



Report from the Development Frontlines

Developers present at DevSummit

Created for Developers by Developers, the tagline for the ESRI Developer Summit (DevSummit) was even more applicable at the 2009 event. In addition to the opportunities for networking with ESRI staff and each other, developers attending the conference gave presentations for the first time.

The conference, in its third year, was held in Palm Springs, California, from March 23 to 26 and drew nearly 1,100 developers. In addition to presentations by ESRI developers and management, developers attending the conference gave presentations that not only showcased successes but promoted better development processes. Brian Noyles of DTSAgile had the distinction of giving the very first developer/user presentation. [See the accompanying article, "Pleasing Bosses and Customers—A compelling case for ASP.NET MVC."]

Dave Bouwman, also from DTSAgile (davebouman.net blog) covered the key ideas underlying unit testing and the design patterns that facilitate testing in his presentation "Unit Testing 101." Bouwman's presentation extended Brian Noyle's customer-centric theme, detailing best practices for a thorough, sensible, and incremental approach to creating bombproof software before its release.

Rally Software CTO Chris Spagnuolo offered a similar perspective with his presentation on agile software development. His session supplied a brief history of agile and illustrated how agile practices trump other software development methodologies. Bouwman, Noyle, and Spagnuolo all advocated more intelligent software testing and highlighted tools and best practices that make testing easier than ever.

Several presenters showcased their work with ArcGIS Server and the APIs now available from ESRI. Sreejith Parthasarathy from the City of Philadelphia used ESRI's Flex Viewer to create Map Plugin, a program that lets departments throughout the city share Web services and various data resources on an enterprise level. Vish Uma from Timmons Group showed how he used server object extensions (SOEs) to provide developers with a fast, reliable, and scalable way of building GIS solutions using ArcGIS Server.

Continuing the API theme, RSP Architects' James Fee (James Fee GIS Blog) presented on OpenLayers. Fee advocated the use of the ArcGIS Server REST API to access the OpenLayers library and walked the audience through the process of creating an OpenLayers Web application from scratch.

On the mobile solutions front, Bill Bott from Telvent Miner and Miner presented on his use of the Microsoft Composite Application Library (CAL), a freely available framework for building Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF) applications. His presentation covered the primary components of CAL and how they can be easily combined with the ArcGIS Mobile Application Development Framework (ADF) to create an extensible and powerful mobile application.

A new feature to the ESRI Developer Summit, this year's 12 user presentations were a launching point for discussion and collaboration. Lively question and answer sessions followed these presentations. Many attendees stayed after each presentation to meet the speakers and converse with peers.

"It was great to see how people were using ESRI technology to solve their real-world problems with innovative solutions," said Fee. "So much of what we were shown was about delivering value to our users and how we can change workflows to improve our responsiveness to them." Plans are already under way to expand the user presentations at next year's DevSummit.