

Bye Bye Cocomo, Hello Flash Collaboration Service

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The wait is over: Adobe have just announced the official name for what was the service code named Cocomo. The official name is now **Adobe Flash Collaboration Service** (which in short would make it AFCS, or even shorter FCS - ring any bells? :).

Adobe describes AFCS as follows: "Adobe Flash Collaboration Service is a Platform as a Service that allows Flex developers to easily add real-time social capabilities into their RIA (Rich Internet Applications). Comprised of both Flex-based client components and a hosted services infrastructure, Adobe Flash Collaboration Service allows you to build real-time, multi-user applications with Flex in less time than ever before. And because Acrobat.com hosts the service, issues like deployment, maintenance, and scalability are taken care of for you."

I personally love real-time capabilities in web apps and AFCS (just like FMS) really excites me. I have a long list of ideas that I'd love to build with it. What's tricky right now is picking the right tool for the job. My current tool of choice is FMS and has 90% of the features I need in a real-time enabled web app. The developer workflow may not be best with FMS still stuck at AS1 on the server side and very limited APIs for the outside world to talk to it, but most of the time I can build what I want with it.

AFCS on the other hand is tempting since I no longer need to worry about scalability, plus Adobe gives me a whole new bunch of Flex components I can use ready to roll. I can also build on top of the underlying data model and come up with my own components. Very powerful stuff.

The questions that remain unanswered (but which will no doubt be answered soon) are those of pricing, amongst other things.

The future for Flash powered RIAs looks bright, and I cannot wait to dig deeper into the new AFCS. Adobe now needs to make it clear to potential customers how AFCS differs from FMS, and when we should use which platform. I cannot help but notice that by renaming Flash Communication Server to Flash Media Server and naming Flash Collaboration Service the way they did they are giving some clear signals of what type of apps they'd like to see on which platform. FMS is getting tons of attention, but 99% of that attention is for streaming video and not real-time apps.

I will feel sad if FMS will be put on the back burner when it comes to developing collaborative apps, but then I guess things change, priorities change and new platforms emerge. Exciting times and exciting apps ahead, I hope FMS will remain part of this ecosystem.