InVision
New York, New York
www.invisionapp.com

Results
- Enabled end user client to produce lift in conversions
- Allowed previously disparate parties to collaborate in seamless workflows
- Leveraged extensive built-in ColdFusion functionality to accelerate time to market
- Eliminated need to integrate disparate packages into web apps
- Increased platform security
- Extended internal app to commercial platform for more than 65,000 high profile users

InVision

Synthesizing design and development

Small company enables development of design-driven web applications, using innovative software built on Adobe ColdFusion

InVision, a company started by two partners from Epicenter, a boutique web development consultancy based in New York City, has helped transform the way some of the biggest and most innovative companies in the world approach application development and user experience design. At Fortune 500 brands and high-profile companies, including Zappos, Google, eBay, Whole Foods, and Motorola, to name a few—designers and developers use the InVision platform to collaboratively prototype some of today's most recognized digital properties.

InVision, today, is still a small venture-backed company where co-founders Ben Nadel, a widely-noted ColdFusion developer and CTO at InVision, and user experience designer Clark Valberg, now CEO of the company, head a team of about ten people. While neither of the company's co-founders ever had formal design training, their revolutionary subscription-based platform InVision, developed using Adobe ColdFusion, stems from a shared belief that web apps mean little without great experience and interface design. "We see design as the new language of business. While functionality is assumed, design is the key differentiator in today's competitive digital landscape," says Valberg.

Nadel and Valberg are the creators of the InVision platform, a design project management and collaboration tool for creative teams. By focusing on design first, and instead of having separate teams iterate on code while other teams are iterating on ideas, the InVision platform enables teams to spend time prototyping on what matters most to consumers—the experience. Rather than produce static pictures of prototypes of web apps, developers and designers use InVision to collaboratively and rapidly create fully interactive prototypes of web and mobile applications—and gather instant feedback from stakeholders.

"We used ColdFusion to stitch together screens built in Adobe Fireworks®—a relatively simple idea that has revolutionized prototyping. This methodology has not only had a profound effect on us as a web company, it evolved into a successful commercial design project management platform for more than 65,000 users in the first year of launch," says Valberg.
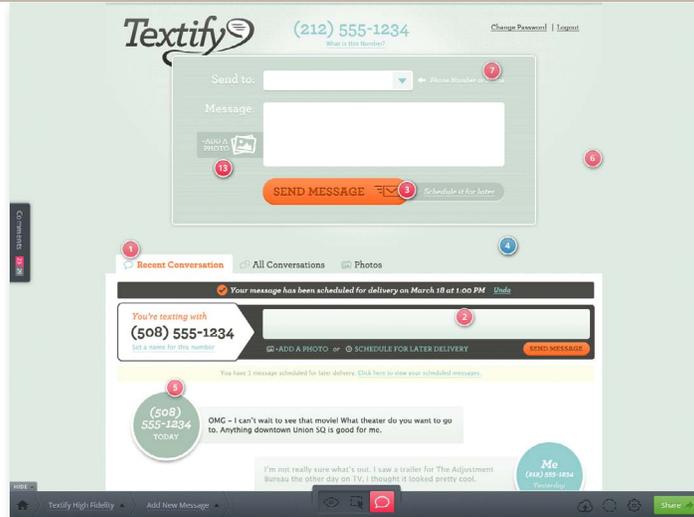
Companies use the InVision SaaS platform to drive innovation, to bridge the gap between design and critical business points, and to enable previously disparate parties to collaborate in seamless workflows. Valberg notes, "In one recent use case, designers and developers at a luxury leather goods manufacturer used InVision to help streamline the company's online checkout process—a user experience improvement that resulted in a lift in conversions and a revenue spike."

Small team approach to rapid development
Before using ColdFusion, Nadel had a strong passion for computer science and programming, but did not like using available programming languages to engineer the front end and back end of web apps. Adopting ColdFusion was a game changer for Nadel and resulted in an innovative, commercially successful platform that, today, is the primary design management tool for thousands of web teams.

Among the greatest advantages of using ColdFusion, Nadel notes, is the ability to rapidly build out applications from prototypes created on the InVision platform, particularly when it comes to pulling content from databases. "The ability to rapidly define rich, clear query parameters in ColdFusion is just one of many reasons the software is a developer's dream come true," says Nadel.

By adopting ColdFusion, InVision was able to create an innovative, commercially successful platform that is today the primary design management tool for thousands of web teams. Advantages of using ColdFusion include the ability to rapidly build out applications from prototypes created on the InVision platform, particularly pulling content from databases.

Challenge
- Enable designers and developers to rapidly iterate on dynamic, interactive prototypes of web and mobile applications
- Shift development process to bridge the gap between design and critical business requirements

Solution
Use Adobe ColdFusion to create a subscription-based design project management and collaboration platform for creative teams

Systems at a glance
Adobe ColdFusion
Adobe Fireworks

Having extensive boilerplate functionality built into ColdFusion allows Nadel and his team to write straightforward code, and to define things in fun, interesting ways. "Such freedom is not found in other languages. We built the InVision platform on ColdFusion, and it's been a pleasure to work with it for the last decade. The investment Adobe continuously makes into the product instills confidence for us to remain loyal customers," he says.

With enhanced support for script-based coding, ColdFusion enables small teams of developers from various backgrounds to get up to speed fast working in a familiar coding environment. For small shops like InVision that have limited engineering resources, ColdFusion provides easy application configuration, enabling small firms to leverage the strong hosting partnerships Adobe has in place.
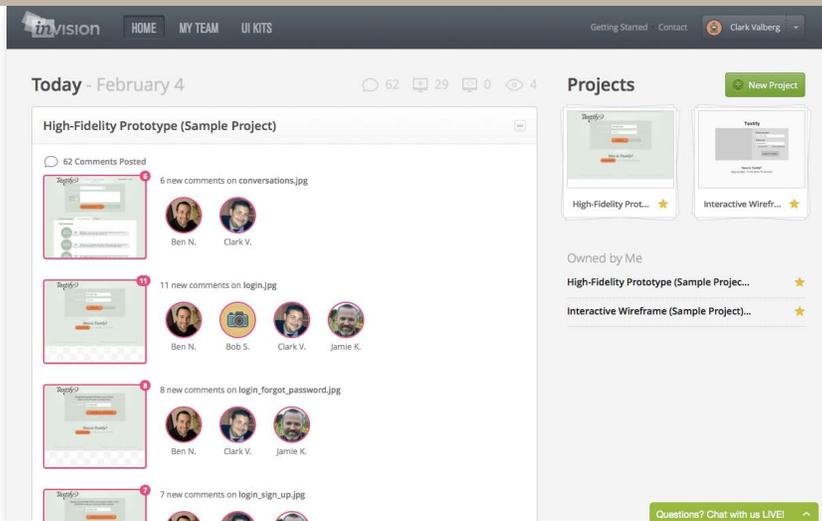
Enhanced functionality drives innovation

Recent advances to ColdFusion have contributed to the enhanced capabilities in a new release of the InVision platform. Strong support for image manipulation makes it possible for InVision to handle the massive number of creative assets designers require for resizing, editing, adding effects, and more. "ColdFusion is perfect for building image processing intensive apps. It also eliminates the overhead and hassle of integrating additional imaging software," says Nadel. Having so much functionality out of the box makes it possible for Nadel and his team to write just a few lines of ColdFusion code rather than source other products, configure and install them, and hook them into an app.

To the InVision developers, the addition of closures in ColdFusion—a binding mechanism for functions—has shifted the paradigm of programming from procedural and object-oriented to more of a functional approach, enabling developers, especially those with JavaScript backgrounds, to rapidly solve complex problems in different, easier ways.

New WebSocket functionality in ColdFusion enables InVision programmers to build bidirectional, real-time web applications without the need to integrate disparate server side push technologies. Instead, ColdFusion provides a set of JavaScript functions for maintaining permanent connections and for better socket management.

ColdFusion has also evolved to enable developers to protect applications and client-side servers against security vulnerabilities and attacks, including session hijacking and riding, and malicious client-side scripts. "ColdFusion is security-rich. Even when less security minded developers are doing the work—as long as they are following ColdFusion best practices, they are following the world's best practices," says Nadel.

"The ability to rapidly define rich, clear query parameters in ColdFusion is just one of many reasons ColdFusion is a developer's dream come true."

Ben Nadel, CTO, InVision

Feeling the pulse of a project

New to InVision service offerings is InVision Sync, a Mac OS X application that makes sharing design work as easy as saving an Adobe Photoshop® or Fireworks file onto a hard drive and having it swooped to a cloud repository.

The new version of their core product, now features a dashboard and an activity stream that provide design teams and their clients with a bird's-eye view of all design activities and communication in process across the organization. InVision now allows designers, product managers, and other stakeholders to keep a continuous finger on pulse of a project and tracks all team member participation over time.

Having headed up the metropolitan New York ColdFusion user group since 2008, Nadel is in the enviable position of having top-notch talent continuously knocking on InVision's door. "It's exciting to imagine what the new generation of ColdFusion developers will accomplish as the platform continues to evolve. For us, it's almost impossible to measure the time we have saved using ColdFusion over other technologies to implement complex features that we see as incredibly relevant to the future of the web."

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/coldfusion-family.html

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