



October 2009

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Yes - It's Alive!

Back in the May 2008 newsletter I reported that Renaissance was awarded a contract to develop a medical practice portal – the Patient Communications Gateway (PCG) for Micro-Office Systems (Cleveland, Ohio). I am now happy to report that over the past several months the system has gone live and into production with a large set of features. The system has proven to be reliable, robust, and capable of handling peak loads.

Micro-Office clients are now benefitting from a wide variety of features provided by the PCG that we developed, including:

- Appointment reminders via email, phone calls, SMS, and paper (mail)
- Mass mailing of paper statements
- Sending and tracking of electronic statements
- Online Payments
- Customized Letters – paper and electronic

Details of the challenges and our role and can be found at www.renaissance.co.il/MicroOfficeCase.aspx

Features of the system can be found at <http://micro-officesystems.com/pcg.aspx>

Tools, Technologies, and Techniques – VS 2010 and .NET 4 Beta 2

The long-awaited Beta 2 of Visual Studio 2010 and .NET 4 is now publicly available. What this indicates is that the product is "feature complete". That means that (essentially) all of the features are complete and that the remainder of the time before RTM will be spent improving performance, fixing bugs, and adding "polish".

This is a major release for both Visual Studio and the .NET framework. There are a tremendous amount of new features and enhancements, regardless of the type of application you are developing. In addition, Visual Studio itself is undergoing a major rewrite.

Rather than including a partial list of the new features, I will include some useful links to documentation, tutorials, and videos, so you can check out the topics of particular interest to you.

[Visual Studio 2010 Beta 2 - Downloads](#)

[Visual Studio 2010 Beta 2 - Walkthroughs](#)

[ASP.NET 4 and Visual Studio 2010 Web Development Beta 2 Overview](#)

Another recent announcement was a simplification of the different versions of Visual Studio – be sure to check out the diagram in this document to understand the mapping from the current versions to the new versions:

[Visual Studio 2010 Packaging Fact Sheet](#)

Conferences and Events – Techniques More Than Technologies?

At Renaissance, we know how important it is to be involved in the developer community – both for staying abreast of new technologies and best practices, as well as to network and have informal technical discussions with other professional colleagues. That is why all of our developers attend local Microsoft User Groups on a regular basis and some of us have given presentations at them as well.

We also attend more formal and extensive events as well. A good example is the [Israeli Developers Community Conference 2009](#) that was recently held in Tel Aviv. This was a full-day conference that was organized by individuals of the Microsoft developer community in Israel. Members of our development team attended this conference and enjoyed all of the different aspects of the gathering.

I had one striking observation regarding the presentations for this conference. It was very interesting to note that only a few of the presentations were about new technologies. Most of the sessions were actually about development techniques, approaches, and architectural issues. The speakers and topics for this event were not chosen by committee – instead, all submitted proposals were voted on by the participants, with the most highly selected sessions being the ones delivered at the conference. My conclusion is that while there are many readily accessible sources of information regarding new technologies (especially from Microsoft) there is a real longing by developers to learn and discuss architectural issues and practical development methods.

For us, we walked away with two important benefits. (1) First of all, we did learn about several new technologies and techniques. (2) Moreover, we also received affirmation that several of the methods that we discovered or developed on our own are considered “industry best practices”.

On the Lighter Side – How *Not* to Use PowerPoint

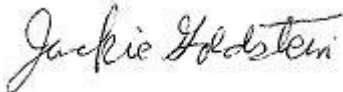
I often have a link or some content that I would like to share with you, but have a bit of a dilemma determining in which section of the newsletter it should be placed. Does it belong in “Tools, Technologies, and Techniques” or in “On the Lighter Side”? The video below certainly falls into that category – it uses humor very effectively in order to teach how *not* to use PowerPoint.

[How NOT to use PowerPoint](#)

Have a good laugh – then give it some serious thought!

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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