

Building Facebook Apps

By David Keener

Version 2.1

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About Me

David Keener

From the Washington DC Area.

I'm a Technical Architect for **General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems**, where I work on information and social media projects for **CENSORED**..

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Overview

- Why work with Facebook?
- The Facebook Development Landscape
- How to Get Started
- General Application Types
- Some tips and best practices



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 - Lots and lots and lots of people
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- General Application Types
 - Plus a few examples
- Some tips and best practices
 - Your Facebook development survival guide

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Be a student.
Be a musician.
Explore a new culture.
Learn English.



Use your phone to start your X-Life today.

PollCast

Home

Polls

Invite

My Polls

Welcome to PollCast!
Create a cool Poll with
your own photos and
invite your friends to
vote. You might be
surprised what your
friends really think!

Create
Your Own
Poll

Кой е вашият любим отбор във F1?

☒ Vote Now ☐ View Results



Stanislav Dimitrov wants to know
1 vote 0 comments

NFL Football: Who Will Win the NFC East?

☒ Vote Now ☐ View Results



Johnny Nguyen wants to know
52 votes 8 comments

What is your favorite holiday?

☒ Vote Now ☐ View Results



Kayley Suk wants to know
28 votes 3 comments

Coke or Pepsi?

☒ Vote Now ☐ View Results

0 credits · Get Info

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Build a Massive
Fanbase



Add a Promotions tab to
your fan page. Go live
with a viral Sweepstakes,
Contest, or Coupon in
Minutes with Wildfire!

Fun Rottweiler T-
shirts



Get 15% off your order of
\$56 or more with code
FB15 today only at
Cafepress.com.au

Like

Free Flip Camcorder



Chat (3)



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Best Garage Band Contest 2010



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**Tell your friends
about the contest!**



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Random

[Recently Added](#)

[Top Rated](#)

[More...](#)

Random Videos



2 views ★ 3.73



1 view ★ 3.55



5 views ★ 2.70



3 views ★ 2.60



3 views ★ 2.75

More Entries



Recent Activity



Garage Band, Congresbury!

David McVicar, Johnny Nguyen and 3 people shared this.



Garage Band - Electric Funeral

Johnny Nguyen shared this.

The background of the slide is a gradient of light blue and white. In the upper left corner, there is a pattern of binary code (0s and 1s) in a darker blue color, which appears to be slightly out of focus or faded. From the top left, several thin, bright blue lines radiate outwards across the top of the slide, resembling light rays or data streams.

Why Facebook?

F A C E B O O K

More than

500 million

active users

Average user has

130 friends

on the site

Every month

70% of all users

use Facebook apps

50%

of active users
log on to Facebook
in any given day

Average user sends

8 friend requests

per month

More than

1 million

developers from 180 countries

More than

35 million

users update their status each day

Average user spends more than

55 minutes

per day on Facebook

More than

500,000

active Facebook apps

More than

60 million

status updates posted each day

Average user clicks the **Like** button on

9 pieces of content

each month

More than

250 apps

have 1 million+ users

More than

3 billion

photos uploaded to the site each month

Average user writes

25 comments

on Facebook content each month

More than

80,000 sites

now use Facebook Connect

More than

5 billion

pieces of content
(web links, news stories, blog posts,
notes, photo albums, etc.)
shared each week

Average user is a **member** of

13 groups

More than

60 million

use sites via Facebook Connect

Beyond the Stats....

Facebook provides...

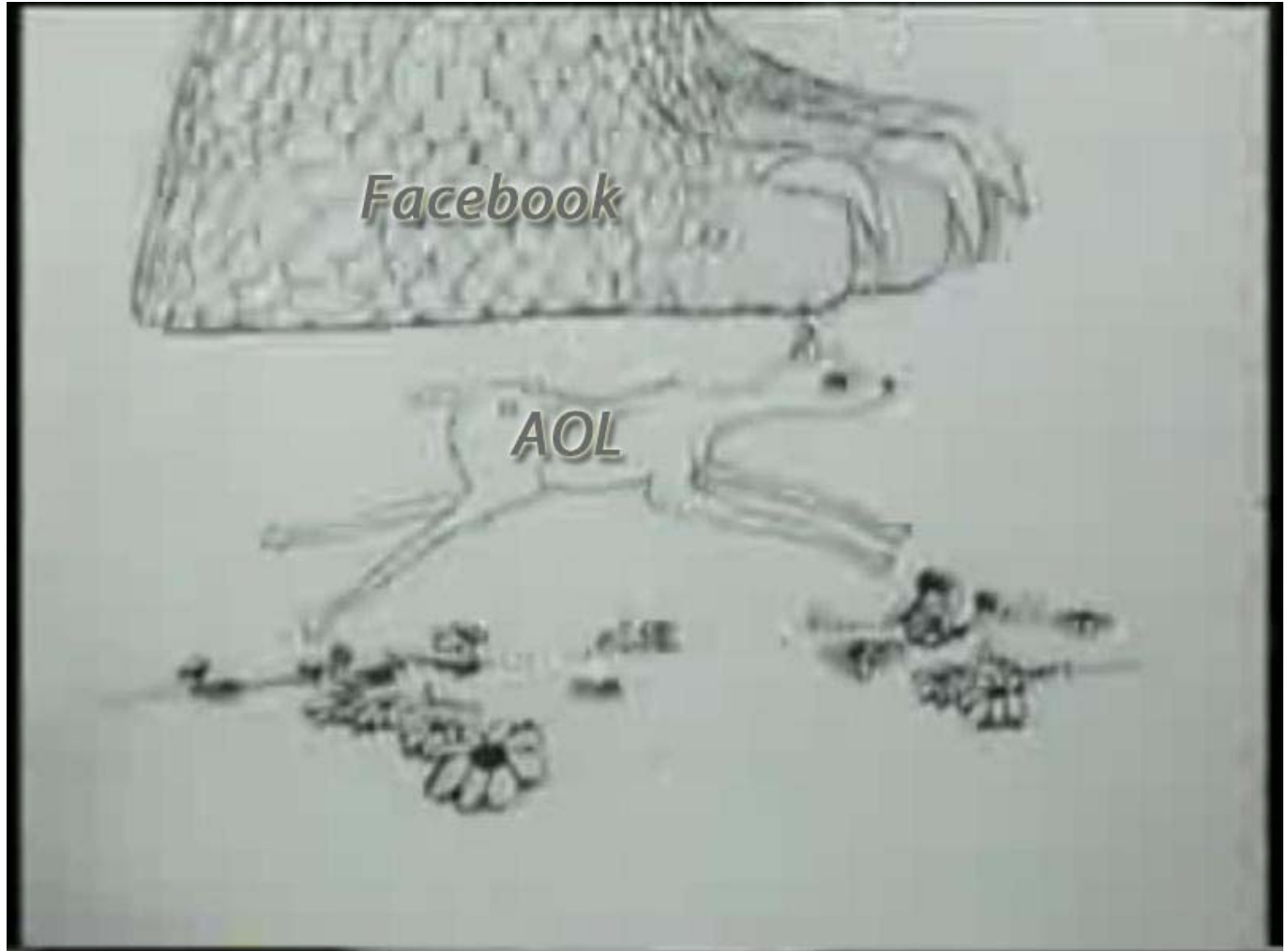


- A large and active audience
- Global reach (70% non-US)
- Methods for apps to interact with that audience
- Well-defined ways for audience members to tell their friends what they like
- Successful apps can make real money

Bambi Meets Godzilla

Facebook:
600 million

AOL:
35 million



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpBkc2jK-6w>

(Also a 1969 animated
short from Marv
Newland)

Pop Quiz

1. In 2001, did you think the Internet Boom would last forever?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. In 2006, did you think the Real Estate Boom would last forever?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you seriously think that Facebook can add 100 million new users every single year?
☐ Yes ☐ No

The background of the slide is a gradient of blue and white. In the upper left corner, there is a pattern of binary code (0s and 1s) in a lighter blue color. From the top left, several bright blue light rays or beams of light extend diagonally across the upper portion of the slide, creating a sense of motion and technology.

The Development Landscape



**The world's
largest social network
and
your web site**

And then Reality sets in...



From a PHP Mindset...

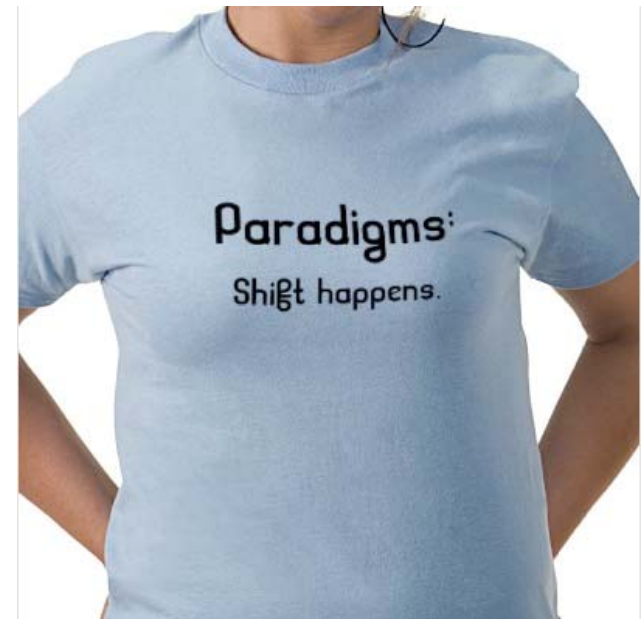
- Facebook was designed with PHP in mind
- Integration features were clunky at best
- ...including an API (sort of)

But they bought FriendFeed in Aug 2009

- Key tech people were ex-Google
- Knew API's and scalability issues

...to a Modern API

- Uses OAuth 2.0 for authentication
- OpenGraph API - central to Facebook's plans
- Relaxation of draconian data storage policies
- Privacy Permissions on all Data
- New easy-to-integrate widgets
- Deprecation of all the old technologies



http://www.zazzle.com/paradigm_shift_shirt-235689301340536532

It's Been a Rocky Road...

- Facebook still outgrowing the PHP mindset
- No “dev” version of Facebook to test apps against upcoming platform changes
- Their REST interfaces may not do REST in the way you expect:
 - <https://graph.facebook.com/me/friends>
 - <https://graph.facebook.com/me/home> (News Feed)

Just accept it and move on...

Gone, Deprecated, etc.

1. Old REST Web Services

2. FBML and FBJS

- HTML with extensions
- JavaScript w/ extensions

3. Facebook Connect

- Single sign-on for external sites
- Rebranded as part of OpenGraph API

Facebook Platform

OpenGraph API

- Consistent view of the social graph
- Represents objects & actions

Authentication

- Uses OAuth 2.0
- Formerly Facebook Connect

Social Plugins

- The “gateway drug” of the Facebook Platform

OpenGraph Protocol

- Allows external web pages to be integrated into the social graph
- Simple meta tags

It's Still a Moving Target



- Facebook changes often, and with little warning
- 3rd party libs always lag behind platform changes...

Getting Ready to Develop

- ① Create a Facebook account
 - You can't play if you don't join
- ① “Install” the Facebook Developer app
 - <http://www.facebook.com/developers>
- ① Create a Facebook application
 - Register your app with Facebook
- ① Record key data elements for later use
 - Application ID (Your OAuth client_id)
 - Application Secret (Your OAuth client_secret)

Some App Variations

- External, Single Sign-On Only
 - Just leverages Facebook's audience
- External, Shallow Integration (Social Plugins)
 - Quick, easy, limited; no control of branding. Needs JavaScript lib.
- External, Medium Integration (JavaScript)
 - Requires actual programming with the JavaScript lib
- External, Deep Integration (OpenGraph)
 - A deeper user experience, more work
- Facebook Canvas Application
 - Functions within the Facebook context
 - Can integrate with Facebook Business Pages



Example 1: Single Sign-On

(JavaScript)

Single Sign-On, JavaScript (1)

Must include the following code:

```
<div id="fb-root"></div>
<script src="http://connect.facebook.net/en_US/all.js"></script>
<script>
  FB.init({appId: '123456789012345', status: true, cookie: true, xfbml: true});
  FB.Event.subscribe('auth.sessionChange', function(response) {
    if (response.session) {
      // A user has logged in, and a new cookie has been saved    }
    else {
      // The user has logged out, and the cookie has been cleared  } });
  }
</script>
```

Single Sign-On, JavaScript (2)

`<fb:login-button></fb:login-button>`



- Or you can have your own button and call `FB.login` via JavaScript for a login popup...

```
FB.login(function(response) {  
  if (response.session) {  
    if (response.perms) {  
      // user is logged in and granted some permissions. }  
    else {  
      // user is logged in, but did not get any permissions }  
    } else {  
      // user is not logged in  
    }  
  }, {perms:'read_stream,publish_stream,offline_access'});
```

Facebook Cookie

- Successful logins result in the creation of a Facebook cookie
- The cookie is called: **fbs_APP_ID**
- That cookie can be interrogated by code on the server
 - access_token, facebook_id (UID)
- Generally, you create local accounts for Facebook users (and record things like their name, UID, etc.) after they've logged in for the 1st time



Example 2: Profile Pics

(HTML)

Facebook Profile Pics



- If you know any user's Facebook UID, then you can show their profile pic...

<https://graph.facebook.com/UID/picture?type=small>








Example 3: Single Sign-On

(Ruby and OAuth2)

Single Sign-On, Ruby

Sign In
Choose a login method

Email

Password

Sign In or **Sign Up**
[Forgot Password?](#)

- We'll use the OAuth2 gem for Facebook authentication
- Same technique also works with Twitter and LinkedIn

Facebook Login Badge

```
<% if @auth_method.nil? || @auth_method == :any %>
<p><%= I18n.t('text.login.choose') %></p>
<ul id="login-types" class="clear">
  <li class="vtr" style="cursor:pointer"></li>
  <li class="fb"><%= link_to "<span class=\"alt\">" +
    I18n.t('label.connect_3rd_party',
      :network=>"Facebook") + "</span>",
    facebook_login_url(:contest_id => contest_id, :back =>
      request.env['REQUEST_URI']), :title =>
      I18n.t('label.connect_3rd_party', :network=>"Facebook")
    %>
  </li>
  ...

```


Facebook Routes

- We support multiple auth schemes
- Each one has its own controller (facebook_controller.rb)
- Here are the relevant routes:

Rails 2.3.x

```
map.facebook_login "facebook/", :controller => 'facebook', :action => 'new'  
map.facebook_oauth_callback "facebook_oauth_callback/",  
  :controller => 'facebook', :action => "oauth_callback"
```

Rails 3

```
resources :facebook, :only => [:new] do  
  collection do  
    get :oauth_callback  
  end  
end
```

New Login Action

```
class FacebookController < StoreBaseController
  before_filter :authorize, :except=>[:new, :oauth_callback]

  def new
    session[:return_to] = params[:back] if params[:back]
    redirect_to client.web_server.authorize_url(:redirect_uri =>
      facebook_oauth_callback_url)
  end

  def oauth_callback end    # Provided on next slide

  protected

  def client
    @config ||= YAML.load(File.open(RAILS_ROOT +
      "/config/facebook_auth.yml").read)[RAILS_ENV]
    OAuth2::Client.new(@config['client_id'],
      @config['client_secret'], :site => @config['base_url'])
  end
end
```

Oauth_Callback Action

```
def oauth_callback
  unless params[:code]
    authentication_failed('Authentication info does not match session info.') and return
  end
  access_token = client.web_server.get_access_token(params[:code],
    :redirect_uri => facebook_oauth_callback_url)
  user = FacebookUser.identify_or_create_from_access_token(access_token)
  session[:user_id] = user.id
  session[:user_type] = user.user_type
  user.increment!(:login_count)
rescue Net::HTTPServerException => e
  case e.message
    when '401 "Unauthorized"'
      authentication_failed('This auth request is no longer valid') and return
    else
      authentication_failed('There was a problem trying to auth you.') and return
  end
end
```

Parsing the JSON

```
def self.identify_or_create_from_access_token(token)
  raise ArgumentError, 'Must authenticate with an OAuth2::AccessToken.' unless
    (token) || token.is_a?(OAuth2::AccessToken)
  user_json = token.get('/me')
  user_info = JSON.parse(user_json).symbolize_keys

  unless user = self.find_by_external_id(user_info[:id])
    user = self.new( :external_id => user_info[:id])
  end
  FACEBOOK_ATTRIBUTES.each do |att|
    user.send("#{att}=", user_info[att]) if user.respond_to?("#{att}=")
  end
  user.external_id = user_info[:id]
  user.access_token = token.token
  user.profile_pic = "https://graph.facebook.com/#{user_info[:id]}/picture?type=small"
  user.save
  user
end
```


The background of the slide is a gradient of light blue and white. In the upper left corner, there is a pattern of binary code (0s and 1s) in a darker blue color, which appears to be part of a larger, slightly blurred image. From the top left, several thin, bright blue lines radiate outwards, creating a sense of motion or light rays. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and tech-oriented.

Tips and Best Practices

Practical Tips

- Look carefully at performance
 - Control the number of Facebook calls on a page
 - Consider FQL to get data more efficiently
 - FQL has been updated to use OpenGraph
 - Cache data where possible
- If you use the canvas, use the iframe sub-type
 - Better control of the output
 - No need for HTML to be scrubbed (or mangled) by Facebook
- Do periodic regression tests on production code

For Canvas Apps

- “Hybrid Apps” is the way to go
- Limited functionality works within the Facebook “canvas”
- For advanced features, users taken to a separate site
- Example: PollCast – Users can take polls within Facebook, but they create them by going to a separate site

Resources

- Facebook Developer Resources
 - <http://www.facebook.com/developers>
 - <http://developer.facebook.com>
- AllFacebook.com
 - <http://www.allfacebook.com>
- “Developing Facebook Platform Applications with Rails” by Michael J. Mangino, Pragmatic Programmers, 2008
 - Seriously outdated, but interesting



Questions

- **Blog:** <http://www.keenertech.com>
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- **Twitter:** dkeener2010
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dkeener@metrostarsystems.com



Appendix A: App Creation

As a prerequisite for developing applications for Facebook, you must first register your app...

This appendix shows the various Facebook pages involved in the process

NOTE: These 3 screenshots are out-of-date now, but the basic tasks are still the same.

Developer

News

Displaying 1 of 312 stories

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Connecting with f8

Yesterday at 5:00pm
Published by Julia Lam

276



Whether you're joining us in person at f8, or will be following the event from afar, we're looking forward to celebrating the developer community with everyone on April 21.

Preparing for f8, Taking a Look Back

As we get closer to the next f8, we'll begin sharing videos from past conferences on the [f8 Page](#) for a look at some of the conversations that took place when Facebook Platform launched, and a year later when the focus was Facebook Connect.

Bringing f8 to You

With such a large and diverse ecosystem of developers and entrepreneurs around the world, we want to give everyone the opportunity to participate in f8. We'll continue to post the latest content to the [f8 Page](#), including a live stream, updates, and photos on the 21st, so that you can see what's going on at the event, ask questions, and interact with other developers and Facebook employees on the ground.

In addition to the f8 Page and live stream, you can also connect to the event on Twitter at [@fbplatform](#) (hashtag: #f8).

For those who missed out on purchasing a ticket on time, the staff at TechCrunch has free tickets they're awarding to five people with the best comments on [this article](#) (as judged by TechCrunch). Just let them know why you should attend f8 this year for a chance to win.

The Countdown Begins!

We're anticipating another great crowd this year. Go to the [f8 Page](#) and share what you're most looking forward to discussing and learning at the event.

See you there (or you'll see us) on April 21!

Julia is moving fast with the rest of the f8 team, getting ready for the big day.

List of your apps

[+ Set Up New Application](#)

My Applications

[See My Applications](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	dkfbone	more ▾	Monthly Active Users	0
			Application Fans	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	JobCast	more ▾	Monthly Active Users	0
			Application Fans	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	metrostarconnection	more ▾	Monthly Active Users	0
			Application Fans	0
	PollCast	more ▾	Monthly Active Users	51
			Application Fans	28

Status

[Subscribe](#) | [See All](#)

iFrame app issues

Apr 7, 2010 12:50pm

Hello, we are aware of issues currently affecting some iFrame apps, and we're working on a solution. You can see updates and... [Read more...](#)

Multi-friend selector issues resolved

Apr 6, 2010 11:04pm

Create an Ad

U2 360° - Rose Bowl ×



U2 360° At The Rose Bowl features live footage from their historic concert & more. Available June 3rd. Pre-order it here!

Like

Recommended Download ×



Boost PC speed. Microsoft certified. Free download.

Like

Want A Killer Good Time? ×



Play Mafia Wars today and

Initial App Creation



Create Application [Back to My Applications](#)

Essential Information

Application Name

Cannot contain Facebook trademarks or have a name that can be confused with an application built by Facebook.


Terms

Do you agree to the [Facebook Terms](#)?

☐ Agree ☒ Disagree

Create Application

- <http://www.facebook.com/developers/createapp.php>
- Must fill out a CAPTCHA upon submission

[Back to Developer Home](#)**My Applications**[+ Set Up New Application](#) **airbanking** dkfbone dkfbtwo JobCast**K** keenertech metrostarconnection PollCast Votridea**airbanking****Directory Status: Not Submitted**Once you have completed your application, you may [submit it](#) to the Application Directory.

Monthly Active Users

0

People Who Like This

0

Total Users

0

Application ID

122981967744938

API Key

f0085f2c484f9fd3b7a34e13d6e0995d

Application Secret

Canvas Page

<http://apps.facebook.com/airbanking/>

Canvas URL

<http://web1.tunnlr.com:11225/>

Canvas FBML/iframe

iframe

Contact Email

dkeener@metrostarsystems.com

Support Email

dkeener@metrostarsystems.com

Application Description

Social Banking: Banking for the 21st century

Sample Code

Get started quickly with some [example code!](#)[Edit Settings](#)[Application Profile Page](#)[Insights](#)[Translations](#)[Advertise](#)[Reset Application Secret](#)[Create an Ad](#)**Google & Clickbank** ×
Secret

Make Min \$ 3,500 a Month with Google & Clickbank Using a Simple System Which I Will Setup For You on a \$4.95 Special Trial

 Like**Comic Book Club** ×

If you like reading comic books and / or collecting comic books this is the place for you. Stop by, say Hello.

 Like**Need Website Traffic?** ×

If you own a website, you

Appendix B: SSH Tunneling

SSH tunneling is only needed if:

- You are building an app that will run within Facebook's canvas
- You want Facebook to pull the app from your dev environment, e.g. – your laptop

http://127.0.0.1:3000

...is not acceptable...

Facebook can't find your laptop...

One Simple Access Method

- Set up ssh access to a host on the Net
- On host, `sshd_config` file needs:
 `GatewayPorts = clientspecified`
- Run the following command on a UNIX flavor dev machine (like your laptop):

```
$ ssh keenertech.com -R  
:3001:127.0.0.1:3000 sleep 99999
```

Forwards host's port 3001 to 3000 on laptop

Appendix C: Other Examples

Some more code examples:

- Example 4: Social Plugins (“Like” Button)
- Example 5: Metadata
- Example 6: Canvas App

The background of the slide features a blue-toned abstract design. It includes a pattern of binary code (0s and 1s) that appears to be receding into the distance, creating a sense of depth. Overlaid on this are several thin, bright blue lines that radiate from the left side towards the right, resembling light rays or data paths. The overall effect is a high-tech, digital aesthetic.

Example 4: Social Plugins

Social Plugins

- Leverages Facebook's JavaScript SDK
- Can easily add social plugins to web sites
- Enables rapid "shallow integration"
- Eight type of social plugins available
- Each widget supports customization options
- Customization is still limited, though

Available Social Plugins



Like Button

The Like button lets users share pages from your site back to their Facebook profile with one click.



Activity Feed

The Activity Feed plugin shows users what their friends are doing on your site through likes and comments.



Recommendations

The Recommendations plugin gives users personalized suggestions for pages on your site they might like.



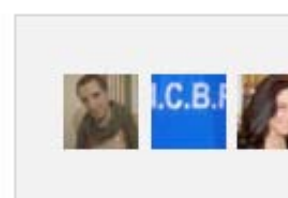
Like Box

The Like Box enables users to like your Facebook Page and view its stream directly from your website.



Login Button

The Login Button shows profile pictures of the user's friends who have already signed up for your site in addition to a login button.



Facepile

The Facepile plugin shows the Facebook profile pictures of the user's friends who have already signed up for your site.



Comments

The Comments plugin lets users comment on any piece of content on your site.



Live Stream

The Live Stream plugin lets your users share activity and comments in real-time as they interact during a live event.

Adding a Like Button

- “Like” will cause the web page to be promoted on the user’s News Feed...and will also appear for their friends
- The number of people who “Like” an item impacts how often the item will be shown on Facebook news feeds
- Facebook will retrieve info about the page


Blog Entry, With “Like” Button

KEENERTECH
INTERNET TECHNOLOGIES MADE SIMPLE


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April 7-9, Reston, VA
2011
rubynation.org







Our First RubyNation Video is Live

 [dkeener](#) on May 21, 2010

Our first RubyNation video is now live. It features Jim Wierich and his well received "SOLID Ruby" talk. It's been a lot of work getting the RubyNation video production effort off the ground, so it's nice to finally see our first polished video (only 28 more conference sessions to go).



40:04    blip.tv

 Like  3 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

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3D virtual meetings

In your browser
In under a minute

Social Plugin Requirements

Need to have the following code...

```
<div id="fb-root"></div>
<script>
  window.fbAsyncInit = function() {
    FB.init({appId: '106529556064124', status: true, cookie: true,
      xfbml: true});
  };
  (function() {
    var e = document.createElement('script'); e.async = true;
    e.src = document.location.protocol +
      '//connect.facebook.net/en_US/all.js';
    document.getElementById('fb-root').appendChild(e);
  }());
</script>
```


Using a Partial...

```
<%= render(:partial => 'shared/facebook_like_button', :locals =>
  { :href => "#{SITE_URL}#{request.request_uri}" }) %>
```

- This is part of “show.html.erb” for content pages on the KeenerTech blog
- Partials help keep social plugin code modular

Like Button – Embed Code

```
<iframe  
  src="http://www.facebook.com/plugins/like.php?href=  
    <%= CGI::escape(href%)>  
    &layout=standard&show_faces=false&width=450  
    &action=like&colorscheme=light&height=35"  
  scrolling="no" frameborder="0"  
  style="border:none; overflow:hidden; width:450px; height:35px;"  
  allowTransparency="true">  
</iframe>
```

- /shared/_facebook_like_button.html.erb

The background of the slide is a light blue gradient. In the upper left corner, there is a pattern of binary code (0s and 1s) in a darker blue, slightly blurred. Overlaid on this and the gradient are several thin, bright blue lines that appear to be part of a larger, abstract structure, possibly representing data flow or a network.

Example 5: Metadata

Metadata for Facebook (1)

```
<html xmlns:og="http://opengraphprotocol.org/schema/"  
      xmlns:fb="http://www.facebook.com/2008/fbml">
```

```
<head>
```

```
<meta property="og:description" content="Description"/>
```

- See <http://developers.facebook.com/docs/opengraph#types>

```
<meta property="og:image" content="/images/ctnt/123/rn.jpg"/>
```

- Images should be square and at least 50x50 pixels

Metadata for Facebook (2)

<meta property="og:url" content="http://.../your_page/">

- Permalink for the article; used by Facebook

<meta property="og:site_name" content="KeenerTech"/>

- Official name of your website

<meta property="fb:app_id" content=" 106529556064124"/>

- The app ID (or use fb:admins with comma-delimited list of Facebook ID's for the admins)

...



Example 6: Canvas App

Prerequisite - Appendix B: SSH Tunneling

Facebook Application

- Entire app functions within the “canvas,”
i.e.- within the Facebook context
- Two sub-types:
 - Canvas: Deprecated.
 - Iframe: External app functions within an
iframe
- Many games use iframes with an
embedded Flash app
- Mostly the same as external apps...now



What Is the Canvas?

The canvas is the area within the Facebook web site that your application can control.

- As a “Canvas” app, or...
- An external app running in an iframe

It looks like this...

DKFBONE Home

This is a test.

This is the Canvas

Create an Ad

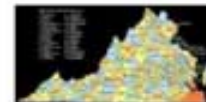
VA Fathers Only: ×
Get \$10k



Married Dad's Over 45 in Virginia: Get a \$10K scholarship you can use to pay bills, pay debt, or further your education!

Like

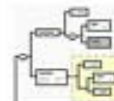
VA Laws Passed ×
Jan. 11



New laws allow VA residents with high amounts of CC debt to legally remove 60%.

Like

XML Editor: Free ×
Trial



Model, edit, transform & debug XML-related technologies. Fully functional 30-day free trial!

Like

More Ads

How Facebook Canvas Apps Work

