

Coldfusion Panic - why CF coders scare easily

Posted At : June 8, 2005 11:35 AM | Posted By : Mark Kruger

Related Categories: Coldfusion's Future

CF coders are a curious lot. They tend to be among the more *engaged* members of the I.T. community - at least for a product with a reputation for running mostly on Windows (ha). Each time a merger happens there is a great hue and cry from the CF community about what it "means" for Coldfusion. You design folks will have to forgive us (well you don't have to... but it would be nice) for our lack of inner fortitude. There are some reasons for our panic - though none probably based in reality. We are just afraid of losing hard fought gains in the I.T. arena. Here's a list of items (in random order) that make me panic when I think they are in jeopardy.

1. Ease of language

It may seem silly, but we are really sold on CFML as a language. It has nothing to do with the Ap server. It's just easier to code in CFML. To paraphrase a cliché, "once you've used CFML, everything else is like being in hell". I enjoy coding in C# - but it's still a distant second to CFML (sorry MS). Recent advances like CFC's, flash remoting and web services make it that much more fun.

2. Readable Query Code

Along the same lines as "ease of language", this is a personal favorite of mine. It's practically impossible to do anything in an application without writing tons of SQL. The fastest way for me is to use a query tool to write and test the SQL, then port the code into the web application where it's needed. This is *especially* true for complicated queries like complex joins and unions where getting the result set exactly right can be challenging. My favorite tool is SQL server's "query analyzer". Like most web developers I am forced to deal with code in other languages from time to time. Consider this snippet of code from classic ASP:

```
set conn = server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
conn.Open application("dsn")
send=false
set rs = conn.Execute("Select * from users where email='" & _
& request("user") & "' and password='" & request("password") & "'")
```

If I've written a query in query analyzer and I want it to work here, I have to do some significant reformatting to make it happen. In coldfusion the same code looks like this:

```
<cfquery name="rs" datasource="#dsn#">
    SELECT *
    FROM    Users
    WHERE   Email = '#form.email#'
    AND     password = '#form.password#'
</cfquery>
```

In this case I can copy my code into the template and replace the variables. It is also natural and readable, and far more reminiscent of the code that is found in stored procedures, sample code, books and the online help. I don't have to sort through a lot of extra code to extract the SQL statement either. I can copy it right into my favorite query tool and work with it if I like. This makes the SQL code in CF much more portable than in other languages. It may seem like a small thing, but considering how much SQL a developer has to write it can save a great deal of time.

3. Community Connections

I love being connected in some way to all of you. I have found the CF community to be warm and engaging. When you have a code issue, a pool of developers is usually there at the ready to help out. CF coders are really involved in a vibrant community. As human beings we are engineered to seek out connections with others. The richness of your life can be measured by the depth and strength of such connections. I know that these "professional" connections are a distant second to family and personal friends, but I just can't help feeling warm and fuzzy anyway - I love you guys (sob!).

4. A sense of being *under valued*

This one is no-doubt a false impression. CF coders who have been here for a while remember the days of Allaire. Coldfusion was the crown jewel of Allaire. It was the flagship. The developers conference was the "Coldfusion Developers Conference". Jeremy Allaire could walk on water and Ben Forta could part the red sea (if you will pardon my cross-faith metaphor... or perhaps dual-faith would be better than cross-faith... but I digress). When MM bought out Allaire it was like moving from being a senior in high school to being a freshman in college. Not only were we one of the crowd again - we were a less significant part of the crowd. The talk at devcon wasn't about performance, tags and CF Features - it was about studio, flash and how to design better sites (design!! if you can believe it). It just didn't feel right anymore. It's exactly how you flash and dreamweaver folks are going to feel in October (wink).

The truth is that Macromedia has put significant resources behind Coldfusion Development - more than Allaire could have afforded. It has grown and added important and innovative features. **Tim Buntel** and his crew have continued spiralling upward with a great product. Adobe is the 4th largest software company in the world (or will be). The amount of resources it *can* devote to CF will be an exponential increase over Macromedia. I for one will choose to look forward with optimism... but if you are a CF coder - I still got your back!