AEGEON

Aegeon Accelerates Product Development with Groovy and Grails

SPRINGSOURCE RESULTS

Groovy and Grails delivers the following business results to Aegeon:

- Accelerated Application Development – infrastructure setup reduced from weeks to hours

- Faster Responsiveness to Customer Needs; down from 10 days to 24 hours

- More Value-Added Features – up to 300% more

- Reduced Resources and Costs by 33%

- Improved User Experience

TESTIMONIAL

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Aegeon

Aegeon is a Web 2.0 company based in Orange County, California, with operations in Australia. The company develops Enterprise Social Software solutions such as Spaceo.us (pronounced "spa-cious"), an innovative next-generation knowledge management platform.

Challenge

"Aegeon is a startup, and we are constrained by time," explains Rob James, CTO of Aegeon. "The more time we take to build an application, the more it costs, and that is prohibitive for a startup. The challenge for us was to try and build a product that was competitive in the marketplace, while keeping to budget and time limitations."

Aegeon had to meet a very tight schedule to create the prototype for Spaceo.us. Although the initial plan was to develop the product using pure Java, the company decided that the environment was not flexible enough and did not provide adequate infrastructure support for them to build the prototype on time, with all the features they wanted to include. Aegeon needed to find a new platform that would enable them to accelerate the development process, especially during the prototyping stage.

Another major challenge Aegeon faced when working in Java was development of the user interface. Although Aegeon felt that the look and feel of the system would be a major impact on the product's success factor, James says it is difficult to find the "sweet spot" where developers and designers can work together in Java to produce a top quality user experience. The ongoing maintenance and upgrading processes are the real problem, because it is very difficult for designers to make changes when the Java code is already embedded in the design.

Solution

Aegeon chose Groovy and Grails to solve the challenges of developing a prototype in Java, and the company ended up using this platform to develop the entire Spaceo.us system. Groovy is a dynamic language for the Java Virtual Machine, that offers a flexible Java-like syntax all Java developers can learn in a matter of hours. Grails is an advanced and innovative web-application framework based on Groovy that enables IT teams to establish fast development cycles through agile methodologies and to deliver quality applications in reduced amounts of time.

"The original plan was to generate only the prototype in Groovy and Grails, and then slowly migrate to pure Java for the development of the actual product," says James. "But we realized there was no need to switch to Java, and in fact it would have slowed down our process, which was already quite fast in Groovy and Grails."

"We have even greater confidence in Groovy and Grails now that it is backed by SpringSource," he continues. "Spring was one of the reasons we trusted Grails in the first place, and I would recommend using Groovy and Grails for any future development that I am going to be a part of – because of the confidence I have in Spring and SpringSource." SpringSource is the leader in enterprise Java and the company behind Spring, the de facto standard programming model for enterprise Java applications, as well as Groovy and Grails.

Benefits

GROOVY AND GRAILS DELIVERS THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS RESULTS TO AEGEON:

Accelerated Application Development

"The biggest benefit Groovy and Grails give us is the ability to rapidly develop products and features," James confirms. "In a traditional Java project, we can spend weeks writing the initial code to set up the infrastructure, which is just the "plumbing" code. In Groovy and Grails, we can do that in a couple of hours with plug-ins." James explains that Grails offers a large selection of essential features readily available through the platform, as well as plug-ins that allow Aegeon to quickly and easily add a range of value-added functionality while writing minimal code.

Faster Responsiveness to Customer Needs

"Making us much more nimble is the greatest advantage Groovy and Grails give us over our competitors," James explains. "Using Groovy and Grails, we can quickly adapt and evolve our product. We can test new features in the market, and if they don't work we can easily change them. In addition, we can respond to customer requests in a few days. Our competitors have not been able to react that quickly to customer needs." One example of a customer request is the addition of RSS feeds to notify the user when new content is added to specific areas within Spaceo.us. "In traditional Java it would have taken us at least 5 to 10 days to add the new functionality to our product, whereas we were able to build the feature and demonstrate it to the customer, using a Grails plug-in, within 24 hours. It was fantastic to have that kind of turnaround."

More Value-Added Features

Groovy and Grails empower Aegeon's development team to add many more value-added features to the product. In the initial prototype, the company was able to demonstrate significantly more functionality than would have been possible using pure Java. This advantage has continued into ongoing product development, giving Aegeon the ability to deliver more features than the competition.

"With Groovy and Grails, we can spend less time writing "plumbing" code and more time writing functional code that adds value to our application," says James. "For example, if we had built our prototype in Java, we would have only been able to deliver a quarter to a third of the functionality we produced in Groovy and Grails."

Reduced Resources and Costs

Aegeon took about six months to develop a marketable product with all the features they wanted to offer to customers – using a tight team of only four people. "To produce the same level of functionality in the same timeframe, in traditional Java, we would have had to ramp up the team size by 3x, and consequently add much more cost," James asserts. "Groovy and Grails meant that we could keep a small team and still be immensely productive."

Improved User Experience

Groovy and Grails enable Aegeon's designers to understand the code more easily and work on more changes, rather than having to pass every task on to Java developers. Consequently, Aegeon was able to build a better UI and improve the user experience.

"The application is much easier to navigate," James says, "so the user experience is much richer than a traditional web experience because we used Groovy and Grails – giving us a competitive advantage over other knowledge management products."

About SpringSource

SpringSource, a division of VMware, Inc., (NYSE: VMW) and the leader in Java application infrastructure and management, provides a complete suite of software products that accelerate the entire build, run, manage enterprise Java application lifecycle. SpringSource employs the open source leaders who created and drive innovation for Spring, the de facto standard programming model for enterprise Java applications. SpringSource also employs the Java and Web thought leaders within the Apache Tomcat, Apache HTTP Server, Hyperic, Groovy and Grails open source communities. Nearly half of the Global 2000, including many world's leading retail, financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, technology and public sector clients are SpringSource customers. For more information visit: www.springsource.com.