



TeraTech News

Software connections to your information

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TeraTech Development Approach

The following is continued from last month's newsletter...

Last month we looked at how the FLiP (Fusebox LifeCycle Process) process that TeraTech uses on most projects allows for much more early user feedback and saves expensive changes later in a project. This month we look at the details of FLiP

1. Personas and Goals

Who will use this software? Why will they use it? A persona is a precise description of the application's user. Understanding the goals of the system users and owners (personas) and regular communication with them is essential for the design of good Web applications.

2. Wireframe

Wireframing is a way to quickly model the proposed actions that will be performed by the application. The result of wireframing is a clickable model or skeleton view of the application that provides a coherent process flow which gives the architect a clear road map for designing the site and gives users an early "test drive" of the application flow. This helps prevent having to develop pages that hadn't been thought of later in the development process.

3. Prototype / Front-End Development

A FLiP prototype is a clickable model of the finished application with dummy data and no backend behind it. Prototyping is the largest step in the FLiP cycle, generally taking up to 70% of the project's elapsed time for new systems. The result of prototyping is something that looks exactly like the finished application, with no functionality just client side screens. The objective is to

discover exactly what the client expects from the application, and how they want it to look.

Prototyping is typically done in plain HTML. The finished prototype will become the application's user interface, so the traditional sense of a prototype being a minor, throw-away version is not the case. All the effort made in this step is used in the final application.

The Prototype becomes the basis for user acceptance of the new system design and function. The can use the prototype as a benchmark for the identification of the formal requirements for the system. Based on the prototype the system architects are able to document the formal requirements artifacts needed to document the planned system, to develop system decision and flow diagrams, and develop accurate schedules for coding and deployment. It is also the model for the development of the formal system test scenarios.

To be continued in next month's newsletter...

CFUnited-08 Call for speakers ends 10/31/07

We are excited to announce the opening of CFUnited 2008 USA registration and call for speakers. Anyone can suggest a topic. Topics suggest so far include:

- Jeff Tapper "Flex 3 For ColdFusion Developers"
- Raymond Camden "Ajax and CF"
- Robi Sen "Continuous Integration with Flex, FlexUnit, and Ant"
- Adam Howitt "Load Testing for ColdFusion developers"

And about 50 more listed at

<http://cfunited.com/blog/index.cfm/2007/10/24/CFUnited-08-Topics-submitted-so-far--call-for-speakers>

Register today at <http://www.cfunited.com/>

Michael Smith speaking at Web 2.0 conference

Michael is speaking on "Spiral Web – the future of web society" at the Web 2.0 conference in Virginia on November 1st 2007. The talk will look at what is coming in the next year for the web? What about in the next five years? How can we predict trends in websites? Spiral

web provides both insight into existing websites and predicts future trends in websites. Based on the long established theory of spiral dynamics for human society development, Spiral Web explains and predicts the evolution of web societies. More information at <http://tnni07.thenewnewinternet.com/>

What is new at Adobe

Recently Michael, Liz and Nafisa attended the Adobe MAX conference in Chicago to learn what is new with Adobe products. Here is what Liz wrote about it.

First off everyone we met loved **ColdFusion 8** and were excited about the news that Adobe is working on version 9 already! We saw some cool demos that were very inspiring. There was lots of loud music and it got the audience really pumped. We saw AIR applications like snipage, anthropology, pounce, AOL top 100 and more. **AIR** is the new Adobe platform for running HTML, Flash and PDF applications on your desktop. Including the ability to save data locally and drag and drop to desktop apps.

I loved buzzword, that was cool, an online processor that is even better than Google's one. It is written in Flash and **Flex** and is being ported to AIR. Let's multiple authors edit the same doc at once.

Thermo is that it is tool for designers to create a design in Photoshop or Illustrator, import into Thermo and indicated in a simple way, what the website should do. Meanwhile, it writes code for the developer to work with using Flex. <http://labs.adobe.com/wiki/index.php/Thermo>

Fusebox 5.5 beta released

Check out the Fusebox 5.5 beta that Sean Corfield released the other week. There are two primary themes:

1. Simplify. Remove barriers. Make it easier for newbies. Make building applications faster by favoring convention over configuration.
2. Extend through extensibility. Provide new functionality outside the core. Add plugins, lexicons, even standardized circuits.

In addition, backward compatibility is of paramount importance so all Fusebox 4.x and Fusebox 5.x applications should run, unchanged, on Fusebox 5.5. In theory, you can just unzip the new core files over the top of your existing core files and everything should just work. (However we suggest you always backup your files before trying any beta software including Fusebox 5.5!)

Download at <http://www.fusebox.org/go/fusebox-downloads/beta-program>

Cultural Glue

There's a very smart software VP over at Dovetail Software (was First Choice Software) whose approach to building his department's [corporate culture](#) has great balance.



Balance between what? Between the serious aspects of a productive environment and the fun that is the glue that holds it all together, "I work at this - building a special kind of culture in my team at Dovetail. Some of it is big stuff - learning how to communicate more effectively, mutual respect, and so on - and some of it is little stuff - giving everyone putty to play with. Silly? Perhaps. But there's something magic that happens in a group that plays this way."

Anything about people is about relationships and the interactions are incredibly complex. Take three people and you have at least 12 sets of dynamics circulating,

A (alone)
A & B
A & C
A & B/C

etc. for each person, and this model grows exponentially as the group gets larger. And because people grow, change and have moods those dynamics are fluid, changing, and not particularly stable—so you need glue. It doesn't matter if it's silly putty, limerick contests, nerf balls or what, the goal is laughter with each other, not laughter at another's expense, and it's easy to tell the difference. It's at if the explanation, "...but I was laughing with you" is ever uttered.

Yes, you may find that the big building blocks of great culture, such as clear and constant communications, a well-crafted, well-shared vision and multifaceted respect at all levels, internally and externally take most of your energy, but if you forget to make it interesting and fun you lose the glue, which may not matter in good times, but that's what holds the edifice together when an earthquake hits.

Miki Saxon is President of RampUp Solutions, Inc. and provides products and coaching based on [MAP \(mindset, attitude, philosophy\)](#)TM.
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