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3 QUESTIONS:

The Evolution of Web 2.0

With Peter Yared, CEO and founder of [ActiveGrid](#), which provides enterprise features built on the LAMP stack to help enterprises rapidly build rich Web 2.0 applications.

Question: How are open standards and open source driving Web 2.0?

Yared: All of the leading Web 2.0 companies, ranging from Google to Friendster, run open source stacks like LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP/Python/Perl) on large grids of commodity machines. Initially, these companies chose open source from a cost standpoint, since the existing licensing mechanisms of software vendors made it unrealistic to deploy their software on large clusters of machines. So the Web 2.0 companies pieced together open source projects and have created an environment of "software Darwinism," where the strongest and best code survives. After a few years of thousands of really smart engineers piecing together systems, stacks of open source software such as LAMP have emerged.

Question: What are the real changes that you see Web 2.0 creating, for tech companies and their staffs? And for the tech industry as a whole?

Yared: There have been some rumblings that the "Web 2.0" term is a little over-hyped, I think particularly because of all of the startups out there with no business model. The important thing to consider is that Web 2.0's core pieces — scaling out on commodity machines, rich Internet Ajax applications and open source stacks like LAMP — are definitely getting traction throughout the technology industry.

These technologies are starting to be used by large traditional enterprises, not just small startups and large-scale Web sites. The biggest reason for this shift is that it is hard enough with the existing toolsets to build an application with a reasonable user interface that communicates with a single database. When you graduate to rich user interfaces and numerous Web services and databases, the existing infrastructure is completely inadequate and forces a shift to the architecture that has been proven by Amazon, Google and Yahoo.

Question: What companies/organizations do you see leading Web 2.0 most successfully? What is it they are doing right?

Yared: Clearly the leading, well-known Web 2.0 companies (such as Google) are doing something right. Companies like SABRE/Travelocity, Lufthansa and E*TRADE have evolved from running J2EE on expensive UNIX machines to running open source on grids of commodity machines, some with rich user interfaces. All of these companies are taking a pragmatic approach to technology and showing a willingness to try something new.

Sticking with whatever IBM, BEA and Sun are selling is the easy choice. On the other hand, learning from the Web 2.0 leaders like Google lets you quickly integrate new technologies and provide better value to your customers. Just recently, it was still normal for your CRM system not to be able to talk with your ERP system. In a world where a random guy can make a mash-up of Google Maps and Craigslist, there is an expectation that all of your systems should work together, and have a rich user interface as well.