FedEx

FedEx provides a convenient way for customers to monitor shipments directly from their own computers using Adobe® AIR®

FedEx
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FedEx

Industry
Shipping Services

Challenges
• Improve access to information
• Enhance user experiences
• Increase customer satisfaction

Solution
• Desktop tracking tool
FedEx is using the Adobe Flash Platform, including Adobe Flex 3 and Adobe AIR, to deliver a persistent desktop presence to help customers better manage daily activities by tracking packages at a glance.

Results
• Delivered same customer experience online and offline
• Enabled easy-to-use, always-on, branded tracking method
• Shared 45% of web tracking code for Adobe AIR application
• Increased development productivity by nearly 50%

Systems At A Glance
• Adobe Flex 2 and Adobe Flex 3
• Adobe AIR
• **Platform back end:** Java™ Weblogic Server connected to Oracle database

Always-on tracking

FedEx has been an innovation trailblazer since it began operations in 1973 and launched one of the first true corporate web services, fedex.com, in 1994. With a continuous stream of innovations, including online package status tracking, online shipping, mobile services, and other customer-focused conveniences and strategic relationships, fedex.com now hosts more than 15 million unique visitors monthly and handles more than 5 million package-tracking requests daily.

For FedEx innovators, it's all about access and visibility. Specifically, the fedex.com visibility team is charged with finding new solutions that will help customers better manage day-to-day activities, improve access to information, and deliver fast and easy user experiences. This team is focused on continuously improving the customer experience through new and improved digital channels.

Based on the findings of a commissioned research study that assessed customer satisfaction regarding the access and level of tracking information detail, the visibility team set out to enable FedEx customers to be persistently connected to the brand and interact with information where and when they want, without having to be connected to the web. The development team utilized the Adobe Flash® Platform, including Adobe Flex® and Adobe AIR, to create a rich Internet application (RIA) and shipment visibility channel named FedEx Desktop. This application supports the FedEx goal of moving from a destination to more of a connection.

"When we first saw Adobe AIR, we were confident that it could bring new possibilities to the FedEx customer experience," says Matt Maher, lead developer of FedEx Desktop. "As a developer, it's exciting to see such a sophisticated tool on the market. One can see how Adobe AIR could forge a new arrival for Internet collaboration and communication."

Destination connection at a glance

FedEx can now give customers timely and accurate information regarding the status of FedEx® shipments right from the desktop. Previously, a customer might have spent time looking for information, whether on the web, sifting through e-mails, or calling customer service. With Adobe AIR, the online tracking system is extended beyond the web, pushing information directly to customers via a RIA on their own computers. Users can literally track packages at a glance.

"We expect that individual shippers, consignees, and small businesses will benefit most from the new, easy-to-use Adobe AIR application because they will have immediate access to critical information about their shipping and supply chain activities," says Aitza Anderson, FedEx product manager.

Because FedEx Desktop is entirely proactive, it can notify customers whenever there is a change to a shipment's status. The desktop application will continuously monitor the progress of a shipment hands-free until the goods arrive on site. "This will be a great channel for our small business customers," adds Anderson.

FedEx Desktop, built on the Adobe Flash Platform, gives customers timely and accurate information regarding the status of FedEx® shipments right from the desktop. With Adobe AIR, the online tracking system is extended beyond the web, pushing information directly to customers via a RIA on their own computers. Users can literally track packages at a glance.
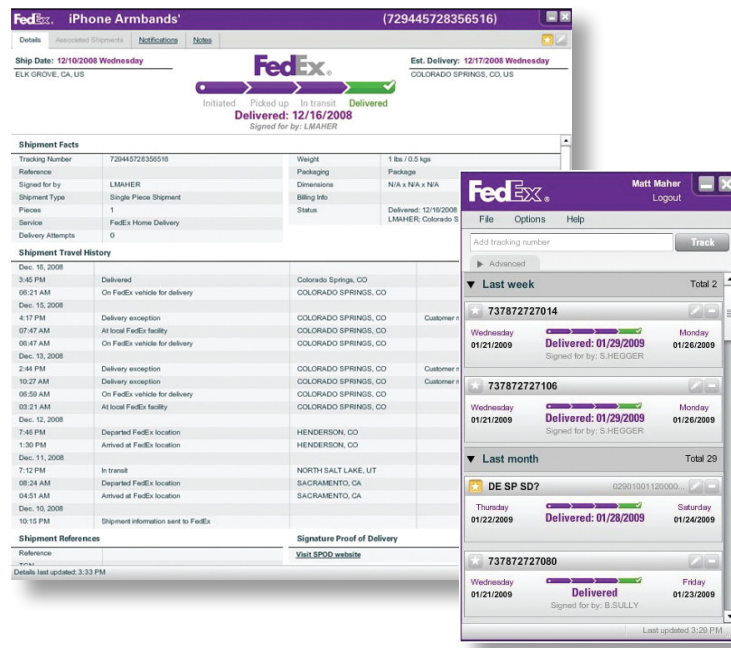
"The confluence of Adobe Flex 3 and Adobe AIR enables our customers to live in an online and offline world with equal access."

Matt Maher,
Lead developer,
FedEx Desktop

For More Information
www.adobe.com/products/air/
www.adobe.com/products/flex/

Integrated development environment

According to Maher, an integrated framework for rapid development of multiplatform applications has finally arrived. "The confluence of Adobe Flex 3 and Adobe AIR enables our customers to live in an online and offline world with equal access," he says. The reality is that Maher sees an increase in productivity working with Adobe Flex, enforcing the efficacy of a well-constructed, object-oriented development environment.

Maher notes that coding in Adobe Flex 3 moves the development focus from browser-only to a true, multi-windowed environment. "The Adobe Flex 3 capabilities such as a caching mechanism display list and the ability to save memory are just a few of the reasons this application is so attractive."

Additionally, Maher notes that Flex 3 further improves creating applications for the Adobe Flash Player. "As far as I'm concerned, that's one of the most important advantages of Adobe Flex 3. Code once and Flex easily lets you run your work in the Flash Player." He adds that Adobe Flash Player also offers enormous performance leaps, capable of seamlessly accessing huge data sets.

With Adobe solutions underlying increasingly sophisticated, yet simple-to-use channels, FedEx customers will be able to access information faster and more easily in integrated online, offline, and mobile environments.

It's the FedEx commitment to innovation that propels the development of new products and services that enhance the customer experience. By using the latest technologies, FedEx is delivering on its vision of access: to connect customers with services and information that allow them to fully participate in the local, national, and global marketplace.