



Ottawa Sybase User Group

The President Of The Ottawa Sybase User Group, Chris Pollach, Provides The Highlights Of The Historical OSUG Two Day Event

By Chris Pollach

The Ottawa Sybase User Group has been in existence since 1993 and was formerly known as the Ottawa PowerBuilder User Group until its current name change in 2003. OSUG's mission is to create a Sybase community in the National Capital of Canada where users can share knowledge, experiences, and best practices on various Sybase products. The group is composed of over 400 members that represent Database, Design, Architecture, Application Server, Mobility and Development Tool product lines. The strongest representation currently is in the PowerBuilder area as there are over 4,000 licenses of the product alone in the Canadian Federal Government.



Chris Pollach has been working with PowerBuilder version 0.8 since 1989, has written numerous articles in various popular personal computer magazines and newsletters and is the President of the Ottawa Sybase User Group. Chris can be reached at cpollach@travel-net.com.

The Ottawa Sybase User Group's last meeting was on December 1st and 2nd, 2009. For the first time in OSUG's history, this was a two day event that spanned two streams - one stream focused on PowerBuilder 11.5 on Day 1 and PowerBuilder 12 .NET on Day 2, and the second stream focused on Data Management which ran only on Day 1.

The event was sponsored by Appeon, Bradmark, Novalys, Sybase and ISUG. The first presenter was Sybase VP of Database Product Development, Mr. Brian Vink, who presented to both the PowerBuilder and Data Management groups together as the keynote speaker. Brian's presentation was entitled "Sybase State of the Nation" and covered Sybase's current product strategic directions in the areas of Mobility, DBMS (ASE and SA), Development and Modelling tools, Data Warehousing, and new product horizons.

Some of the interesting information conveyed was that, in the last quarter, Sybase has had a 20% increase in new PowerBuilder licenses, and that Data Management product growth is ahead of the nearest completion by a factor of 3:1 - both up significantly over the previous year.

PurePoint Partnering

The event was also a great place to meet our new Sybase partner in Ottawa, Mr. Bill Lobban, who owns

PurePoint Consulting. PurePoint delivers solutions to help ensure business and information availability. They provide:

Business Continuity; Disaster Recovery Planning; Project Development and Management; Strategic and Technical Consulting; and the Essential Hardware and Software solutions to help meet business needs. PurePoint has now been registered on the Canadian Federal Governments supply arrangement and can provide any federal government department right across Canada with Sybase software solutions.

Bill was able to meet with various OSUG members and partner attends at the OSUG meeting to introduce himself and PurePoint. For more information on PurePoint Consulting, have a look at their website at <http://www.ThePurePoint.com>. You can find Bill's contact information on the website under the "Contact Us" section. OSUG would like to welcome PurePoint and Bill into the Sybase arena.

Chris's Technology Watch

On Day 1, just over 70 attendees from various IT disciplines including IT management, analysts, developers, project managers, independent consultants, architects, consulting firm technical representatives, etc. Some attendees even travelled to Ottawa from



Montreal, Toronto and, even as far away as Vancouver and Buffalo, New York. The event was officially opened by OSUG's president, Chris Pollach, who spoke about ISUG, local Sybase news, OSUG direction, and a special mini-report entitled "Chris's Technology Watch". Chris then had a special activity prepared for John Strano who was one of the key PowerBuilder presenters. Chris usually starts the meetings off with a small Martial Arts demonstration to show how a technique or way of doing something can make a person much more powerful for a self-defence move against an attacker. Of course, this is always an analogy towards the "Power" in PowerBuilder where using such tools as the DataWindow makes your development life so much easier. In these cases, Chris often asks John Strano to join him for the demo as the "Vana White" participant to demonstrate on. However, this time Chris had John break some boards to demonstrate how a certain technique can make you more effective in delivering a more powerful blow. To aid in this matter, Chris invited his Martial Art instructor, Master Stephen Yeoh, a 6th degree black belt in TaeKwonDo to advise John on how to proceed. Amazingly enough, John was able to break the board held by Chris on the first try with a reverse knife hand strike! For this great accomplishment, Master Yeoh and Chris (2nd degree black belt) presented John with an Honorary Black Belt and certificate. This whole process was a great crowd pleaser for the OSUG attendees who encouraged John throughout the demonstration. Well done John! Next year, concrete stones maybe?



Data Management

For the Data Management track on Day 1, OSUG had the privilege of hosting Ms. Cindy Bean from Bradmark along with Mr. Anthony Robinson and Mr. Matt Creason from Sybase Canada and USA respectively. Matt spoke to the attendees about "Enterprise Architecture vs. Enterprise Information Architecture" with the latter placing its focus on Meta Data Management. Once you have a repository of your information assets, you can quickly do impact analysis for business agility and change management; traceability and standards for Regulatory Compliance; and process alignment and integration to support Service Oriented Architecture goals. Cindy presented the audience with Bradmark's phenomenal monitoring tool for the ASE DBMS called *Surveillance*. This is



one of Bradmark's award winning products that can perform event management, data flash back, real-time diagnostics, and a historical repository of changes. Anthony gave us a look at Sybase's new Replication Server version 15.2 that can bidirectionally replicate data between any major DBMS on the market today and not just ASE to ASE. Many of the DM stream attendees were really impressed with Anthony's presentation on Sybase's IQ, and in particular, the SUP (Sybase's Unwired Platform). SUP addresses the challenge of creating and managing multiple mobile applications that securely connect a variety of heterogeneous back-end data sources to all major device types.

Appeon And PowerBuilder

The first presentation of the Development tools track saw Mr. Armeen Mazda who was a key member of the initial team that founded Appeon Corporation back in 1999. He is also Appeon's CEO and President. Armeen presented two topics for the balance of the morning which were "Rich Internet Application Development Made Easy with PowerBuilder" and "Appeon and Learning from a Highly Transactional and Available Web Business Application." The presentations were extremely interesting and drew many questions from the attendees. The focus on webification was definitely a key focus for many of the PowerBuilder developers as their current work assignments and their IT management have been directing them in that direction. Armeen was also able to relate to his customer base and gave many tips, techniques, approaches and traps that comprised some great *lessons learned* information.



During the presentations from Armeen, he was also able to break into actual demonstrations of the Appeon web development platform that is integrated with PowerBuilder. Interesting points were made that, not only does Appeon make your Webform applications super fast with all of Appeon's special runtime optimization, but the development time is 4:1 better in terms of lines of code and time; and Appeon with PowerBuilder applications can be done with an eight times better cost ratio than MS.NET products. These were statistics gathered from actual projects using Appeon vs. Visual Studio. All in all, a most impressive product that held the OSUG members attention. Armeen was able to stay for the entire two day session and even on the 2nd day was giving more demonstrations in the Sybase Canada board room that Sybase donated for OSUG use during the two day event. For more information on Appeon, please visit their website at <http://www.appeon.com>.



The second presenter for the afternoon in the Development Tools stream was Mr. John Strano from Sybase USA. John is one of the key evangelists on the PowerBuilder team for Sybase.

On Day 1, John focused on the current production release of PowerBuilder (version 11.5.1) and the theme of his presentations was “*Solving your Top Business problems today with PowerBuilder.*” John worked through many business scenarios and how PowerBuilder today could be used to easily solve these problems. John did this by using a “*Hands On Challenge*” feature where he worked through eight different business scenarios that your IT management might ask a PowerBuilder developer to perform in handling some of today’s common requests. The challenges covered such things as: *Exposing logic of a business object as a .NET Web Service; Exposing my current application logic to my .NET peers; We need to build Web Services, use ‘em, and manage them; Management wants a new application written for the Web; We must move our current PB applications to the Web, Publish your traditional application as a .NET Smart Client application; and PowerBuilder applications can get a facelift in no time.*

Application Security

On Day 2 of the OSUG event, only the development stream continued, but it was action packed with presentations and information. The Sybase Canada board room continued to be open for one-on-one presentations and questions to all our guest presenters. On tap for the entire morning program was Mr Christophe Dufourmantelle who founded Novalys in 1998 and has run the company from that point in time. Christophe focused on the various product offerings and many new recent releases of these items to the PowerBuilder community. This was of great interest to many of the OSUG attendees as they currently use one or more of Novalys’s products currently. Christophe first explored the application mining tool called *Visual Expert (VE)*. At the time of the OSUG meeting, VE 6.0 was recently released and Christophe was able to take the audience through a detailed tour of the new feature set. VE 6.0 now supports PB 11.5.1 and is used in many sites around Ottawa (PWGSC, Supreme Court, Passport, Elections, etc for example).



The next product he spoke about is a brand new tool called *PBProtect*. This product addresses the area called Obscurification where the application executables are

basically scrambled so that it cannot be decompiled. This would be very beneficial for applications that perform unique processing and contain special algorithms, business process logic or security checking for example that you would not want anyone to reverse engineer. *PBProtect* actually scrambles the PowerScript code by tokenizing it just as it enters the compilation stage – which Christophe then demonstrated.

The next presentation was on a product named *VisualGuard (VG)*. This product wrappers an existing PowerBuilder application and imposes security by user, role, data value, etc without recoding the application. What was on interest in the new release of VG is the new Enterprise version that can perform this feat on not only PowerBuilder, but Java and Visual Studio applications as well. So now you have one-stop shopping for application security in the major development languages and one common repository for all their security control. After a demonstration of VG, Christophe moved on to the new *Customization Studio* product. This is a new aspect to VE and allows for customization of the product’s use, extra reporting, special name checking, etc features that an organization may want. Novalys is also planning to release common customized modules that will be downloadable to existing customers so that they can be shared. Christophe then demonstrated how customization worked and then entertained a Q&A session on the Novalys product suite. For more information on Novalys and its PowerBuilder product line, please visit their website at <http://www.novalys.net>.



PowerBuilder 12 .NET

The last part of the Day 2 was dedicated to PowerBuilder 12 .NET. John Strano returned wearing his newly acquired black belt to give the audience a detailed live tour of PB 12 .NET. John covered the overview of the PB 12 release that will encompass InfoMaker 12, PB 12 Classic and PB 12 .NET. Those customers who have the Enterprise version of PowerBuilder will receive all three of these products on the install DVD. John then proceeded with an overview of the new types on controls in PB 12 .NET and the fact that all the standard PB Controls now are descendants of actual .NET controls. So the behaviour and feature set of every control is a true .NET behaviour, yet Sybase has still retained certain features on PB controls that offer unique behaviour. Of course the DataWindow is still its own unique control but has a refactored code line to now be true WPF (Windows Presentation Foundation) member. The DW object is now true .NET managed code where as in PB 11.x, the DW was

unmanaged code and thus had some restrictions on its feature set and execution privileges. This now makes the DW object a fully compliant .NET custom control.

The next significant change (among many) for PB 12 .NET is the departure from the PB 11.x IDE shell and adoption of the .NET Isolated shell that Visual Studio uses as its IDE. The change to the Microsoft IDE allows PB to: leverage more of the .NET framework; capitalize on assimilating 3rd party WPF controls; add “intellisense” and collapsing code blocks; position PB to take advantage of emerging technologies such as Silverlight; support for fully managed executable code generation and even support for 64bit MS-Windows - just to highlight a few key areas. During the PB 12 .NET talk, John was able to demonstrate the PB 12 .NET IDE and run some example applications that emphasized these areas. The new software was “without a doubt” captivating to hear and watch for the all the OSUG members.

The next area on the PB 12 .NET tour was the new vector graphics, DW graph types such as Cone, Radar, Scatter, etc along with Application Skins. All these new features are now possible for PB 12 being a true .NET citizen. John was able to walk the attendees through the design and coding steps needed to use these new features. For those OSUG members who were already in the Beta program and brought their copy of PB 12 .NET on their laptops, John was able to share code examples and help the members get these features working on their own machines. This was an excellent hands-on training session for those who attended! During the presentations, demonstrations and code example walk through, John lived up to his theatrical background and amused the crowd with stories, anecdotes and light humour which made for a very entertaining afternoon that I am sure all would agree.

The afternoon session witnessed 43 attendees who were primarily PB developers who got a great look at intellisense, collapsing code blocks, new object browser, etc while John was able to gather great feedback from the audience for engineering of what they would like in the final production product. The next section covered the XAML language and how PB 12 .NET can incorporate 3rd party controls based on this technology. The next section covered the new WPF design painter that replaces the Window painter and some of the nuances when converting to this technology paradigm.

John then covered the considerations for migrating an existing older PB Win32 application over to the new PB 12 .NET WPF architecture. He stated that it is Sybase’s intention to have this as automated as possible so that rewriting an older application will not be necessary. To backup his

point, John demonstrated a migrated Win32 application now running as a WPF based one from within PB 12 .NET – a true testament to Sybase’s



commitment in this area. Chris

Pollach pointed out that Microsoft developers moving from Visual Basic version 6.x to VBNET already have to rewrite their applications. VB developers will again have to rewrite or do significant enhancements to their VBNET applications to assimilate the WPF environment. Whereas, PowerBuilder developers will enjoy the ease-of-migration in version 12 as they did in any other previous release.

PB 12 .NET now also includes visual inheritance that even the new VS2010 does not support! VS developers today and with the new release this year must still control inheritance via code (my how archaic!). Couple this with a WPF based DataWindow and one can see the enormous productivity gains possible with this PB 12 .NET based technology direction. When asked about the debugging capabilities of PB 12 .NET, John demonstrated the use of the VS debugger in PB 12 .NET as it is integrated through the .NET framework and the common VS shell IDE. However, Sybase has made the interaction with the debugger more intuitive to use as in previous PB releases.

Overall, the attendees of the PB 12 .NET training session were very impressed with Sybase’s PB direction and the fact that engineering has been proactive in informing the customer base about their efforts thus far. John iterated that PB 12 .NET also has WCF - Windows Communication Facility capabilities and is now able to directly inherit from native .NET controls.

Summary

Stay tuned for more road shows planned from Sybase focused on the new PB 12 .NET product and technologies. Visit the Sybase news groups and the main Sybase and ISUG websites for more information on these venues. From all the OSUG members here in Canada’s national Capital ... thanks John, for a great presentation, guided test drive and hands-on education! OSUG would also like to thank OSUG member Michael Lessard who took many of the pictures at the two day event. When not coding in PowerBuilder Michael is an accomplished wedding photographer – so if you need some expert photographs done, please contact Chris Pollach for Michaels contact information.

Again a great big thank you to Sybase Canada, its Partners, ISUG and Sybase US marketing and engineering for helping OSUG make this its most memorable event ever. ■