



Building Dynamic Web Applications with AJAX

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Who am I?

- Creator of phpDocumentor
- Creator of HTML_AJAX
- Senior Architect with Uversa Inc.
- Blogger/Writer



New web Models or new Marketing

- AJAX
- Web 2.0/3.0
- RIA



Maybe a new User focused Model

- Give users more control
- Improve the user Experience



User Experience Goals

- Remove “Click and Wait”
- Increase Interactivity
- Act more like a Native Application
- Were not talking about flash games or fancy menus



Two Pieces to the Solution

- Client side scripting
- New communication channel with the server



Mainstream Options

- Flash
- AJAX + DHTML

Other Options

- XUL - Mozilla only (can use built in SOAP client or AJAX)
- SVG - Firefox 1.1 or with a plugin still needs AJAX and possibly things like XBL
- XAML - MS only hasn't been released

Flash

- Can Integrate with JavaScript
- Remoting: amfphp - <http://amfphp.org/>
- Web Services: Mx 2004 can do SOAP - <http://www.flash-db.com/services/tutorials/mxclasses/mxwebservices.php>
- Flash/JavaScript Integration Kit: <http://weblogs.macromedia.com/flashjavascript/>



Flash Advantages

- Powerful Graphical environment
- IDE
- Decent Documentation



Flash Disadvantages

- ActionScript
- Stuck with IDE
- No easy debugging outside of IDE
- Hard to test in deployment like environments



AJAX

- Communication part is AJAX
- Interactivity with DOM Scripting (DHTML)
- XMLHttpRequest: This is the main method
- IFrames: Can be a possible fallback, useful for file uploads
- Cookie: A neat trick



AJAX Advantages

- Fits into normal code flow
- Most developers already know some JavaScript
- Lots of OSS toolkits that lower entry and amount of JS you have to write



AJAX Disadvantages

- Browser Compatibility
- Picking a toolkit
- High end graphics can be hard/impossible



My Experience using Both

- Flash/amfphp: Building Identikit.net an composite sketch tool for police
- AJAX: Clearhealth a Medical billing application
- Problems with both, less with AJAX



HTML_AJAX

- First release was today
- Reuses ideas and code from JPSpan
- Much lighter weight
- Lots of new features planned



More Information

- My Blog
- <http://blog.joshuaeichorn.com>
- Contains AJAX Resource list