



Case Study - EarthWeb

High volume message board solution with integrated personalization.

Challenge

EarthWeb's growth, serving in excess of 2 million users per month, had been assisted by the acquisition of a number of other Web properties. The company faced the challenge of combining these separate entities into a seamlessly integrated whole with a unified experience for all users.

Pamet's mandate was to bring together a number of separate message boards into a single, robust and scalable application. Requirements for the project were quite demanding: as many as 19,000 users might be accessing the boards concurrently, leading to four million page requests per month. Moreover, this was among the first attempts to personalize advertising content and cross-promotion activities based on the known user profile for a message board making it into a marketable online media space.

Pamet was asked to create an application that might accommodate 800% annual growth in the number of users of this system.

Pamet's Solution

Pamet worked quickly and effectively to meet EarthWeb's demands. Requirements gathering was completed on site with the client during a two-day intensive working session and application development began immediately. The Message Board Application (MBA) was built on ATG Dynamo 4.5.1 using JDK 1.1.7 and Oracle Enterprise Edition 8.1.5.0.0 as an underlying RDBMS. Dynamo was well suited to meet the size and scalability needs required by EarthWeb. A further great asset to the project was the Dynamo Personalization Server (DPS).

For the data layer, Pamet proposed an advanced method of performing hierarchical querying to increase the application speed and response time, based on recently completed research at MIT. Although EarthWeb initially felt a more conventional approach to the database structure would deliver equal performance, we performed a series of tests and proved that our solution was between 2 and 10 times faster and required substantially less database processing.

Pamet was able to leverage its extensive experience in ATG and Java to complete this project in less than ten weeks.

Benefits to the Client

The client was very happy with the speed and quality of Pamet's work. The message board application now serves as a major foundation for EarthWeb's Web-based community for IT professionals. Working with a best-of-breed application development firm that had previously established all the necessary relationships with the key technology vendors ensured the timely delivery and deployment of the new application.

