Declining or Advancing... What is Coldfusion's New Direction?

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There's lots of hand wringing over what the Adobe merger means to Coldfusion. That's very important to me as well. In a recent spate of messages on the CF Guru list **Robi Sen** asked the question "Is CF growing or Declining". A number of excellent opinions where offered. Here's a synopsis.

House of Fusion's Michael Dinowitz wrote:

The future is VERY bright from my perspective. Lets go through the history. Allaire made CF and pushed it as far as they could sales wise as they were rather small. Macromedia took it to the next level and pushed it to a lot of corporate and government places. Not as many corporate places as I'd like, but still respectable. Now Adobe is taking over. Adobe is a corporate POWERHOUSE. They have no problem throwing the proper advertising at a product. They have no problem pushing a product into the corporate market where they have a very solid foothold. I see ColdFusion exploding into places in the market where it has not been before. I see it being seen as the true competitor to .Net rather than one of a group of competitors. I see good times ahead.

Oh, Both Macromedia and New Atlanta showed their best sales ever for ColdFusion/BlueDragon this year. This says something even before looking at the Adobe buyout.

Oh, I should also mention that I'm so hyped on this that I've joined with some business types to do broader consulting than I've done in the past. Yes, the future looks very bright ColdFusion wise.

Part of Robi's response:

Adoption can easily be shrinking yet they have increasing sales (which is why I said I was interested in hearing if it was growing in usage not by sales). They could be selling more to new customers while for example large organizations are slowly phasing out CF. This is what I have seen. I know of two huge buyers of CF who have decided to stop using CF for new projects and to move all projects to Java. One of the clients must account for hundreds of licenses its self. They just committed to buying CFMX 7 to upgrade but that's the last purchase they will make. I am also seeing this among our Defense clients.

Ronald West puts in his 2 cents:

I was at the annual Spring Break conference a few weeks ago put on by the SEOUMG (great material and turnout - Leo Laporte was awesome!)... and Dave Gruber gave the Keynote. Something that stuck in my head from his speech, was the fact that the merger of Macromedia and Adobe will create the 4th largest Software company in the world. I am not sure if that is a measure of the company's combined revenue, staff or presence but it seems like there is no better place for a software product to live.

When you talk about the potential of CF I think that if I had all my eggs in the same

basket I would be foolish, but my rosy colored CF egg will sit quite nicely in the Adobe/Macromedia basket.

Think of all of the companies out there that have been "Adobe Disciples". Adobe has a following in the design portion of the web much like Apple does from the education portion of the computer sales. There has to be a ton of these individuals which may not have thought of ColdFusion. Now that it is an Adobe product, and their Adobe Salesperson tells them about how easy they can build out complex data applications to complement their design, you have to think the server sales will jump.

Additionally, with the line between developer and designer being blurred, specifically in flash application development, you have to imagine those crossing over from the design side into the developer side, are going to see CF is an easier way to integrate their neat flash apps then say a J2EE or .NET application server.

Always the voice of reason, Dave Watts of **Figleaf** *wrote:*

When elephants dance, mice watch out!

There's no reason to assume that Adobe sees any strategic value in CF at all. We can only hope that it does. But it seems premature to assume that Adobe will be a better owner than Macromedia was. Adobe has little experience with the server market, and its primary focus in purchasing Macromedia can be assumed to be Flash. Adobe may see CF as a pointless distraction, even if it's a profitable one.

(regarding MM's server personel acquired by acquisition)
No, I don't think it [the merger] will replace them. However, Adobe might decide just to ditch the server market altogether, since that's never been their game. Or, more likely, they might keep the Flash and Contribute server products, and ditch the rest. I hope they don't, and I have no reason to believe they will, but all this talk about how great the merger will be for CF developers is just that - talk. It remains to be seen how things turn out. All we can safely surmise at this point is that Adobe values Flash.

Never one to remain on the sidelines, **Sean Corfield** *adds:*

FWIW, we recently developed a web services / JMS application in C# / .NET. It took us several months to build and test this application but we had continuing memory and performance problems with it, mostly due to the unmanaged C++ library that we had to use for JMS integration.

We decided to rewrite the application using ColdFusion MX 7. Same spec, same requirements. The ground-up rewrite took less than a quarter of the time to write, compared to writing the C# / .NET version. The event gateway machinery provides us with a web administration interface and is generally easier to maintain and manage. I don't have the performance figures to hand but I did hear that team saying the CFMX version was more scalable...

Sean also provided the following details regarding Adobe and server products:

According to their web site: **Document Server**
Elements Server
Frame maker server

Graphics Server

Sean: "As for popularity and track record, I've no idea, but referring to their IR section, this document shows their "Intelligent Document" segment was 32% of revenue for FY2004:"

q105_datasheet.pdf I'm sure if you read through some more of their IR documents, you'll find the answers to your question.

As for myself , I will add my 2 cents in separate post. After all it's my blog (ha).

Graphics Server