It was encouraging to hear that Fireworks is still going to be developed and supported, however, as it offers many aspects of ease of use that Photoshop does not (and to be fair vice versa).

Think about the reach of Flash across the web though. Ninety-seven percent of Internet users running the Flash player, and less than a year to develop and deploy a new version. Add to this the power of Flash video, and it seems clear to me that the future of web/desktop application development lies here. If you are not sure about this, then think how often you have had to 'compromise' or 'work around' browser limitations when developing online resources (for example, if you are reading this on my site as opposed to the feed and are using IE, then a completely separate CSS had to be written just for you). As you are only

writing Flash applications for the Flash player, this ceases to be such a big issue. You also have far greater control over the presentation of your content, which, coming back to my first point is where we should be starting from - design."

Fireworks Does MXML, Acrobat Does 3D, and More

"You are designing an experience, which the coding language is there to support."

by John Nack

<http://blogs.adobe.com/jnack>

Wrapping up a packed week at Adobe MAX, on Thursday a number of teams provided glimpses of what they've got cooking for the future. Jen deHaan has provided a great overview, taking notes during the session. Some highlights:

- Fireworks is now geared towards rapid prototyping. Dani Beaumont dragged buttons and other widgets into a Fireworks doc, set JavaScript parameters, exported the results to MXML, and opened it in Flex. If this trips your trigger, you can sign up for their beta.
- Adobe is working with Yahoo on integration with the Acrobat Connect (né Breeze) communication platform. Peter Ryce & Dean Chen showed PDFs being displayed directly through Connect (using the Flash Player).
- Hart Schafer pointed out spectral view in Soundbooth, where you can visually

- eliminate unwanted noises using tools much like Photoshop's Healing Brush. Played a bahw-tschicka-WAaooow funk groove appropriate to Dirty Vegas.
- Scott Fegette demoed cross-browser compatibility checking in Dreamweaver, plus a CSS Advisor on Adobe.com that lets users share solutions, add comments, rate articles, etc.
 - Beau Amber of Metaliq showed new Zoomify components written in ActionScript 3.0. Fast and smooth loading of a 1.2GB file through Flash Player. [More thoughtful chin-pulling ensues.]
 - Michael Kaplan displayed an interactive, 3D Razr phone running inside a PDF. A Flash UI inside the PDF caused a 3D hand to appear and dial the phone, which then proceeded to play Flash video on its (virtual) screen. And at this point, the audience completely lost it.

You know, Adobe (the old, pre-Macromedia Adobe) had great technology for years, but in my experience the company was often a little shy and unassuming about promoting it. When the Adobe-Macromedia deal was announced, a designer remarked, "Adobe will make Macromedia grow up a little bit, but Macromedia will take Adobe out clubbing." I see that now happening, and I'm getting visions of Michael rocking out to The System Is Down. :-)

Apollo Browser

"You can sign up to be added to the public beta when it is available"

by Rich Tretola

<http://www.everythingflex.com/blog/1/2006/10/Apollo-Browser.cfm>

The new HTMLControl for the Apollo runtime is very impressive. It will have

full support of HTML based on the WebKit.org standard originally introduced by Apple and also used for the Safari browser.

Adobe has also committed to support the pdf and swf plugins for the control.

The HTMLControl will be fully extendible just like any other ActionScript class. Also, because it is an ActionScript control you will have full control over the properties of the control. There was a demo shown where an HTML page was loaded into the control from an http address and then the control was blurred, rotated, and scaled while still remaining fully functional. Very cool.

You can sign up to be added to the public beta when it is available at <http://www.adobe.com/go/apollo>

MAXimum Burn

"The combination of Macromedia's product momentum and energy and Adobe's design sensibilities made the keynotes worth seeing"

by Simeon Simeonov

<http://simeons.wordpress.com/2006/11/01/maximum-burn>

I'm still recovering from Adobe MAX 2006. Yes, it was in Vegas and, yes, the Macromedians (at least) know how to party till very early in the morning. Plus, two of my companies are fundraising and I'm looking at a couple of very cool new startups in depth. There just wasn't enough time for ego enlargement through self-publishing...

MAX had great energy. The combination of Macromedia's product momentum and energy and Adobe's design sensibilities made the keynotes worth seeing. Kevin Lynch's quiet credibility

worked especially well. Of course, there weren't any Steve Job's-style mega-announcements but that's the difference between a consumer play (where you keep everything secret till the last second) and a developer/enterprise play (where the Labs concepts works great).

I have too many notes from the conference so here's just a flavor of what's important:

- Flash Player. The new Flash runtime is ridiculously fast thanks to a large extent to the efforts of former JRunners Edwin Smith and Tom Reilly and JIT compiled code running on a new VM. Unofficial numbers are 1/3 the speed of natively compiled Java. The good news is that the team has a few additional optimizations up their sleeve. The even better news is that in the future, these types of radical performance improvements should make their way into Flash Lite, where they'll matter even more than on souped-up PCs.
- Apollo. After a false start with Central, the company has regrouped and solved the basic problem of cross-OS installable applications with access to local resources. Don't know what this means? Check this video out. Two of my startups at the conference were quite interested in the technology—it saves a lot of time and offers online apps a simple way to have a desktop presence and deeper integration with local resources. eBay had built a cool demo (can't find a link to it, for the life of me).
- Tools. The real power of the MM/Adobe merger is in streamlining workflow for web developers & designers. This is great for people who live in the tools. Notable is the push towards better mobile content publishing. Video tools

“The combination of Macromedia’s product momentum and energy and Adobe’s design sensibilities made the keynotes worth seeing”

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have gotten better and Adobe is for the first time getting into audio (for video pros as opposed to audio pros) with SoundBooth. The Builder Eclipse add-on for Flex is starting to look pretty good.


- Servers. Flex 2.0 is maturing rapidly—discussions I overheard at the conference were sophisticated. People are building real apps. Lots of stories about pain in getting DHTML to work just right cross-browser. With the Flex SDK selling for \$0 and that message spreading in the industry, I expect to see a lot more Flex-powered apps next year. The combination of Flex and Apollo is particularly powerful. The ColdFusion team is continuing to innovate on the ease-of-use front, both with new server features and with great wizards/frameworks that integrate key technologies cross products into solutions. It’s great to see that kind of passion on the team of an eleven-year-old product. LiveCycle is now in the same BU as ColdFusion and Flex. Expect to see more Web-PDF integration and multi-channel deployment of PDF forms.
- Mobile. Adobe is really starting to get mobile. They are expanding their focus away from OEMs to operators through FlashCast (good) and are also now starting to leverage the developer community more (great). They have hired a head of developer relations for mobile, a great step. The ecosystem around Adobe Mobile is growing. The Wednesday keynote featured John Stratton (on video) and Peggy Johnson. The biggest news is that Flash Lite apps distributed through a select set of aggregators don’t have to go through a separate certification process. This is a big help for smaller mobile ISVs and content shops and a step in the right direction. Adobe can do much more, though. They have to push to clarify the economic model

and simplify the business negotiations with aggregators and carriers on behalf of publishers.

- Strategy. It seems like the post-acquisition integration is going well. I heard only a few meaningful complaints from various teams and, on balance, many more positive comments. As a friend of mine put it “Adobe has been lucky that the world waited for them to get their act together.” While the post-Vista assault from Microsoft will be intense, the company has a great base on the design side, a fantastic reach to the desktop and the theoretically best technology for mobile experiences. I bet there is a lot of thinking going on about SaaS and getting deeper into the applications business (based on the success of products such as Breeze).
- Ecosystem. Adobe announced \$100M available for distribution through Adobe Ventures to help build the ecosystem in critical areas. In talking to John Leckrone (head of Adobe Ventures) and John Brennan (SVP corp-dev) about it, I got the sense that they have a solid yet flexible model in mind that combines the cash with real value add rooted in Adobe’s reach and industry influence. Update: Adobe took a \$30M piece of MobiTV’s \$100M Series C. This is about getting into the Flash video ecosystem.
- Clubs. The sampling included Tao, V, Mix, Pure and Tabu. Pure was voted the clear favorite.

Topics to think/write more about:

- Apollo + X = Revolution. X = ?
- What’s the tipping point for Flash Lite?
- What’s Adobe’s SaaS strategy?
- Does the company have a Web 2.0 or Enterprise 2.0 play?

Update: word is that Adobe will make a big announcement of sorts at the Web 2.0 Conference. 



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