

For Immediate Release
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*Opinion Release: A view from the .NET development benches
for year-end round-ups and trend articles*

Outsourcing Collapses, RAD Methods Gain, Code Reuse Takes Hold and Other Application Development Predictions

Mountain View, CA; December 3, 2003 – Corporate IT departments faced with increased pressure to deliver more web-based enterprise applications more quickly, will turn *en masse* to reusing code assets and RAD tools. The big losers will be outsourcing, UML and large-scale platform implementations as developers retake control, and develop IT expertise in-house.

This is the view from software development tools company Iron Speed, maker of leading application generation tools for rapidly developing .NET web applications. The company's flagship product, Iron Speed Designer, generates up to 80% of each web application, saving significant development and testing time over hand-coding approaches.

Trend One: Outsourcing Is No Longer "In"

Most IT directors don't outsource development because they disdain software development. They'd still prefer to develop in-house, Iron Speed Chairman Alan Fisher explains.

"The goal of outsourcing is to save money and get applications launched more quickly. Alas, the sacrifices are frequently worse than the problem," Fisher says. "While it may appear cheaper, someone located 12 time zones away who doesn't speak your language is really hard to manage. Moreover, they don't understand the internal customers you support because it is hard to collect and share user community feedback when there are time zone, language and corporate culture differences between you and your outsourcer. This can be especially frustrating when dealing with demanding users and tight deadlines."

But what is a budget-challenged IT director to do?

Fisher says, "The preferred alternative is to keep the work in-house, use software tools to do a lot of the heavy lifting for the routine infrastructure programming, and then focus developer resources on the unique and career-building code that gives the application personality and dimension."

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Trend Two: Iterative Development Comes of Age

"We speak with hundreds of application developers in Fortune 100 and mid-market companies each month," says Fisher. "Every one of them is under intense schedule and resource pressure. The huge investments in IT during the 90's didn't always result in the kinds of flexible, enterprise-wide applications that are central to business success today. Developers are finding that an automated approach, which keeps more control in-house, is working best.

"Iterative development manifests itself with growing use of re-factoring (leveraging existing code assets into new web-based applications) and RAD tools, and away from restrictive platforms and outsourcing – which is proving to be riskier and more costly than anticipated," Fisher says.

Trend Three: Automation Enables Code Reuse

Even if end-users want to "webify" their favorite client-server application, the development cost to re-factor existing applications into new and improved streamlined web versions is often too high. However, code generation and RAD automation – increasingly available both as stand alone tools like Iron Speed Designer as well as features built into IDEs, compilers and components – automate many parts of application development, and reduce the costs.

In fact, Microsoft is releasing ASP.NET 2004 with several new features that employ drag-n-drop wizards as well as automated code generation. Another example is the Enterprise Templates feature in Visual Studio .NET. These templates are planning and design modules that allow the developer, among other things, to build code snippets in the IDE itself so they can be shared across a number of applications.

"In essence, code generation and reusing code assets does what no developer has time or schedule incentive to do: it manages selected application code and creates a knowledge base of re-usable code that meets the specific standards and practices of that unique organization," Fisher says. "Now, code written specifically for one application can be re-generated for future application development, all without any additional work or drag on the initial application's project schedule."

Trend Four: The Decline of UML

"UML works very well in shops that have a religious conviction about the application planning and development process," Fisher says. "To paraphrase Abe Lincoln, UML 'appeals to the people to which these sorts of things appeal.' In other words, it works well if you are a highly structured, organized thinker, one who architects and designs first and develops based on the design. However, this does not lend itself to the iterative style of development used by most developers today, especially in an environment of constantly changing end-user requirements.

"What *is* growing in acceptance among developers are RAD tools and code generators which support this iterative style of development. For example, declarative code generators like Iron Speed Designer work by allowing you to simply state what it is that you want, rather than modeling it out. They are particularly suited to the iterative style of development.

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"Let's face it. This iterative approach is what most developers use in practice, despite what they might have been taught is the "right way" to do things."

Background on Iron Speed, Inc.

Iron Speed has revolutionized web application development with powerful application generation software that accelerates the development of enterprise-class web applications. The Iron Speed approach recognizes that developing web applications is more complicated than traditional application development, and so provides powerful development tools for IT departments looking to migrate existing or build new applications for the web. Iron Speed executives are pioneers in the web application development space, having built enterprise and e-commerce systems for companies like Onsale, Egghead (now Amazon), Charles Schwab and Documentum. The company is based in Mountain View, California and located online at <http://www.ironspeed.com>

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Please contact us for clarification on any prediction.

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