



# TeraTech News

## Tools for Programmers

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### Read about:

- Solving Project Communication Problems
- Spyware
- What is Load Testing?
- Whether Writing or Reading—People Hate Resumes

### **Solving Project Communication Problems**

By Michael Smith

We are always seeking ways to improve communication between end users and programmers. I recently gave a talk on this subject at the Capitol PC User Group's Entrepreneurs SIG. The audience came up with a list of common communication problems that they had seen and we looked at how we could solve them using free open source tools. The issues we came up with included:

- User and developer speak a different language
- "that is not what I meant"
- Developer "knows" what user wants (doesn't really)
- Poor cost estimates
- Poor time estimates
- Confusion about who is responsible for what
- Late requirements, scope creep
- Invalid testing
- Multiple people – on either user or programmer site - causing miscommunication
- "Game of telephone" – miscommunication passed on
- People change – forgotten requirements
- Missed the mark of strategy
- How does it integrate into larger system
- Foreign Language issues

We looked at several tools and approaches to solve the communications problems:



- Wireframing: a blueprint for your application chocker
- HTML prototypes: a photograph from the "future" of how your complete application will look
- DevNotes: a tool to document changes in scope during prototyping
- Formal signoff: to freeze scope before development starts.

For more details see article at  
[http://www.cfug-md.org/articles/coldfusion\\_mx\\_and\\_fusebox.cfm](http://www.cfug-md.org/articles/coldfusion_mx_and_fusebox.cfm)

### **Spyware**

By Jason Schwartz



The reason our firewalls don't protect us against spyware is that usually we download and install this software ourselves, without knowing. For example, most spyware detectors will flag WeatherBug, a program many of us use, because it transmits information that is used for marketing and directing the ads that appear in the banner.

This is why it's a good idea to follow some guidelines:

1. Don't install software on your computer that you don't really need
2. Be suspicious of any free/ad-supported software. Few things are truly free - there's

always a price to be paid, whether it's money, agreeing to receive ads, or agreeing (not always knowingly) to transmit information about you for marketing purposes over the Internet.

And don't forget that tools for detecting spyware and adware also have their limitations. You may be willing to live with WeatherBug and not care that it is marketing to you, because you enjoy the benefits of the software. That doesn't mean it's damaging your computer. Use those tools wisely, to detect and remove \*unwanted\* software.

## What is Load Testing?

By Donald Doane

A load test simulates user activity and analyzes the effect a realistic number of users on your web application. By load testing a Web application throughout development, you can identify problems before hundreds or thousands of users use your site.

In almost all cases, load testing uncovers fatal errors that likely would have led to a system crash had deployment proceeded without testing. This is particularly important for mission-critical Internet systems. Load testing increases your uptime by helping you spot bottlenecks in your systems before they happen in a production environment.

Load testing simulates hundreds or thousands of users, using scripts that represent actual users and their daily, often disparate, operations. With a recorder (capture agent), load testing records user activities — including keystrokes, mouse movements, and HTTP requests — to create simulation scripts. Then, it plays back a mix of scripts representing a set of real users.

Load testing also charts the time a visitor to the site has to wait for browser responses. It finds hidden bugs and bottlenecks and gives developers the chance to correct them before the site goes into production. All hardware, software, and database vendors boast of the speed of their products, but load testing discloses how fast those products work within a unique environment, for primary transactions, during peak business hours.

For more information on load testing see <http://www.opendemand.com/>

## Whether Writing or Reading— People Hate Resumes

(continued) By Miki Saxon

### Keys to Screening

The great secret in reading a resume is the ability to read between the lines. You are not reading for speed but rather for comprehension. You want to understand what the candidate is trying to say as opposed to what he does say, or, conversely, to see through what the candidate says to reality.

Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- You cannot screen a resume without knowledge of the specific req as well as the general needs of the organization.
- The length of the resume is less important than the contents.
- There should be strong correlation between the length of time worked, the experience described, and the positions achieved.
- People tend to value those skills their current/old managers valued. The skills you seek may be underlying the skills described.
- Today everything in technology and business is constantly changing. The person, who has successfully changed industries, technologies, careers, etc., has

abilities that usually go unnoticed and allows you to source candidates unrecognized by your competitors.

- Take notes and jot down questions on a separate sheet of paper, including your name, and then staple it to the resume.
- Even in an abundant labor market speed has value, in a tight one it is essential.

Over the years I've identified four categories of resumes:

### The Most Desired: What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get

This is the resume and the candidate that everybody wants to get every time. Be it functional or chronological, the resume states everything in an honest, straightforward, unembellished manner. It is cohesive and coherent, interesting, easy to read—and all too rare (a reflection as much on conflicting resume-writing advice as on writer personality). As you read it, you find that each part of it supports every other part. Career progression is logical and reasonable. It makes sense! Intuitively, you feel it is solid and you want to talk to the person. (Well, what are you waiting for? Call her!)

### The Easiest to Miss: Humble Pie

This resume comes from candidates who are usually tongue-tied and self-deprecating in person. The reason can be personality or the result of working for someone who believes in “management by belittling” or other abusive practices. No matter the reason, it is critical to read between the lines. Look for things like substance in the feel of the descriptions of work done, *even if the person does not indicate a leadership or substantial role.*

(continued next month)

Send your questions and comments to Miki ([MgrMntr@RampupSolutions.com](mailto:MgrMntr@RampupSolutions.com)) and visit her open house in the TalkBack online chat room (almost) every Thursday evening from 5 to 8 Pacific time at <http://www.rampupsolutions.com/talkback/index.cfm>



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