



January 2010

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Out With 2009, In With 2010

The year 2009 certainly did have its accomplishments and high points for Renaissance, such as going live with a major client project (the Patient Communications Gateway described in our previous newsletter). However, like most companies, we are not sad to see it go. It was a “challenging” year all around, but I believe that the survivors will be stronger as a result.

The year 2010 is definitely getting off to a better start. We have already had a flurry of inquiries and discussions and expect the pace to keep going. Many companies now have renewed budgets and are trying to make up some of the lost development time they suffered during the spending freeze of the past year(s). More startups are getting funding as well.

This trend was already evident a few months ago, as described in the article [Need for speed driving midmarket adoption of IT outsourcing services](#) (requires free registration) which states

IT executives at midmarket organizations are hurrying to sign deals for IT outsourcing services, including Software as a Service, as business demand for new functionality kick in along with the economic recovery...

Combined with the new tools and technologies to be released by Microsoft in April, we expect 2010 to be a very busy and exciting year!

Conferences and Events – Microsoft PDC 2009

In November I attended Microsoft’s Professional Developers Conference (PDC), which is a developer event focused on the technical strategy of the Microsoft developer platform. It is here that Microsoft starts revealing its latest and greatest technologies and strategic directions.

I cannot review all of the major announcements and directions from the conference, but I will share with you the three (3) areas that made the greatest impression on me.

1. **Windows Azure** – Scalable Cloud Computing is all the rage these days (for many good reasons). Microsoft’s platform is not only compelling, but has also evolved to address many “real-world” issues. The offering goes live this month.
2. **Silverlight 4** – Silverlight has come a long way from its version 1.0 Java Script beginning. The soon-to-be-released version 4 has added many of the missing pieces required to make it a serious tool for line of business applications. Without a doubt, Silverlight will increasingly become the primary Microsoft UI technology.
3. **ASP.NET MVC 2.0** – While originally an “interesting” technology for the fringe of ASP.NET developers, the Model-View-Controller (MVC) framework is clearly destined to become mainstream. Version 2.0 will be included as part of VS 2010 / .NET 4 and has smoothed some of the rough edges of the initial release. More on this in the next section below.

You can find all of the conference sessions, slides and videos, at <http://microsoftpdc.com/Videos>

Tools, Technologies, and Techniques – ASP.NET MVC

While the upcoming version 2 of ASP.NET MVC was not really a *major* focus for Microsoft at the PDC, it certainly was for me. One of the questions we have been struggling with at Renaissance is what browser development technologies to focus on for our in-house and client projects. Apparently we are

not alone – I attended an audience-participation session at the PDC dedicated to the question of choosing between Webforms, MVC, and Silverlight.

Each technology has its pros and cons, and each development project must be analyzed for its particular needs and tradeoffs. Still, I would offer the following observations:

- (1) The architecture encouraged by the MVC framework leads to more testable and maintainable applications, with a clear separation of roles – both in software and human developers and designers.
- (2) For more “futuristic” applications, where you want more advanced graphics muscle and the power and familiarity of the .NET framework, go with Silverlight. As I said previously, it is the future of UI on the Microsoft platform.

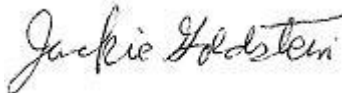
On the Lighter Side – The Operating System Matrix

The comic strip shown below (from the blog <http://www.joeydevilla.com/>) shows how different people see the same thing in different ways – you can decide for yourself if it “biases” or “viewpoints”...



I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you any of your current or planned projects. We can help you develop a technology strategy, lead your development team, or take full responsibility for your projects. I also welcome your questions and comments on any of the subjects covered in these mailings, our approaches to software development, or any of my conference presentations.

Sincerely,



Jackie Goldstein
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