

## What web applications are you working on?

A few years ago, rich internet apps making use of asynchronous JavaScript and XML—known as Ajax—or Adobe Flash, Adobe Flex/AIR, Java/JavaFX, and the markup language Curl, had an early run to great fanfare—as writings and trade show presentations of the time underscored. Part of the push had to do with enhancing websites to meet rising consumer expectations. Part of it had to do with sheer utility. If the app in question was practical in nature, easier to work with. (With less scrolling, and simpler navigation.)

As social web was emerging, web for commerce had to keep pace.

At the same time, business users behind the firewall needed apps that could somehow be built affordably, yet pack a punch in terms of capability. Forrester, for instance, wrote a report late in 2007 regarding the use of rich apps in “information workplaces.” The paper featured RIA enterprise vendors such as Nexaweb and OpenLaszlo.

So, whether it was customer facing or not—it was all about taking individual websites from static bill boards to multimedia experiences.

Much of the buzz was at its height just before the recession hit. With the “hunker down and wait” mentality largely in evidence since then at many workplaces, I’m wondering what applications, if any, you’re retooling now and if web based technology is the way you’re going.

Perhaps your company is just at the planning stages of a new application build out, getting ready for the recovery to come. Certainly, in theory, there are many good reasons to upgrade, particularly if the existing business process isn’t working for you.

Enterprises, according to Gartner, continue to struggle with legacy systems that just won’t grow with them. Applications based on languages such as PL/I, Assembler, VB6 and PowerBuilder come with licensing and maintenance costs and fewer professionals know them. Web-based upgrades make the most sense in terms of cost-effectively adding useable, malleable applications. So, is this something you’re considering?

If so, I’m wondering what these apps are design to do, and why you were interested in doing the modernization at this time. (Are the application upgrades in line with new corporate initiatives or is it part of an overall efficiency play?)

Perhaps you want to make much needed upgrades now, while you still have personnel that can deal with legacy technology. Perhaps you are considering business process outsourcing of some sort and need to create a more standardized environment.

Interestingly, Forrester has reported that employees working on modern, rich applications are more engaged and more productive. That alone might be a good reason to take a particularly slow going process and revamp it. Let me know what you think. —CIOZone