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SYS-CON
MEDIA

JOHN OLSON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Predictions or Statements of the Obvious

Another year has quickly passed and once again we'll take a moment to look at how my predictions for the year fared. Last January I predicted the following five things:

1. Over the next three years high-speed data access will dramatically change the face of the Internet.
2. Many Java and Web development tools will stop being produced, while a few tools will rise above the fray to take control of the market.
3. Most Sybase tools customers will actually start developing distributed and web applications.
4. Many Sybase tools customers will bypass PB7 and migrate directly to PB8.
5. A flood of new software development projects will be started in 2000.

For more information on these, see the full text of my editorial from the January 2000 issue (**PBDJ**, Vol. 7, issue 1).

How did these predictions fare?

High-speed Internet access has become commonplace. Not only is it hard to find businesses without it, but it's also common among residential Internet users. However, it will still take a few years before Web site designers and developers assume that their users all have high-speed access. Even so, Web sites are delivering increasingly more content and requiring users to have higher speeds to achieve acceptable performance.

This reminds me of the battle between hardware speeds and software requirements. As PCs get faster, software requirements increase. In the end the user gets more features but performance doesn't improve because those added features consume the additional speed and resources of the new PC. In the same way, as Internet access speeds improve, Web sites will deliver more content and use more advanced Web features (rather than vanilla HTML).

As each month passes we're moving faster and faster in this direction. Unfortunately, there are real hardware limits because residences are only guaranteed to be wired with copper (phone lines). Believe it or not the majority of homes in the U.S. are not wired with coaxial (cable). Therefore, unless residences suddenly move en-masse to wireless Internet access (satellite, microwave, radio, PCS, etc.) they'll never be able to overcome the existing speed barrier. Regardless, the existing hardware allows for speeds high enough to change the face of the Web.

The next issue was regarding the massive quantities of Java and Web development tools. In 2000 we saw many companies merge and numerous products disappear. This was partly due to the natural evolution of the industry but also to the bursting of the Internet stock bubble.

The third prediction was an indicator that the majority of PowerBuilder users were not developing Web applications in 1999. Though this is becoming more prevalent I think it's still true. PowerBuilder is seen as a client/server tool, not a Web development tool.



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FROM THE EDITOR

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That's a stigma which probably can't be shaken. However, PowerBuilder is just one component of EASStudio. That's a package which is marketed and seen as a Web development studio. The PowerBuilder community is increasingly seeing itself as the "EASStudio development community" instead. This changes perceptions but also indicates that our community is rapidly moving to the Web. I'll touch more on this next month when I talk about my predictions for 2001.

My fourth prediction was that many PowerBuilder users will migrate from PB6.x directly to PB8. Though PB8 won't be out for several months I still believe it to be true. Many developers haven't migrated to PB7 and will bypass it and migrate directly to EASStudio 4 later this year.

My final prediction was that a lot of software development projects would be put on hold until after the Y2K milestone passed and was dealt with. From my vantage point, it appeared that when the flood gates opened, the majority of the money poured into Web development projects. Though the money flowing into client/server projects remains constant, the increase in monies spent on custom software is all flowing into Web development.

In retrospect it appears that my "predictions" were just statements of the obvious. I didn't stick my neck out on anything. I could have said that Bill Gates would give up the top operations management spot at Microsoft, Oracle would almost exceed Microsoft in value, or that Oracle would then lose 60%+ of its value by year's end...

Next month I'll give you my thoughts on the coming year, where I think we're headed, and how you'll be affected. ▼

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