CFUnited Interview: Matt Woodward - CF 8 and AJAX, Real world FX and CF, Mach II

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The following is an interview conducted by [Brian Rinaldi](), Adobe Community Expert, and User Group manager of [Boston CFUG](), regarding Matt Woodward's presentation topics for CFUnited 2008.

Matt Woodward is Principal IT Specialist for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms at the United States Senate. Matt is a long-time ColdFusion developer, an Adobe Community Expert for ColdFusion, the manager of the [Capitol Hill User Group](), and co-host of the [ColdFusion Weekly Podcast]().

Brian:
So what sessions are you doing this year at CFUnited?

Matt:
This year at CFUnited I'm presenting sessions entitled "[ColdFusion 8 and AJAX: Easy For You, Better For Users]()," "[Real World Flex and ColdFusion]()," and "[Head First Mach-II]()."

Brian:
Ok, well, let's start with the CF8 Ajax session...can you tell me more about it?

Matt:
Sure--one of the big new features in ColdFusion 8 is built-in AJAX functionality, and as with everything in ColdFusion, it's extremely simple to use and requires very little coding to get some very cool things happening in your applications. So that's the "easy for you part." The "better for users" part refers to the fact that when

used judiciously, AJAX does make for a much better, more immediate user experience, so I'll talk about when you might want to use AJAX to give your users a better experience than with traditional HTML.

Brian:
Right, I have used some of the features. In fact, to me the Ajax feature I will likely use most is the CFAjaxProxy.

Matt:
Definitely--it's a very slick and easy way to get at your CFCs via javascript.

Brian:
Is the Flex and ColdFusion presentation the one you did for us at [Flex Camp Boston](#)?

Matt:
Actually it will be similar, but I'll modify and update it a bit based on the feedback I got after Flex Camp. The goal of this presentation is to get ColdFusion developers excited about Flex and show them some very simple things they can do right away to get started with Flex. A lot of ColdFusion developers are excited about Flex but don't know where to start and might not be aware of some of the key things that will make them successful right out of the gate with Flex development.

Brian:
For those people who didn't see it, your presentation was very well received at our Flex Camp. We had a lot of very advanced topics and you really filled a need for our attendees.

Matt:
I made the joke that while I didn't design my own color matching algorithms (referring to the very cool stuff done by the folks who worked on anthropologie. com), I think there are lots of basic techniques CF developers can use to get started so they can not be so scared of Flex.

Brian:
Absolutely.
As for Head First Mach-II, I assume this will be along the lines of Peter's presentation of the same name?

Matt:
Yes, this is actually a tradition we started at the Frameworks Conference back in 2005 if I remember correctly, and Peter and I originally did a joint presentation at that conference. This is a presentation I give a lot online to various groups so it's been fine-tuned over the past few years, but it's a great way for people to dive into Mach-II and some basic OO concepts in ColdFusion.

Brian:
Well, I have seen it before, but with all the new features in 1.5, I am sure to learn something new.
So, you can probably expect to see me in the audience. (and I promise not to heckle too much)

Matt:
Excellent--we'll also probably reveal some 1.6 and 2.0 features.

Brian:
I was just going to ask that.

Matt:
We've publicized a lot of the Mach-II 1.6 features, and we'll probably be ready for a release at CFUnited, so expect to hear a lot about 1.6. The features for 2.0 haven't been released publicly yet but rest assured we have some big plans for 2.0.

Brian:
Excellent.
So, will the ColdFusion Weekly make an appearance at this CFUnited?
Any plans for doing a show from the conference?

Matt:

Yes, we'll definitely be doing some interviews and daily wrap-ups from the conference. We're starting off a bit slow in 2008 since we're going through some retooling of the podcast, but we should be in full-force by CFUnited!

Brian:

I remember being on a panel for the Weekly two years ago at CFUnited. It was fun...and there was quite a funny moment with Michael Dinowitz.

Matt:

Yes, it's always fun to record people when they're relaxed and having fun with fellow CF lovers.

Brian:

Anything else you are looking forward to at the conference you want to discuss? A new MachBlog release perhaps? ;)

Matt:

Funny you should mention that! I just moved MachBlog over to Google Code about 15 minutes ago and am starting on a revamped version. I'll definitely have more to say about that by CFUnited.
As always the thing I'm most looking forward to about CFUnited is the networking and just seeing everyone I don't get to see that often. That's always the best part of the conference for me.

Brian:

Agreed. Well, I will be looking forward to grabbing a beer or two with you there! Thanks for taking the time to speak with me.

Matt:

Glad to do it! I'll see everyone at CFUnited!