

Scorpio Tour Nashville: Final Wrap-up

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First, I want to thank Ben for an outstanding presentation last night. 49 attendees from three different states, from beginners to long time gurus, and everyone walked away highly impressed with the upcoming Scorpio release. (Side Note: Of all of the companies represented it looks like EVERYBODY is hiring).

Ben started off with a minor history of CF. The came the disclaimer: stuff changes. Features shown might change, or not end up in the final version. At the end of it all we asked him what he thought might not make it in and he said, in his current opinion, there was nothing shown that he didn't think would make it to final release.

What's it all about? In past releases there were typically single points of focus as to why an upgrade was compelling. Scorpio? No single highlight: Developer Productivity, Integration, and Improved Management and Administration.

Developer Productivity:

- CFImage (50 + functions) VERY COOL! Write direct to the browser (I never did that with Alagad). I asked about the underpinnings and image quality concerns. CFImage is built on JAI, but extended by Adobe extensively where needed. Much better quality.
- AJAX - JSON (and serialization), Controls, and wizard.
 - autosuggest, populated by a simple list or via an AJAX call back to the server.
 - datefield
 - richtexteditor - Configurable, to a point. This uses FCKEditor. Works in all visual browsers, with the exception of Safari (which they are working to correct). Does not have the file upload stuff. It's been turned off by default (for obvious security reasons) and would require you to edit the server side files. Or, you roll your own (better choice). You can control some base menus, and if you have access you can define your own menus by editing/extending the underlying js.
 - DataGrid (more in a minute)
 - CFWindow - modal type windows
 - cflayout
 - cflayoutarea
 - related selects - make selects related as many levels as you need, or related to an input box, or related to...
 - cfmenu/cfmenuitem - create heirarchal menus simply and easily
 - cfajaxproxy? Set up proxies for ajax calls
 - cfajaximport - I asked about this. Ben skirted it like we didn't see it. Apparently Dave Schuck and the Scots UG noticed it as well (Google the tag)
 - New AJAX wizards plugin for Eclipse (query builder wizard included in one example)
 - Debugger for AJAX calls (log4javascript?) - turn it on in admin, append a querystring var and it's there

Showed a nice sample app from Ray that uses AJAX to pull traffic problem data, with map, from a zip code. 43 lines of code. I don't think Ray had to write much html in it at all, most generated by the various cf tags. Every 'AJAX' tag that I saw, except the text editor and maybe the autosuggest, was rendered by Slocum's [Ext UI library](#), and there will be API's to show you how to extend the components, as well as the ability to define custom styles.
- Use cfloop file="" to loop a file line by line - java line reader under the hood
- File I/O functions (so file i/o in cfsript)
- CFThread - Run, Join, Sleep, Terminate. Threads expose metadata - elapsedtime, error, name, output, priority, starttime, status
- CFDocument Improvements
 - Bookmarks
 - Bookmark Heirarchies
 - Create custom report templates
 - CSS styling
 - Conditional formatting
 - Now supports multiple queries in a single report
 - Output to HTML and XML
- CFC interfaces and IsInstanceOf()
- ArgumentsCollection (asking engineers about inconsistent naming)
- Implicit array and structure creation (as in js or as)
- JavaScript style operator support in all CFML expressions and CFScript - certain boolean operands only available in script (=, etc.)
- Caching of stored procs, caching with cfqueryparam
- CFFTP supports SFTP
- CFC's now properly serialize objects, allowing true replication across a cluster
- Eclipse Debugger Plugin - Step through, line-by-line, from breakpoints (requires RDS access, supports multiple debugging 'sessions', turn on through admin[requires restart, and can specify specific port in admin])
- Extensions for DW (no debugger)and plugins for Eclipse, according to what makes sense by the 'types' of developers using these tools

Integration:

- .NET integration <cfobject> CreateObject support invocation of .NET assemblies within the CLR
 - Can access local and remote assemblies
 - Can be used even on nonwindows installations as a local object
 - Example connection to a native .NET class (systemio within the .NET framework itself) that gives the drive info of the machine (remote machine)

- CFExchange - (he's running Exchange on a Win 2k3 server in VMWare on his laptop for the demo)
 - cfexchangeconnection
 - cfexchangecalendar
 - cfexchangeemail
 - cfexchangecontact
 - cfexchangetask
 - cfexchangefilter

Shows example, with code, that makes the connection, pulls calendar entries according to a filter, displays the data, then fills out a form that creates a new calendar entry that he shows us after the fact in Exchange's Web Outlook. I can tell you from personal experience that writing something like this in ASP takes a script longer than my arm. His script was about 10 lines of code.
- CFPresentation - Adobe Connect style on-the-fly and up-to-date slide presentations (swf output)
 - cfpresenter
 - cfpresentationslide - any old cfml in the tag
- Flash Media Server bi-directional connection between connected Flash clients (not enough info here)
- CFFeed for RSS and ATOM consumption
- CFPDF
 - metadata
 - merge pages
 - extract pages
 - encrypt
 - thumbnail of pages
 - flatten
 - protect
 - execute DDX instruction sets

DDX sounds extremely cool, giving developer extremely granular degree of control
- CFPDFForm - Will populate PDF forms (AcroForms and XML based) with CF data, and extract data from a filled PDF form
 - CFPDFFormparam to pass values to form
 - CFPDFSubform used to manipulate nested forms
 - CAN NOT create PDF forms (option A & B Ben!)

Management and Administration:

- Server Monitor
 - Server snapshots
 - Define alerts
 - Track the effectiveness of query caching
 - Longest running queries (and their statements)
 - memory usage per
 - page
 - variables
 - queries
 - application
 - and much more...

An Extreme amount of available information, with the ability to kill processes at the thread level. Flex based front end, with an API that will be available to tap into (allowing guys like SeeFusion and FusionReactor to build some really outstanding stuff)
- Admin and RDS User administration, with roles based permissions. Predefined roles (no, you can't add any), with even finer, more granular control at the sandbox level
- Per application mappings, customtagpaths, logging, and debug settings (set in your Application.cfc)
- JDK 1.6
- Virtualization support
- Licensing based on physical socket (so if you have two quad procs, and several virtual machine setups of Scorpio, your licensing for the server is for the two sockets, regardless of the number of implementations on the machine)
- 64 bit support on Solaris, with other platforms to be supported in the future (but no time line given)
- Special pricing options for hosting companies to make CF competitive in that space (host charging you more for CF over PHP or .NET is price gouging you)
- Can (through admin) lock down the number of concurrent process per feature, like only 5 concurrent connections making PDF through CFPDF at the same time, etc.

Incredible stuff, with tons to get excited about, and more to come. Some of us want it now. Some of us want more "Java flavored Scorpio M & M's" All I can say is that Scorpio definitely has more cowbell. We are cookin' with Crisco baby, and we're servin' it hot! Ben told us that some benchmarks, on certain features, are clocking at 4 to 5 times faster. This is partly due to the JVM advancements within 1.6, and partly due to some reworking by the Adobe engineering team. A lot of attention was given to CFImage to extend the capabilities of the Java Advanced Imaging library to attempt to give things the quality you come to expect from Adobe's imaging efforts. And it's still scratching the surface as to all of the new features.

It's a great time to be a ColdFusion programmer!