Recently Jeremy and I had the pleasure of representing Infusion at BUILD 2013 in San Francisco. This year, the BUILD conference focused on the launch of Windows 8.1 along with a whole new suite of tools to help developers develop great apps for the entire Windows platform.

The theme of the week was how Microsoft was changing the way that they respond to both developer and customer feedback by increasing their product cadence. This means that across the board at Microsoft, teams are working to shorten the time between product releases and to factor in more user feedback into each product release. This tighter customer feedback loop means that as customers, we get what we want – quicker.

In addition to the advanced in software, Microsoft hardware partners are envisioning and delivering all manner of new form factors – from small 7” tablets to 27” tablets to 60” touchscreens – which are becoming a critical part of the Windows 8 ecosystem by offering consumers a huge variety of Windows 8 certified devices at competitive prices.

Another key focus of the conference was expanding the windows experience beyond touch. Windows 8 was all about touch, touch, and more touch while migrating some of the text to speech and speech to text capabilities directly from Windows 7. In Windows 8.1, much of the work done for Windows Phone will be integrated into the core OS – including the Bing speech-driven search, OCR with translation, as well as increased speech abilities. Finally, the camera SDK is improved to allow easier access to the raw image to allow for interesting scenarios such as gestural page advancing in reader apps based on the camera.

There was a lot presented in the 2 keynotes – some of the highlights below:

* New Search API’s with Bing
* New native support for next-gen hardware like 3d printers
* Several XAML Performance Updates
* New WinRT HTTP API
* New Developer Tools
* The ability to integrate Windows Store apps with USB and Bluetooth devices
* New Features in Mobility Services in Azure

You can read up on all the new features at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/apps/bg182410.aspx>.

If you are interested in what was presented, I would highly recommend watching a few of the videos from Build 2013 located at: <http://channel9.msdn.com/Events/Build/2013>.

In this upcoming Blog series Jeremy and I will go into more detail about a few of our favourite sessions and expand out the code samples a little bit.

During one of my investigations into controlling USB Devices it all seemed so simple in the session –however there was one giant canyon of a leap that was not connected during the session. Jeremy and I will attempt to connect the pieces for you.

Stay tuned to this space for more Insite.