



TeraTech News

Tools for Programmers

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This month we cover:

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CFUN – 02 ColdFusion conference



Time flies when having fun. It is time again for our yearly ColdFusion conference. Last year we had lots of fun and learned loads of information. It is great to meet other ColdFusion developers and wannabees. For more information and registration visit <http://www.cfconf.com/cfun-02/>

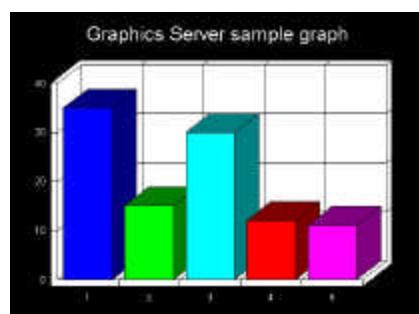
TeraTech sponsors the Maryland ColdFusion User Group Mailing List

Do you or anyone in your company program or work with ColdFusion? Sign up on the MDCFUG – L list. This list is for discussion of ColdFusion and related programming issues. To join the mailing list, simply visit: <http://www.cfug-md.org/lists/MDCFUG.cfm>

CFXGraphicsServer – Add the Power of Graphs to your ColdFusion application.

Teratech's CFXGraphicsServer is a unique 100% server-side high-performance graphing and charting engine for Macromedia's ColdFusion. With it you can produce professional quality graphs and charts from real-time database sources.

Unlike similar products, the CFXGraphicsServer is 100% server-side, requiring no additional client-side controls (e.g. ActiveX or Java), making it safe



for use within a corporate Intranet environment. CFXGraphicsServer returns the image to the browser in JPG or PNG formats. For more information visit: <http://www.cfxgraphicsserver.com/>

Custom Training in CFXGraphicsServer

Recently our Director of Training, David Schroeder taught a class for a client in Baltimore, Maryland. Are you interested in on-site training? Contact us at: davids@teratech.com.

We Have a New Team Member

We are pleased to introduce Liz Arroyave, our new Graphic Designer. Liz is a senior at the University of Maryland College Park. Her major is in Art Studio/ Graphic Design. Please contact Liz at 301-881-1440 x107 for any graphic needs you might have.



Prototyping

Michael Smith recently listened to an informal talk between Fusebox programmers Hal Helms and Steve Nelson on software development

Hal: I've said many times that if I could control only one aspect of the development process, it would be the prototype.

Steve: Why?

Hal: I've learned from many painful experiences that clients cannot tell us what they want until they see it.

Steve: Yeah, but most processes assume that the client can analyze their business processes—that user interface issues are just eye candy. So there are lots of questionnaires and interviews and developers bring out their legal pads and flowcharts. All to avoid doing a prototype.

Hal: Well, in the pre-web days, there was always a conflict between the "use it" and "lose it" crowds with prototypes. Do you use the stuff you produce or just throw it away? But there's no longer a conflict since we normally prototype in HTML, which will be used in our actual code.

Steve: Yes, the key point of the prototype is that it should be identical to the finished product.

Hal: You don't mean identical. You mean "really close".

Steve: Identical.

Hal: Right. It's "identical" in the sense that it's really, really close. There are just a few things that won't be the same. Maybe we don't have the exact verbiage for some sections or the images haven't been delivered yet, but that's close enough to identical, right?

Steve: Identical. As in—identical. No differences, no additions, no minor changes or fill-ins.

Hal: Well, I had to play Devil's Advocate. But yeah, I completely agree. Here's the thing: all those decisions are going to have to be made sooner or later, so let's get them made before the prototype is finished (or "frozen"). That means the client doesn't have any "wiggle room" as in, "Oh, I thought that we could still add in a little bit"—and of course, their idea of a "little bit" involves another 6 weeks of work. So all kidding aside, yes—identical.

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

Article courtesy of Hal Helms at

<http://www.halhelms.com/>

TeraTech uses the Flip process on projects.

Management tip - The Vision Thing

Whether you are the head a company, run a department, or lead a team, you are responsible for that "vision thing" as it applies to those subordinates to you. It is your responsibility to clearly identify (if you are the CEO/Prez/Owner) or articulate (at all other levels) the goals of the company. Then it is up to you to involve your people, working with them to turn those goals into specific actions for which they are responsible.

Most people are hypothetically aware that work isn't done in a vacuum, but often individuals, teams, or even departments fail to truly understand the domino effect created by allowing their schedule to slip. You can minimize this problem, and improve the quality of your workforce, by making certain that they understand how their own goals, those of the company, and others', both internal and external (customers and vendors), interact.

The biggest rewards (using whatever incentives are available) at all levels should go to those who understand the company's goals, and ethically do whatever is necessary to achieve them—especially when it takes precedence over their personal goals!

By Miki Saxon, CEO RampUp Solutions, Inc.

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