

## Helping Yourself

Resources for Learning and Answering  
Questions

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Fig Leaf CFUG, February 2000

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## Topics

- Self Service Resources for CF Support and Education
- Maximizing Use of These Resources for Problem Solving
- Checklist of Resources to Search When in Trouble
- Presentation will be online later today
  - Will make a couple more updates
  - Also open to ideas, suggestions from audience

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## Introduction

- You may often have a question, not easily solved
  - Maybe there is an unusual aspect of challenge
  - You're usually not the first to experience it, though
- There are dozens of resources for you to learn more
  - Perhaps find question already asked and answered
  - Or ask the question of fellow CF'ers

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## About the Resources

- Resources are useful, if you know how to use them effectively
  - Results may be unsatisfactory, if not used carefully
- Even experienced users may learn something today
- There are resources on CF, Spectra, and HomeSite

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## Resources Categories

- Web Resources
  - forums, e-zines, informational sites, and more
- Email Resources
  - list servers, newsletters, tip lists
- Print Resources
  - magazines, books
- Computer Based Training
- Online Help

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## Web Resources

- Web Based Forums (Questions Asked and Answered)
  - Allaire Forums ([forums.allaire.com](http://forums.allaire.com)) – more in a moment
  - Allaire knowledge Base
  - CFAdvisor.com, Defusion.com, etc.
- Online Magazines (Scheduled Updated Content)
  - ColdFusionJournal.com, CFAdvisor.com, Defusion.com, etc.
  - CFMasters.com
- General Interest CF Sites (Frequently Updated Content)
  - Allaire.com
  - HouseOfFusion.com, FusionAuthority.com, TeamAllaire.com
  - CFDev.com, CFMasters.com, CFScripts.com
  - CFMCentral.com (required reg., CFSpot.com (seemed thin),
  - Ben Forta's Site: <http://www.forta.com/cf/>
  - HomeSite: [hshelp.com](http://hshelp.com), [hsguide.com](http://hsguide.com)
  - Fusebox.org, Wddx.org

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## More Web Resources

- Meta Sites (lists of other sites)
  - Allaire, houseoffusion (bookmarks), etc.
  - CFMasters.com
  - Indian Health Service CF References
    - [http://www.ihs.gov/misc/links\\_gateway/sub\\_categories.cfm?Sub\\_Cat\\_ID=050102](http://www.ihs.gov/misc/links_gateway/sub_categories.cfm?Sub_Cat_ID=050102)
  - Ben Forta's links:
    - <http://www.forta.com/cf/links/>
  - CF Web Ring ([webring.org](http://webring.org))
- Online Tutorials
  - Allaire Alive ([alive.allaire.com](http://alive.allaire.com)), Spectra Tutorial ([figital.com](http://figital.com))
- Others?

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## Visiting The Allaire Forums

- Threaded conversations
  - Sometimes hours or months of conversations on given topic
- Note 2 days of material offered by default
  - Note: only 2 days shown, but 3+ years available for viewing!
  - Can change to show more or less days conversations
  - More important to learn to search the forums, rather than "browse"
- Shows several available "areas" of interest
  - Can change which to see

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## A Trip on the Forums

- Reading threads
  - Learn the interface
- Posting a new question/Answering an existing one
  - Login, to avoid having to enter personal identification information
  - Also, can now edit messages you've placed in the past
  - By default, you will receive an email if any other posts are made to the thread
- Searching the archive

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## Allaire Forums: Common Problems

- "There are only 2 days worth of information"
  - List of topics on front is just a starter page
- "No one has answered my question"
  - Consider searching
- "Search takes too long"
  - Consider limiting search either in days, or topics
- "I found no result in my search"
  - Consider all search options (see help)

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## Email Resources

- List servers, several at houseoffusion ("mailing lists")
  - Cf-talk- More in a moment
  - Spectra-talk, wddx-talk, jrun-talk, cf-linux talk, fusebox
  - others
- Newsletters
  - Allaire developer newsletter
  - Hal Helm's newsletter
    - <http://teamallaire.com/hal/index.cfm?fuseaction=newsletter>
  - CFDev.com newsletter
- Tip lists
  - CF daily tips (tipworld.com)
- Others?

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## CF-Talk List

- Email list
  - Join at houseoffusion.com
  - Approx. 150 messages/day
  - Available in both immediate and digest format
- Asking questions
  - Must be member of list to post to list
- Searchable archive
  - See houseoffusion.com for link to archive at egroups.com
  - About 2 months of archive
  - Someone is promising to offer archive of all past messages

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## Print Resources

- Magazines
  - ColdFusion Developers Journal (monthly)
- Books
  - ColdFusion Web Application Construction Kit
  - Advanced ColdFusion Development
  - Mastering ColdFusion
  - ColdFusion for Dummies (brand new)
  - Others coming
- Others?

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## Computer Based Training

- Allaire (Skill Building with ColdFusion)
  - CD, from Allaire, about 295
    - Half-price for attendees of Allaire Training
  - Covers similar skills as Fast Track to ColdFusion
  - Good for some for revisiting after class, or as prep for class

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## Online Help

- Installed with both CF and CF Studio
  - In CF, available off of Start>Programs>ColdFusion Server>ColdFusion Documentation
  - In Studio, available as both Help tab and F1
    - 4.01 opens use of F1 on tag or function
    - Don't miss help access from within tag editors
- Also available at Allaire, and some other web sites
- Studio and Server help offer search interface
  - Studio interface vastly improved in 4.01
- Can also extend Studio help to have any sort of help you'd like
  - Just add any html set of files to Program Files>Allaire>ColdFusion Studio>Help
  - Directory name becomes "book" in Studio Help tab
    - Title of underlying files become "topics" in help

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## Special Topics

- Someone asked this morning about security resources
  - Not necessarily CF specific, but there are some
    - Allaire Security Zone
    - HouseofFusion "security" tab on left
    - rain.forest.puppy (<http://www.el8.org/~rfp>)
      - Or see HouseofFusion "bookmarks" tab on left
- Someone asked about web service providers offering CF
  - Both Allaire and Ben Forta's sites offer pointers to such SP's

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## When you have a question

- So, where to turn to for help?
  - Search the Allaire Online Help/Docs
  - Search Allaire Knowledge Base
  - Search the CF-talk archive
    - Only about 2 months, for now
  - Andy Edmond's search interface
    - <http://psyberspace.net/coldfusion/search/>
  - Search Defusion.com, CFDJ, CFAdvisor, others
  - Search Allaire Forums
  - Check out index of CF Books

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## Conclusion

- You Are Not Alone
- Resources are available for learning, asking, and searching
- There are subtle challenges to using these most effectively
- LOTS of resources available!

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