

From ASP to PHP

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About the speaker

- Lives in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida with wife Kristine Collins (another software developer)
- 4 daughters and 1 son, ages 1-15
- 15 years software development
- Developed software for NASA, NCR, IBM, Encore Computer, Harris, Racal, and some smaller shops
- MS Computer Engineering Univ. of Florida, MBA Florida Atlantic Univ.
- Taught systems development in ASP at Florida Atlantic Univ. in 2002
- Used PHP for three commercial web sites 1999-2002
 - www.ProProject.com
 - www.Watchit.us
 - www.NameBuySell.com

Agenda

- ASP and PHP
- Highlights of ASP
- Highlights of PHP
- Cost
- Platform Support
- Tools and Libraries
- Documentation
- Popularity

- The ASP2PHP project
- What about .NET?
- Conclusion

ASP and PHP

- Both ASP and PHP are server side scripting languages for programming web sites / web applications, usually involving a database. Other popular server side scripting languages are JSP, Perl, and Python.
- When textbooks describe the difference between a scripting language and the general-purpose language(s) on which it is based, they usually discuss “interpreted” rather than “compiled.” But that is the superficial difference and is not even true when the platform uses just-in-time (JIT) compilers. The key attributes of scripting languages are loose typing (context-based type interpretation) and higher-level language elements and APIs. These characteristics make scripting generally faster than general-purpose language programming.
- Given the economics, speed, and capacity of server hardware, **higher-level languages are indeed “silver bullets!”***

Highlights of ASP

- ASP is Microsoft’s web server scripting language VBScript based on Visual Basic.
- ASP also supports JScript, Microsoft’s version of JavaScript, but it’s use seems rare to me.
- Script delimiters <% and %>
- Usual language elements:
 - Variables and constants
 - Subroutines
 - Collections – dynamically allocated associative arrays!

- Directives are meta code:
 - `<!-- #include file = "filename" -->` (File system-based path)
 - `<!-- #include virtual = "pagename" -->` (Web page-based path)
- Few Built-in Objects:
 - Application - stores global variables (not naturally done in PHP)
 - Request
 - Response
 - Server
 - Session - stores variables for session management
 - ObjectContext
 - ASPError
- Many other components are available either from Microsoft or 3rd parties.
- More information:
(It is hard to find information on ASP and not ASP.NET. More later.)
<http://msdn.microsoft.com/asp>

Highlights of PHP

- "PHP is a widely-used general-purpose scripting language that is especially suited for Web development and can be embedded into HTML."
PHP.net web site
- PHP stands for PHP Hypertext Processor (originally "Personal Home Page" by Rasmus Lerdorf)
- Open Source / GNU License
- It borrows from C/C++ and Perl
- Core technology is Zend Engine by Zend Technologies
- Another economic miracle like the Apache web server

- More information:
<http://www.php.net>
<http://www.zend.com>

Cost

- Up-to-date information about cost of Microsoft licenses for IIS and development tools will be available during the talk.
- PHP is free
- I use ZendStudio IDE – a Java GUI
- Cost is a major factor for many; not a factor for others

Platform Support

- ASP is supported by Microsoft on Windows platforms only.
- Sun's ChiliSoft makes older versions of ASP/VBScript available for Unix platforms.
- PHP works on Windows with IIS or Apache and on most Unix/Linux platforms.

Tools and Libraries

- PHP
- All the APIs are shipped with PHP
- You might have to recompile to enable the feature you want
- ASP
- Shipped with less features
- But all features easily found from 3rd parties

Documentation

- PHP
 - Online docs at php.net are comprehensive yet easy to use
 - Available with user comments
- ASP

- MSDN Library is comprehensive and also easy to use
- Knowledge base and extensive example projects
- More info:
<http://www.php.net>
<http://msdn.microsoft.com/asp>

Popularity

	October 12, 2000	March 4, 2002	Growth	Share
Total PHP	157,470	7,549,230	4694%	30%
asp	3,166,710	11,958,185	278%	48%
jsp	24,435	413,827	1594%	2%
cfm	936,223	4,950,133	429%	20%

- PHP adoption in US is slower than everywhere else
- More info:
<http://php.weblogs.com/popularity>

The ASP2PHP project

- Translates ASP programs to PHP
- Not 100% but a huge help if you need to port from ASP to PHP
- By Michael Kohn
- License: GPL
- More info:
<http://asp2php.naken.cc/>

Apache::ASP

- An Apache module that supports the ASP API
- Only supports Perl scripting language, not Visual Basic
- By Joshua Chamas
- License: GPL
- More info:
<http://www.apache-asp.org/>

Sun ChiliSoft ASP

- Renamed Sun One ASP
- ASP support for Apache, running on HP-UX, Linux, Windows NT/2000, Sun Solaris and IBM AIX
- More info:
<http://www.chilisoft.com>

What about .NET?

- .NET gives ASP a lot more functionality like templates that was hard to find before.
- An advantage in features
- Disadvantage in forcing expensive upgrades and compatibility issues
- More info:
<http://www.asp.net>

Conclusion

- ASP Advantages:
 - Availability of certified, trained developers
 - Availability of commercial tools
 - For VB programmers: familiarity
 - For Microsoft shops: familiarity
- PHP Advantages:
 - Reliability and security of platform
 - Performance
 - For open source programmers: familiarity
 - For C/C++ programmers: familiarity
 - Cost
 - Cost
 - Cost