

December 7th Mike Hamilton Podcast Program

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1:40

Passionate Flare users – how are they so enthused so quickly with Flare?

2:35

Mike talks about Web 2.0 and wiki models / blog style commenting with Feedback Server

3:40

Feedback Server use case explained.

5:00

Mike doesn't rule out a full wiki model, explains another use case for Feedback with both internal and external use applications.

5:55

MadCap Analyzer explained – so good it's scary? Mike explains that Analyzer is key for maintaining consistency within a project, particularly larger ones with 20,000 to 30,000 topics.

9:45

Analyzing Analyzer – developed to answer Technical Communicator's pain points never previously addressed.

10:10

Clarifies MadCap's focus on Adobe: "...we don't care what Adobe does, we're focused on solving the problems of the technical writing community... I want to dispel any myth that we're chasing Adobe."

11:40

Why I started analyzing the space closer: MadCap's openness in summer 2007.

12:10

Thoughts on other blogger's views about Adobe's Technical Communications Suite (TCS) launch.

Mike responds by comparing integration of tools within Flare and within Adobe TCS – Example of Capture's integration with Flare to support the concept of single sourcing workflow.

14:25

Integration between Capture and Mimic compared. Mike speaks about the goal of ensuring consistency through answering the industry issue of different tools, different output styles.

MadPak as Shovelware? Mike talks about how the MadPak concept differs from the TCS.

15:25

My analysis of Adobe's strength in bundling applications. Is MadCap answering this tremendous market advantage by 'attacking the workflow'? Mike answers with an example of workflow analysis for Technical Communicators doing screenshot inclusion during software creation and Capture was designed to answer this workflow problem.

16:53

War stories of my personal nightmare example of screen capture workflow prior to Flare. Worst case scenario: old buttons, government contract and everyone's billing the US of A for their time!

19:20

Quick mention of the 'eat your own dog food'. Both Adobe and MadCap have taken hits for this, Adobe for not using RoboHelp to write its RoboHelp docs for version 6, and MadCap for having Captivate demos documenting its products. (Mimic wasn't yet created when the Captivate demos were done...)

20:30

Adobe layoffs in San Diego contrasted with MadCap's expansion.

21:18

Blue Sky Software: The Sequel – MadCap's new / old office explained by Mike.

25:45

Ping pong table and how it fits into MadCap's morale.

26:25

A little about Blaze's new product manager Sharon Burton who adds a great deal of print publishing experience.

27:00

Mike answers the question about Word competing with Flare or Blaze. Since the MadCap – products are a complete workflow, does it compete with Word?

28:15

Getting granular about Word vs. Flare in typical generic user usage – where the breakpoint comes in.

30:15

Strategy and policy for supporting new Microsoft releases. Mike includes Internet Explorer web browser, Word, and operating system support in his answer.

32:10

My beef with Adobe's release to support Vista. Recapping my analysis about how they made record 3rd quarter earnings in 2007.

32:43

Back to Blaze – Is Blaze the sledgehammer I'm thinking it may become? Mike answers this along with explaining how MadCap's internal programming workflow allows them to release both Blaze and a Flare release simultaneously. Mike also explains how going forward with both benefits the end user. Code duplication is not an issue and new changes within one product will be represented in the other because of the method they've used.

33:49

Incredulous about what Mike just said, I make sure I'm not tackled on the way out and confirm with him if I can talk about what he just mentioned about how MadCap's competitive edge works in software design.

34:00

Mike further explains why it's not a problem with him telling me; the core architecture is how the variables are shared across all products, doc tools and multimedia tools. He also explains that their core planning allowed them to build hooks into each products and build 2 to 5 years of planning into their process, which is why it was so complex immediately but reaps benefits each further cycle down the road.

34:30

Remembering RoboHelp: we each discuss where RoboHelp came from and why it's so different from this model MadCap's following. Mike elaborates on the competitive edge MadCap has right now in integrating all of their products.

36:40

Mike believes that both RoboHelp and Flare will be around for a long long time, of course he and I differ on this viewpoint. He does mention the caveat of how much innovation Adobe puts into RoboHelp being questionable which we both agree upon completely.

37:10

Mike mentions [Joe Welinski's Writers UA site](#) which measures tool usage trends (of course Microsoft Word is nearly 100%) but the data charted backs up Mike's assessment of Flare within the marketplace. Note: Joe's site confirms Mike's numbers of 0% to 16% to 25% in two years, and Flare just missed hitting the top ten tools in 2007 by 2% usage.