



TeraTech News

Tools for Programmers

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April 2002
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This month we cover:

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CFUN-02 ColdFusion Conference



Don't forget this year's fun and information packed conference. Speakers include Ben Forta, Charlie Arehart, Raymond Camden, Sandra Clark, Michael Dinowitz, Shlomy Gantz, Hal Helms, Kevin Towes, Steve Drucker, Benjamin Elmore, Robi Sen, and Adam P. Churvis. For more info or to register visit www.cfconf.org/cfun-02/

ColdFusion - Tip of The Month

Alex Schrimsher on the MDCFUG listserv asked:

"We have actually had some issues with HTML comments used in cfm pages. I had a developer using them and when he ran the page, the code in the html comments ran and threw errors. When I replaced the html comments with CF comments, it worked fine. It was very strange."

Michael Smith, TeraTech, Inc. President, answered:

"CF code within HTML comment is run. Only when you put CF code inside CF comments is it ignored. This is just like CF code embedded inside any other HTML in your page."



HTML comments are `<!-- -->` and CF ones have three hyphens `<!--- --->`.
Tip - control-shift-M will insert an HTML comment around the selected code.

Prototyping

Prototyping is a process that is commonly used by TeraTech, Inc. Last month we saw how the prototype should be identical to the final application. Now lets here what Fusebox programmers Hal Helms and Steve Nelson have to say on the prototype design template.

Steve: But there's a step that occurs in parallel with the prototype—the design template, and that has to be worked out before we finish the prototype. These give the application its look and feel.

Hal: Things like a layout grid, where navigation will be placed—

Steve: Backgrounds, color schemes—all that sort of thing.

Hal: But Steve, a lot of people will say, "That stuff doesn't matter. It's just graphics stuff."

Steve: Well, I can promise you that there are some people who won't be saying that—and those are the clients. That's incredibly important to them. You've got to satisfy that need before you go on. It's going to give the client the sense that you're listening to them, rather than barreling ahead like most developers do.

Hal: Right now, there's often a tension between the user interface/graphics folks and the programmers.

Steve: Yeah, the programmers build these horrible pages with glaring user interface errors and then throw it over the wall to the graphics folks to "fix". Sheesh!

Hal: The design template, though, is created before the prototype is done. It is used to build the prototype. But we still haven't really said what it is. So what is it?

Steve: "It" is really more "they". Design templates are pages that provide a shell for the kind of pages that the application will need. Things like input forms, lists, drill-down edit pages—that sort of thing.

Hal: Of course, the architect has to work with the person creating design templates so that the representative templates for this job are planned

for. I may not have any list/drill-downs for a specific application.

Steve: Yeah, good point. So the architect needs to make sure that the design template reflects the needs of the application itself.

Hal: And these design templates are done in what—HTML?

Steve: They can be. They often are. But sometimes, the interface designer will want to use something like Photoshop.

Hal: These design templates are going to be used by the prototype builders, so at some point, those will need to be translated into HTML pages.

Steve: With all the graphical components intact. In other words, the prototype needs to reflect the fact that it's based on the design template. How many of these do you usually create for a site? Then it has that greeking text. "Lorem ipsum..." or whatever.

Hal: I wrote a little custom tag called <cf_greek> that will do that automatically for you. You can download that from halhelms.com.

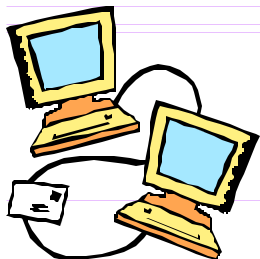
Steve: Yes. The point is to help the client decide what they're comfortable with. I make sure I offer them my advice—not on the aesthetics, but on technical matters. How long will it take to load? Will the users be able to use JavaScript—stuff like that?

More on this article next time.
Article courtesy of Hal Helms at
<http://www.halhelms.com/>

You Can't Manage By Email

Email. Some people can't live without it and others refuse to live with it. The debate as to whether it's a blessing or a curse may rage on, but one thing is for sure: You *cannot* manage by email.

As a manager it is your responsibility to encourage, motivate, challenge, and develop every person on your team. No matter your style, you must be teacher, mentor, coach, cheerleader, and fan for each individual for whom you are responsible! (Hey, you *wanted* to be a manager, remember?) With that said, it should be obvious that these functions aren't particularly email friendly, any more than they were memo friendly in the dark ages before email. Further, even those that seem as if they should work are dependent on writing skills that are beyond most people's ability.



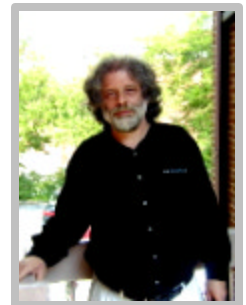
Now, don't get defensive. Look back at email you've received from just one person with whom you are close and count how many times you asked for clarification you found that actions predicated on your interpretation were either awkward, or downright incorrect your understanding of what was written left you questioning/ confused/annoyed/angered/ hurt/etc., which was not the intended effect. If that's the batting average of someone you know well, how much more likely are misunderstandings to happen between two people who not only aren't peers, but where one possesses substantial leverage over the other? (By definition, managers have leverage, whether or not they use it.)

Tribute to Mark Mathis

Mark was the director of the computer department of Gospel Rescue Mission. He also taught classes for ByteBack. He had a great impact on his students and became a mentor to most of the interns. He joined TeraTech in December 1999 and started running the MDCFUG meetings and organizing the CFUN-2k conference. He would often be seen walking around the conference site smoking his pipe or chatting with people.

He was always ready to help out and answer questions. He did have a playful streak in him - often setting exam questions for students that required an extra twist to figure out. He loved cats and had four of them.

Mark died of a heart attack on Good Friday 3/29/02 at the hospital. He was 50 years old.



ColdFusion Code Security

At a recent conference in Denver, Michael Smith- our president, discussed common security holes your ColdFusion code may have in it and how to fix them. Including URL and Form issues, why cookies may be dangerous and how to prevent fake form submits. He also looked at encryption of both code and data. Be the first to learn how to hack into your site (and prevent it) before someone else does! If you want a security audit of your site email michael@teratech.com

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