Improve application performance and scalability with Adobe® ColdFusion® 9

Executive summary

Performance tests reveal that Adobe ColdFusion 9 software provides significant performance improvements over ColdFusion 8, delivering applications capable of processing considerably more page requests. ColdFusion 9 also offers an array of new features such as page fragment caching, object caching, implicit getter/setter in ColdFusion components (CFCs), directory functions, and others that enable developers to build higher performing applications. Additionally, administrators can tune ColdFusion 9 for increased performance with the new Cache Template in Request setting.

Overall server performance in ColdFusion 9 is up to 40% faster than in ColdFusion 8 and up to 6 times faster than ColdFusion MX 7.

Figure 1. CanvasWiki is 40% faster in ColdFusion 9 than in ColdFusion 8 and 6 times faster than in ColdFusion MX 7.

Figure 2. CFC object creation in ColdFusion 9 is 8 times faster than in ColdFusion 8.
Statistics summary

Performance enhancements in ColdFusion 9

Through extensive research, bottlenecks in ColdFusion 8 were identified, analyzed, and removed to achieve significant performance gains and preserve backward compatibility in ColdFusion 9. Substantial gains were obtained in areas such as CFC object creation/invocation, CreateUUID, evaluate, and Flash® Remoting. Table 1 shows the overall server performance gains in ColdFusion 9 compared with ColdFusion 8 and ColdFusion MX 7. Table 2 shows a summary of all the performance improvements in the existing features.

New features such as advanced caching, virtual file system, and a set of directory functions deliver additional performance gains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall server performance</th>
<th>Improvement over ColdFusion 8</th>
<th>Improvement over ColdFusion MX 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall server performance (CanvasWiki)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>500%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Overall performance gains in ColdFusion 9 compared with ColdFusion 8 and ColdFusion MX 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing feature performance</th>
<th>Improvement over ColdFusion 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFC object creation</td>
<td>700%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC method invocation</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash Remoting</td>
<td>800%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page caching</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UUID key generation</td>
<td>5,300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date functions</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance improvement with IIS</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Performance improvements in existing features.
Table 3. Performance improvements over ColdFusion 8 if new features are used.

Existing features
ColdFusion 9 provides significantly better performance in several feature areas, including object creation, method invocations, and many frequently used functions.

Figure 4. Creating UUIDs in ColdFusion 9 is 53 times faster than in ColdFusion 8.
Figure 5. CFC object creation in ColdFusion 9 is 8 times faster than in ColdFusion 8.

Figure 6. Method invocation in a ColdFusion 9 CFC is 3 times faster than in ColdFusion 8.

Figure 7. Date functions show a 35% performance improvement in ColdFusion 9.
IIS connector

The Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) connector shows performance improvements if there are requests for static contents. Figure 9 graphs the performance for 50 virtual users simultaneously requesting 10 ColdFusion Markup Language (CFML) files and 10 static HTML pages. As requests for static content increase, performance improves. Performance gains are visible only if there is enough load to consume all IIS worker threads. For more information, refer to "IIS connector improvements" in the appendix.

Note: This performance gain is available only with IIS 6 and IIS 7 on Microsoft® Windows® 2003 and later.
Figure 10. Page caching improves 30% in ColdFusion 9.

**Flash Remoting**

ColdFusion 9 provides enhanced Flash Remoting performance apart from bug fixes for "circular reference serialization-deserialization."

From an Adobe Flex® application, 10,000 to 50,000 ActionScript® objects are sent to the ColdFusion 9 server. The AS objects contain the data types most commonly used in ActionScript. These objects are serialised and deserialised into CFCs in the ColdFusion 9 server and then sent back to the Flex application. This turnaround process is defined as a server trip. The throughput shown in Figure 11 is the average of 10 such server trips for each object.

Figure 11. Flash Remoting in ColdFusion 9 is 9 times faster than in ColdFusion 8.
New features
ColdFusion 9 introduces several new features such as advanced caching and implicit getters and setters that enable developers to build higher performing applications.

Advanced caching—object caching
ColdFusion 9 allows users to cache specific objects using cachePut() and to retrieve objects with cacheGet(). Users also have the option to put, get, and flush cached objects.

![Object caching graph](image1)

Figure 12. ColdFusion 9 improves performance when a 500k image is read and resized as a cached object.

Advanced caching—page fragment caching
In many applications, ColdFusion pages contain a combination of static and dynamic information that changes at different frequencies. In these cases, it would be ideal to improve application performance while still allowing application users access to information that is frequently updated. ColdFusion 9 allows developers to cache only the portions of the page that change infrequently or not at all, enabling them to fine-tune application performance.

![Page fragment caching graph](image2)

Figure 13. When invoking a web service that converts Celsius to Fahrenheit, page fragment caching dramatically improves performance.

Cache template in request
ColdFusion 9 provides a new Cache Template in Request setting. When this setting is enabled, ColdFusion will not inspect requested templates in the current request for potential updates. This setting can be enabled in the ColdFusion Administrator on the caching page under Server Settings.
Figure 14. Cache Template in Request is a setting in the ColdFusion 9 Administrator that improves performance by 50 times.

**DirectoryList() function**

ColdFusion 9 introduces a new function, DirectoryList(), that returns a list of the contents in the directory requested. It will also list the contents of any subdirectories if the recurse attribute is set to true. Unlike the `<cfdirectory>` tag, which acts as a query, DirectoryList() creates an array that can be returned much faster.

Figure 15. With a nonrecursive, simple listing of 4.5k files, ColdFusion 9 DirectoryList() is 10 times faster than the `<cfdirectory>` tag.

Figure 16. With a recursive listing of 5.5k files in a directory, ColdFusion 9 DirectoryList() is 4 times faster than the `<cfdirectory>` tag.
DirectoryList() sorting

![Bar chart comparing DirectoryList() and cfdirectory]

Figure 17. Sorting 600 files with ColdFusion 9 DirectoryList() is approximately 35% faster than sorting by the cfdirectory tag.

**Getter/setter function—object creation**

ColdFusion components support private properties, allowing users to prevent direct access to them. Typically, developers code public getter and setter methods for access to these properties.

In ColdFusion 9, developers no longer have to create getters and setters, as they are created implicitly for every component. Components with implicit getters and setters are created four times faster than components with explicitly coded getters and setters.

Note: Implicit getters and setters can be overwritten if necessary.

![Bar chart comparing explicit and implicit object creation]

Figure 18. In ColdFusion 9, CFC object creation with implicit getter/setter functions is four times faster than CFC object creation with explicit getter/setter functions.
Enterprise vs. Standard edition

ColdFusion 9 is available in two editions: Enterprise and Standard. Features like spreadsheet and document to PDF conversion use enhanced tuning and a multi-threaded architecture to deliver linear scalability under load and to accommodate high-volume document generation.

Figure 19. Implicit getter/setter method invocation is seven times faster than explicit getter/setter method invocation.

Figure 20. Spreadsheet functionality scales better in the Enterprise edition than in the Standard Edition.
Summary
Adobe ColdFusion 9 eliminates the bottlenecks in ColdFusion 8, delivering significant performance gains in areas such as CFC object creation/invocation, CreateUUID, evaluate, and Flash Remoting. New features, such as advanced caching, a virtual file system, and a set of directory functions, enable developers to rapidly build, deploy, and maintain higher performing applications.
Appendix: Testing details and additional product information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ColdFusion server settings</th>
<th>ColdFusion 9</th>
<th>ColdFusion 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Java version</td>
<td>1.6.0_14</td>
<td>1.6.0_04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xmx</td>
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<td>1024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeout</td>
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<td>Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable white space management</td>
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<td>Enabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disable CFC type check</td>
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<td>Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of simultaneous</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>template requests</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Max running Jrun thread</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted cache</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cache template in request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component cache</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debugging</td>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Server monitoring</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Test configuration**

The test applications and the individual performance scripts were run with ColdFusion 8 and ColdFusion 9 on Microsoft Windows 2003 with the following specifications:

- Windows 2003 R2 Enterprise x64 Edition with Service Pack 2
- Microsoft Internet Information Server 6.0
- Four 2.27GHz Intel Xeon® dual-core E5520 processors
- 6GB of RAM

The back-end database was on a separate system with the following specifications:

- Windows 2003 Enterprise Edition with Service Pack 2
- Microsoft Internet Information Server 6.0
- SQL Server 2005
- Two 2GHz Intel Xeon dual-core S130 processors with 1333MHz front-side bus
- 2GB of RAM

The client was on a separate system with the following specifications:

- Windows 2003 Enterprise Edition with Service Pack 2
- Two 2GHz Intel Xeon dual-core S130 processors with 1333MHz front-side bus
- 2GB of RAM

**Performance measurement tools**

Performance measurements were conducted with the freeware Jakarta-jmeter. This tool is used to measure end-to-end performance features like average response time and throughput. For more information, refer to [http://jakarta.apache.org/jmeter/](http://jakarta.apache.org/jmeter/).

**Test methodology**

For testing applications, simultaneous HTTP requests were generated to simulate 30 no-think time-virtual users. Each performance test was performed multiple times to confirm the accuracy of the results. The results were averaged and presented in this document.
Migration requirements for Flash Remoting

The following properties should be moved from the ColdFusion "Destination" to "Channel" level. The properties are located under <channel-definition> → <properties> → <coldfusion>. For more details, refer to the Help documentation at http://help.adobe.com/en_US/ColdFusion/9.0/Developing/WSSB9C73A8-SFA2-4a54-B0C6-CECA2E20052D.html.

<access>
    <use-mappings>
        <method-access-level>
    </use-mappings>
</access>

<use-accessors>
    <use-implicit-accessors>
    </use-accessors>
</use-accessors>

<use-structs>
    <property-case>
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        <force-query-lowercase>
        <force-struct-lowercase>
        </property-case>
    </use-structs>

Note: If XML configuration files (inside WEB-INF/flex) from ColdFusion 8 are dropped without ColdFusion 9 changes, Flash Remoting will continue to work as in ColdFusion 8, without performance gains.

Simple caching

Some ColdFusion pages produce output that changes infrequently. Normally, when ColdFusion receives a request for a page in the application, it executes all the business logic and displays the requested content. If the results change infrequently, it is an inefficient use of processor resources and bandwidth.

The cfcache tag tells ColdFusion to cache the HTML that results from processing a page request in a temporary file on the server. This HTML does not need to be generated each time the page is requested. When ColdFusion receives a request for a cached ColdFusion page, it retrieves the pregenerated HTML page without having to process the ColdFusion page.

To cache the page results, place a cfcache tag on the ColdFusion page before the code that outputs text.

IIS connector improvements

IIS maintains the worker thread pool size of 256 per CPU. (Some threads are used internally by IIS). When a request arrives, one thread is picked from the IIS worker thread pool and used until the request is completed. When a request arrives for the IIS thread, the request is blocked until ColdFusion serves the CFM page. Meanwhile, if a request comes in for other content types like HTTP or images, IIS uses other threads in the pool to serve them. If all IIS worker threads are being blocked by ColdFusion requests, there will be no threads immediately available for IIS to serve pages of other content types.

When a connector receives a request in ColdFusion 9, it picks the native thread from its thread pool and returns the IIS worker thread with IO Completion (the request will be in IO block state). Once the IIS request is freed from the request, it is immediately available to handle the next request and to serve pages of other content types. Once the request is completed by ColdFusion, the connector thread is returned to its native thread pool.

Users can tune their applications using different native connector thread pool size values. By default, the native connector thread pool size is 25. This thread pool is defined as "maxworkerthread" in file [coldfusion_home]\runtime\lib\wsconfig\1\jnrun_iis6_wildcard.ini.