

What Problem is Silverlight Trying to Solve?

Posted At : May 27, 2008 10:52 PM | Posted By : Stefan Richter

Related Categories: Off topic, Windows

Usually solutions are there to solve problems, yet I am having a hard time figuring out which problem Silverlight is trying to solve. My view point on Silverlight is that of an end user since I have not yet developed any Silverlight content. This is not down to a lack of interest either, after all it is a much hyped technology, but due to a lack of development tools on my chosen operating system, OSX.

As an end user I have yet to see anything that offers any benefit to me. Quite the opposite actually. When I recently asked about Silverlight demos on the streamingmedia list was pointed to [Silverlight.net](#) by a Microsoft employee. I walked away asking myself if this was the cutting edge of Silverlight deployments - surely not, since my experience was along the lines of

- Clicked on showcase

- Received error message:

"Silverlight error message, ErrorCode: 3002

ErrorType: ImageError

Message: AG_E_NOT_FOUND

- Clicked OK, same message

- Clicked OK, same message

- Clicked OK, same message... and I was out of there.

Today I browsed around [itv.com](#) and came across their TV catchup service (UK viewing only I believe). It looked remarkably like Flash, and admittedly I got a bit excited. Since ITV is one of my clients I know that they have a very open mind when it comes to technology, and are happy to use a mix of whatever does the job including Flash, Windows Media as well as Silverlight. Good thinking. Except this time it seems, since the 'Flash' player didn't do anything. I clicked play but it just went black. I tried a different video and again, nothing. Right click.. brings up Silverlight preferences.

That explains it then. I am kidding - I'm not blaming Silverlight for what may simply be a file access problem. But why Silverlight? Is it all down to being forced by Legal to use DRMed content? What else could be the reason? The user certainly does not benefit from this, or am I missing something?

Someone tell me, what itch is Silverlight trying to scratch? Surely even the best developer workflow in the world (at least so I've heard) cannot make up for a broken user experience. I'm holding my breath for the Olympics coverage.

PS: I was given a behind the scenes look at the live streaming at ITV recently. Expect some coverage on that in the next few weeks.