



Why Dundas Chose Silverlight For Its New Dashboard Framework

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When Dundas embarked on the decision to develop a brand new dashboard creation and collaboration application – Dundas Dashboard – countless questions and considerations needed to be addressed. Issues of architecture, usability, performance, audience (and a host of others) all enjoyed center stage during the planning phase.

Now that some time has passed, it seems that one thing was clear from the very beginning: the delivery vehicle of choice for Dundas Dashboard had to be a rich internet application (RIA) – the maintainability and reach RIAs afforded were simply too good to pass up. Once that decision was made, the immediate dilemma became that of selecting an appropriate technology with which to implement. Though due diligence took Dundas down other avenues it quickly became clear that the technology of choice had to be Silverlight.

Having spent years in the .NET space, hiring and honing top talent, it made perfect sense from an operational standpoint to move forward with Silverlight. Doing so would allow the company to continue applying its .NET expertise to the work, while requiring only limited downtime for Silverlight training. No other presentation layer technology promised to facilitate such a compressed development timeline. Further to this, the overlap in toolsets between classical .NET development and Silverlight development meant that Dundas's tried and true development, versioning and code maintenance practices could continue. Given the results (not to mention countless awards) that these practices have yielded over the years, it was of course

immensely desirable that they be continued with a view to releasing further award-winning products and support.

Many people get caught up in the eye-catching graphics that Silverlight makes possible and simply gloss over some of its other strengths. Consider the degree of concurrency possible during a development cycle. The fact that XAML is meaningful outside of compile-time allowed Dundas's graphic designers and UI team to make progress on the front end of Dundas Dashboard in parallel to lower-level development efforts. This collaborative workflow was identified early on as being valuable. So valuable in fact that Dundas Dashboard itself adopts a collaborative workflow separating tasks by job role between the typical stakeholders in the dashboard-creation process.



Dundas Dashboard

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Another compelling reason to pursue Silverlight was the fact that it would make a single build of the dashboard offering accessible across a number of the most widely used platforms. As Dundas Dashboard uses Silverlight 3.0, its front end is accessible from a number of browser-OS pairs on


both Microsoft and non-Microsoft platforms, with reach set to grow with continued development from Novell's Moonlight Project. Such platform freedom meant that Dundas could fully exploit the flexibility of XAML to implement a rich, responsive user experience that would behave and perform consistently across the spectrum of targeted viewing conditions. This would not have been the case had Dundas elected to pursue a more dated implementation method using a mixture of technologies (such as HTML, Script and ASP.NET) to achieve the desired



Dundas Dashboard is a feature-rich solution that gives users tremendous power to create sophisticated, interactive, real-time dashboards.

user experience. By reducing the number of technology dependencies, Dundas has ensured that the finished product is more robust and less susceptible to the types of defects that plague patchwork solutions.

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While none of these factors alone triggered Dundas's decision to move forward in Silverlight, the aggregate case they presented made the choice clear. Dundas Dashboard will, over time, evolve to meet the changing needs of clients and looks set to benefit from Microsoft's continued investment in Silverlight as well as from the growth of the Silverlight community at large. 

For an online demo, tutorials, FAQs and other resource materials, visit:
www.dundas.com/dashboard.



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