Remote Development in Cold Fusion

More Than Meets the Eye

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Speaker Background

- 15 years database & application development, administration
- Consultant, trainer, tech evangelist
  - More than 50 seminar presentations, dozens of articles
  - Significant CF development, complex applications and databases

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Introduction

- Performing application development on a remote CF server is challenging
  - More so than some would think
  - But many features available that may seem out of reach without Admin control
- This presentation will identify challenges and opportunities, solutions and tips

Agenda

- Defining remote development
- Challenges and risks
- Controlling Datasources
- CF 3.1 Remote Dev. Services (RDS)
- Other Issues and Opportunities
- CF Features to Aid Remote Dev
- Wishlist for new features

Vocabulary

- What do we mean by "Remote Development"?
  - Workstation development with remote hosting
  - Remote Development Services in 3.1/Studio
  - Not really referring to:
    - Accessing a database not on the CF server
    - Remote admin of CF server

Challenges of Remote Dev.

- Deploying code remotely
- Addressed in new Studio features
- But much more to it:
  - CF Admin controls many features, but not generally accessible to users on remote
  - Server logs in restricted directories
  - Custom tags: identifying, installing
  - Debugging challenges
  - Many global features may not be good for all

Risks in Remote Hosting

- Anyone given CF Admin pw has total access
  - obvious, but worth being wary of
- Some CF tags can access all files, .i.e. **yours**
- CF Server logs are for all users
- New Studio RDS services controlled by one password for entire server
- Others can cause ill effects on your app

Controlling/Manipulating Remote Datasources

- Datasources are usually locked by server
- Challenges ability to up/download database
- Solutions:
  - Admin. can redefine datasource to not "maintain database connections"
  - Generate a SQL error to unlock
  - Use SQL DDL and DML
  - Create dummy datasources

New Remote Dev Features of 3.1

- Called RDS, enabled primarily by Studio
  - Direct file edit on, ftp to/from server
  - Visual database tools can query, display data and show database structure
- Requires that server be updated to 3.1 (which is a special one-time free upgrade)
  - Requires knowledge of server "Studio" pw
- Potential problems using Studio/RDS
- Using features when password not enabled

Other Issues/Opportunities

- Use single-user CF Server for local testing
- Debugging alternatives
- Verity Collections: without Admin access
- Scheduling: without Admin access
- Encryption: protect your code
- Backing up remote databases
- Project Upload Wizard

Other Issues/Opportunities (cont)

- Determining remote server's CF version
- CF Server's many logs
- Determining "actual" path names
- Creating temporary files
- Accessing database on non-CF server
- Remotely controlling the CF server wkstn
- Using Custom Tags--even when you "can't"

CF features to Aid Remote Dev

- CFERROR - valuable, but tricky
- CFQUERY - can override db userid/pw

- Debugging - can set for ip, page, query
- CFSCHEDULE - can do all scheduling
- CFINDEX - can do nearly all indexing
- CFCRYPT - can protect templates

CF Remote Dev Wishlist

- Version 4 to address many remote dev problems. Some I'd suggest:
  - more than one RDS/Studio password
  - user-level control of defined datasource
  - finer control of 4 "restricted" tags
  - resolve CFMAIL mimeattach hole

CF Remote Dev Wishlist (cont)

  - finer, app-level control of server settings
  - option to segregate logs by application
  - enable debugging by application
  - enable listing of installed custom tags

Summary

- Have identified several problems and solutions
- Many have been surprised to learn what's possible
- Or what's difficult for others which they take for granted
- Can be applied to increase your productivity
- and...

Where to get more information

- Can learn more in several knowledge base articles and Allaire Forum threads
  - these are listed in online version of presentation
  - at http://www.systemanage.com/presentations/
- Open to questions, comments, corrections
- Am happy to help further:
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