

Web-Applications

Pros and Cons for Users and ISVs

Slides of the ESWC 2009 presentations

Web-Applications

Pros and cons for users and ISVs

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About me

- President and founder of Collectorz.com
- Collection Database Software
- Windows apps since May 1996
- Mac OS X apps since November 2005
- iPhone apps since May 2009
- Web-apps since July 2009
- “Collectorz.com Connect”

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Collectorz.com Connect

- 1. Stand-alone online cataloging service...
- ... to attract a new, more casual audience
- 2. Data publishing tool for Win/Mac users...
- ... to sell as add-on to existing customers

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What's a Web-app?

- Accessed via browser, over internet
- No software download / install
- Account based access
- Subscription based payments
- User data is stored server-side

Web-app examples

- Gmail / Hotmail / Yahoo Mail
- Google Docs
- Google Calendar
- FogBugz / Bugzilla / Lighthouse
- SurveyMonkey, MailChimp, InfusionSoft, Aweber, WordTracker, etc...

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Poll

- Who is using a web-app for email?
- Who is using Google Docs?
- Who is using a web-based bug tracker?
- ...
- Who is developing & selling web-apps?

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Advantages for users

- Access software & data from anywhere ...
- ... and from any device, including phones
- No need to download & install software
- Automatic software updates
- Data is safe because stored server-side
- Easy sharing of data with others
- A low-spec netbook is fast enough

Concerns for users

- Security / Privacy
- Need to be online to use software
- Requires fast internet connection
- Data safety in case of server crash
- Dependency on software provider
- Subscription fees vs one-time price

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Advantages for ISVs

Technical

- Multi-platform with one code base
- No builds / downloads / installs
- Live maintenance / bug fixes
- Track usage of app & its features

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Advantages for ISVs

Customer Support

- All users are running the same version
- Login to user account to see what's up
- Help users by fixing problems, live ...
- ... either by changing data or fixing code
- Users are less inclined to ask for support

Advantages for ISVs

Marketing

- Recurring revenue (subscriptions)
- ... so no major upgrades necessary
- Conversion: Less steps to try & buy ...
- ... plus you can follow up on trial by email
- Sharing / Publishing = Free Marketing
- No piracy problems

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Concerns for ISVs

- Investment in new languages and tools
- Investment in hardware / hosting
- Web server up-time
- Web server performance
- Data safety, security & privacy

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Collectorz.com situation

- Already providing a service (online DBs)
- ... and our apps already depend on it
- ... but we're not charging subscription fees.
- In-house experience with PHP/MySQL/Ajax

- Cataloging as web-app "makes sense"

Ongoing issues

- Server performance
- Deciding on pricing
- Targeting New vs Existing customers
- Competing with own Win/Mac apps

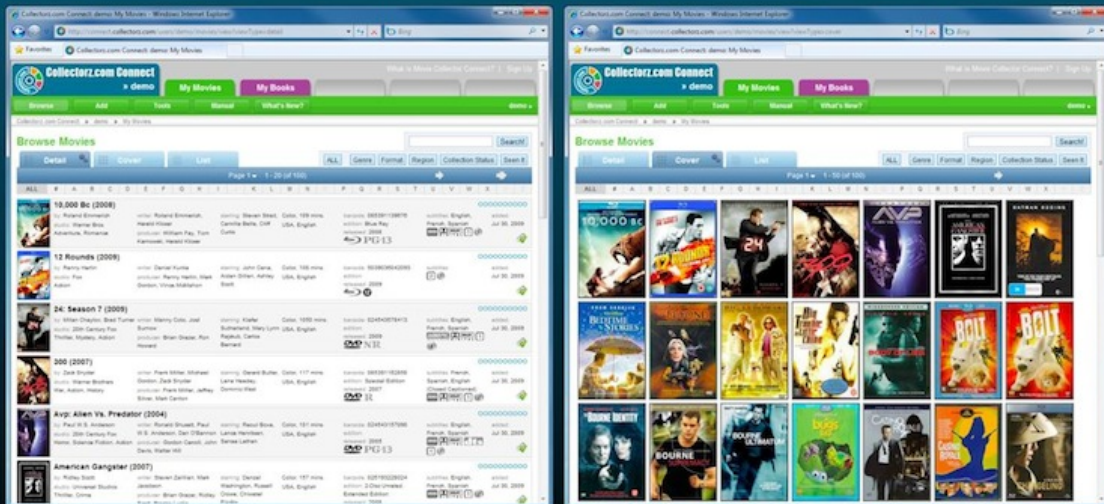
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Sales

- 4% of active users subscribed to Connect
- Some new users through Adwords traffic
- Still need to optimize for existing users
- Still need to tweak product pages & pricing

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Live Connect Demo



Future plans

- Game, Comic and Music editions
- More fields and features
- Community features
- Recommendations
- Direct more (all?) traffic to Connect

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Homework

- Could your product be a web-app?
- Could you create a companion web-app?
- Any web-based competitors out there?
- Learn PHP / MySQL

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