

Barbara Brown
Intro to FLEX for Rich Internet Applications
550157
Wednesday, April 29, 2009/ Nevada 1 (Grand Sierra Resort & Casino)/ 8:00 AM-9:15 AM
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bbrown@alliancesys.com



Fax 636.349.5351
636.349.4434
Alliance Systems & Programming
900 South Highway Drive Suite 201
St Louis, MO 63026



Intro to FLEX for Rich Internet Applications

550157

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Barbara Brown

COMMON 2009 Annual Meeting and Exposition

April 26 – 30
Reno, Nevada



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Agenda

- **Why Flex: a business perspective**
- **Brief History of Web Application Development**
- **Enter FLEX**
- **A Breath of Fresh AIR**
- **Why FLEX: an IT perspective**
- **FLEX and i**
- **Why FLEX: an i bigot's perspective**

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Why Flex ? a Business Perspective

- **It's hot**
 - Harley-Davidson customizer
- **It's cool**
 - Sherwin Williams Color Visualizer
- **It's functional**
 - VW used car locator
- **It's efficient**
 - Flex3 Dashboard



(for more examples, go to www.flex.org/showcase)

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Brief History of Web Application Development

- **First applications – form-like**
 - HTML to render simple pages
- **Common Gateway Interface (CGI) to extend server side**
 - Dynamically rendered HTML
- **JavaScript moved some processing out to browser**
- **Today full-featured object oriented languages for server side**
 - C#, Java, PHP, Ruby...
- **Little advance in client side until MSXML introduced**
 - Cascading Style Sheets, XSLT
 - **AJAX becomes standard for delivery of data to client, but...**
 - Competing browsers lead to problems keeping up with versions
 - Chaos of incompatible frameworks vying for dominance of client space

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Enter FLEX

- Corporate Stewardship - Adobe
- Open Source 2007
- Full Featured
- Adobe Component Explorer
 - Click component in list
 - see working sample
 - code below
- Tour de Flex
 - AIR application
 - More extensive than Component Explorer

<http://examples.adobe.com/flex3/componentexplorer/explorer.html>

<http://flex.org/tour>



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Effective Toolset

- FlexBuilder 3
 - Eclipse based
 - Flex 2, Flex 3 & AIR SDKs
 - ActionScript, Visual Layout, & CSS editors
 - Charting library (pro version only)
 - Integrated compiler & visual debugger
 - Integrated runtime code profiler (pro version only)
- Compiled
- Plugged-In
 - Flash Player (min V9)
 - Browser independent - IE, Firefox, Safari, Opera

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A Breath of Fresh AIR

- **FLEX applications run on desktop, outside of browser**
- **Introduced Feb 2008**
- **AIR Runtime (Free from Adobe)**
 - Windows & Mac/OS versions available now
 - Linux version in beta
- **Integrated SQL-Lite database - local storage & access**
- **Network awareness - monitor/detect availability**
- **Integrated access to the user file system**
- **Auto-update detection - automatically detect, download and install new versions of apps**
- **Drag-and-drop integration with other desktop apps**

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Why Flex? an IT Perspective

- **Highly Productive**
- **Easy to Learn**
- **Inexpensive Toolset**
- **Open**
 - no end user license cost
- **Standards-Based**
- **Viable**
 - Corporate Stewardship
 - Corporate Buy-In
- **AIR**

Makes coding FUN again!

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FLEX & i

- **Flex UI**
 - Delivered by apache http server on i
 - Interfaces with Web Service on IBM Integrated Web Application Server for i
- **Integrated Web Services for IBM i**
 - Released Jan 2008 on i5OS V5R4
 - 2 Steps to Create a Web services server on IBM i
 - 7 Steps to Deploy an RPG/COBOL Service
 - Built on IBM Integrated Web Application Server for i

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Integrated Web Services for i

Sessions by Dan Hiebert:

- 32CG Practical Web Services for RPG (540191)
- 41MG Overview of Web Services Technology in IBM i (410135)
- 53LB LAB: Practical Web Services for RPG (540192)

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Why FLEX: an i bigot's perspective

- New generation workforce prefers browser interface and GUI
- Economy putting on pressure
 - Do more with what you have
- Microsoft server farms replacing i
- Management perceives i as OLD

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```
Session A - [24 x 80]
File Edit View Communication Actions Window Help
MAIN OS/400 Main Menu System: ASJ2
Select one of the following:
1. Tasks
2. General tasks
3. General tasks
4. Files, folders and folders
5. Programming
6. Communications
7. Define or change tr
8. Problem handling
9. Display a menu
10. Information Assistant options
11. iSeries Access tasks
90. Sign off
Selection or command
===>
F3=Exit F4=Prompt F9=Retrieve F12=Cancel F13=Information AS
F23=Set initial menu
a 20/007
I902 - Session successfully started
```

I wonder why people think it is OLD??



Case in Point: Bunzl USA



*“The Execs
were so happy
they almost
cried”*



*“They can’t
believe this is
coming from
the ‘400’”*

- New Business Agreement required Daily monitoring of Key Measurements
- Nancy – RPG developer
 - Taught herself FLEX w online tutorials
 - Attended Gateway/400 group session on Integrated Web Services for i
- Produced Management Dashboard using:
 - RPG Web Services
 - FLEX3 dashboard example as basis
 - Completed in less than 2 weeks

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Why YOU should try FLEX

- Save your i
- Save your job
- Show ‘em what i can do
- Stamp out i abuse

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