# optionMONSTER/tradeMONSTER

Financial media group optionMONSTER redefines online trading with online broker tradeMONSTER, developed using the Adobe® Flash® Platform

**OptionMONSTER Holdings, Inc.**

*www.optionmonster.com*
*www.trademonster.com*

trade MONSTER™

**Industry**
Financial services

**Challenges**
- Differentiate online trading service from competitors
- Deliver a desktop-like experience over the web
- Combine customizable features with high-performance platform
- Reduce development time and costs

**Solution**
- Rich Internet application (RIA) for online trading

    optionMONSTER's founders wanted to provide a uniquely differentiated and effective online trading platform for customers and chose the Adobe Flash Platform to build a Web 2.0 application with desktop-like functionality—all delivered via a standard web browser.

**Results**
- Leapfrogged the competition
- Delivered unique, effective user experience
- Accelerated time to market
- Enabled browser-based trading from anywhere
- Delivered unique, effective trading and educational platform

**Systems At A Glance**
- Adobe Flex
- Adobe Flex Builder 3
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- Adobe RoboHelp

## Redefining online trading

While most online brokerages merely provide a venue for trading, executives at optionMONSTER, a leading provider of financial market intelligence and analytical commentary, saw an opportunity to provide online traders with much more. With this concept in mind, optionMONSTER co-founders created tradeMONSTER, an online broker with a Web 2.0-style rich Internet application (RIA). Using Adobe technology, tradeMONSTER integrates a powerful online trading platform with informative, objective educational resources.

"tradeMONSTER was built on our commitment to bring professional-grade information, education, tools, and technology to the retail investor," says optionMONSTER co-founder & CEO Dirk Mueller-Ingrand. "We wanted to make the experience of using the tradeMONSTER platform unique for our customers, allowing for a desktop-like and professional grade experience in a browser-based platform."

## A desktop-like experience within a browser

To create tradeMONSTER, an authoritative team was assembled to build a platform designed to be powerful, simple, and intuitive. The primary goal was to deliver a desktop-like experience on the web which could handle the high volume of streaming data and real-time updates for accounts, positions, etc., asynchronously. The technical team at optionMONSTER considered a few technologies available in the marketplace to achieve this goal.

"Adobe Flex® Builder™ scored very high in providing out-of-the-box components, browser compatibility, ease of development, and faster rendering capabilities for our streaming data platform," says Sanjib Sahoo, vice president of technology for optionMONSTER Holdings, Inc. Hence, after a very stringent review and evaluation process, optionMONSTER's technology group selected components of the Adobe Flash Platform—including Adobe Flex and Flex Builder 3—as well as Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) and Adobe RoboHelp®.

"We wanted advanced functionality such as the ability to stream data within the browser and a completely customizable user interface; all in the context of a fast, responsive application," explains Mueller-Ingrand. "We also had to be sure customers could use tradeMONSTER without having to download specialized software or plug-ins."

## Rich, engaging tools

With tradeMONSTER, customers have a rich set of functionality that goes beyond what most browser-based brokerage services offer. The interactive interface, complete with animations and video, was designed using the Adobe Flash Platform. Using the service is like being in a cockpit, with features that are conducive to multitasking. Real-time data streams in from a variety of sources, and customers can create an order from any view on the screen. There are What-if-thumbnails throughout the application where customers can enter a hypothetical scenario about a position and see what the projected profit and loss implications should be. Education was built with Adobe RoboHelp and is thoroughly integrated so customers don't have to exit a screen to learn more about the order they are about to place.

*"We looked at options other than developing in the Flex Framework, but we saw that using Adobe Flex Builder was superior in terms of helping us deliver the best customer experience possible."*

Dirk Mueller-Ingrand,
CEO,
optionMONSTER

**For More Information**

*www.adobe.com/products/flex/*
*www.adobe.com/flashplatform/*

Users can easily customize the layout and display "mini-apps," such as live account data, open orders, positions, trading messages, and financial news. Using RSS, several news feeds are delivered in a separate browser window. tradeMONSTER also provides robust charting functionality that lets users view four different styles: line, candlestick, area, and bar. It also allows for many simultaneous studies.

After its original launch, tradeMONSTER added spreadMAKER, a one-click trading tool helping investors to create custom options spreads; the Trade Simulator, which lets users tie their actual portfolios to simulated trades; and tradeSHARE, which allows customers to post micro-blogs with trading information onto social networking sites of their choice. Customers can download documentation in Adobe PDF at their convenience, as well as fill out PDF Forms online to streamline how they conduct business with tradeMONSTER.

### Rapid time to market

Adobe Flex Builder 3 was the primary tool in developing the Web 2.0 customizable service that includes RIA features like drag-and-drop, synchronous service calls, and a window-based desktop look and feel. The dedicated Eclipse Integrated Development Environment (IDE) in Flex Builder 3 and its rich component library of extensible user interface components helped speed development, testing, and debugging. Other factors in accelerating time to market included the ease-of-use and robust debugging facilities of Flex Builder. The Adobe development tools also offered the advantage of fast rendering capabilities for high volumes of streaming data.

Overall, the application was 15 months in the making, with the Flex portion requiring about 7 months. "The speed of developing in Flex Builder is better than with other tools," explains Sahoo. "Overall, as a Web 2.0 and RIA framework, the out-of-the-box features of Flex Builder used in the Flex development environment can shorten development time by as much as 25% compared to any other framework in the market."

Several Flex Builder 3 features were instrumental in accelerating application development and rollout. Flex Builder 3 includes an advanced data grid component for creating custom rows and columns, online analytical processing (OLAP) controls, charting enhancements, a performance and memory profiler to help optimize code, and overall performance improvements, which were critical for such a real-time high-performance platform.

### Convenience for customers

The tradeMONSTER RIA created with Adobe Flex Builder 3 runs in customers' browsers using the ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player software, already installed on more than 98% of Internet-enabled desktops. This means the application can be used consistently across all major browsers and operating systems. Customers can trade from anywhere, without having to download plug-ins, applets, or Web Start applications.

"With tradeMONSTER, we wanted to redefine the online trading arena through browser-based streaming data, a customizable interface, and blazing-fast performance," says Mueller-Ingrand. "We looked at options other than developing in the Flex Framework, but we saw that using Adobe Flex Builder was superior in terms of helping us deliver the best customer experience possible."