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InterLake engagiert sich ehrenamtlich beim Münchener IT- und Medienverband FIWM, dem unser Geschäftsführer Sven Slazenger als Vorstandsmitglied angehört, sowie in der Macromedia ColdFusion User Group Central Europe, die unter unserer Leitung seit 1998 ein deutschsprachiges Forum für über 700 Macromedia Entwickler in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz bietet.

Weitere Informationen zu diesen beiden Initiativen erhalten Sie bei Sven Slazenger ([slazenger@interlake.net](mailto:slazenger@interlake.net))

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InterLake is also an active member of the non-profit Munich IT- and Media Association FIWM. With InterLake CEO Sven Slazenger we provide one of the board members of the FIWM. We are also the founders (1998) of the Macromedia ColdFusion User Group Central Europe, the German language forum for Macromedia Developers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland and one of the largest Macromedia Communities worldwide.

For further information please contact Sven Slazenger ([slazenger@interlake.net](mailto:slazenger@interlake.net))

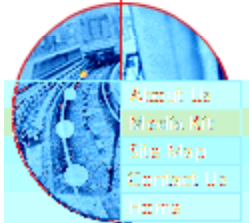




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## Editorials and Opinions

### Guest View: **Macromedia—A Surprising Alternative**



Bola Rotibi, a chartered engineer, is the lead analyst for software development strategies and e-infrastructure at research firm Ovum Ltd.

**December 15, 2002 — In the IT industry, we analysts always talk about who will be the top three software companies. We usually have in mind a combination of Microsoft, IBM and “A.N. Other,” with any number of companies placed in the third slot, depending on market sector. In the application development sector, it’s time to be more specific and put our money on someone once and for all.**

Imagine a faceless golfer with impeccable pedigree, who hangs in there and sneaks a major title at the end of the season when everyone was focused on the big names at the head of the leader board. He may not be exciting, but he sure is successful. Now put Macromedia in golf spikes and you get the picture.

If Microsoft and IBM are the Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson of the IT world, then Macromedia is A.N. Other. I am not for a minute suggesting that what Macromedia is doing is not exciting, but for all its worthy success, it tends to be overlooked. Nonetheless, we should start to take its challenge seriously.

First, Macromedia successfully acquired Allaire—an astute move that bought gravitas to its design-based tools and added middleware capability to its product portfolio. The company even found a way of breathing new life into Allaire’s ColdFusion, which was no small feat for a development and runtime environment that sat at odds with the growing trend to opt for either a Microsoft or Java-based platform. And Macromedia’s low-end J2EE application server JRun—on top of which ColdFusion now sits—enjoys a respectable and notable placing in the J2EE-based application server

## Opinions

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league.

So, in light of this, why shouldn't Macromedia rise above the others? The company owns the Flash Player, arguably the most widely ported software on the planet, with more ubiquity than Java with its Java Virtual Machine (JVM). Granted, the Flash Player has a lot less to control than the JVM, but with its installed base, only a fool can ignore the opportunity this presents to the company. And there can be no doubt that Macromedia is repositioning Flash to capitalise on this popularity. Flash MX may still be very much a tool for the designer, but the improved programming capabilities make it more palatable for application developers who want the wow factor of animation and interactivity.

But it doesn't stop there. In mid-November, Macromedia released Contribute, the latest product to join its newly revamped and MaXimum Strength (MX) product portfolio. Contribute allows those with no prior knowledge of HTML to directly edit and publish static Web pages.

And before you all go rushing off into apoplectic fits over security violations, the key to Contribute is that control remains in the hands of the Web administrator/developer who will have total power over which parts of the page can be accessed, and by whom. Those lucky enough to attend Macromedia's 2002 DevCon in Orlando, Fla.—and to sign the unnecessary and highly impractical nondisclosure forms—were amongst the first to see the product in action.

The full power of Contribute may take some time to filter through, but its immediate benefits to those who rely on Web developers to update simple static data is very apparent. Contribute may not be a panacea to all your bottleneck problems with updating content, but it does pose a more interesting threat to the use of Microsoft's Word as an efficient medium for publishing Web content.

In many respects, Macromedia is like Microsoft, but without the reputation (yet) and, of course, the fabulously cash-rich bank account. Similarly, the company boasts as enthusiastic and loyal a following—albeit primarily among Web designers and builders—but also increasingly among Web application developers.

Not that the future is without challenges. Macromedia still needs to win over more of the hard-core application developer community. Also, it must do so without disenfranchising its core design community. Some hard decisions need to be made with respect to its product portfolio.

For all its success, Macromedia is a technology that isn't traditionally associated with enterprise development. And its recent acquisitions coupled with a new strategy and plenty of internal development, suggests that the company is prepared to move beyond the world of cool site design to punch it out in

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the harsher but more lucrative application development market.

The real danger for its competitors is to underestimate the compelling features and potential of Macromedia's product offerings: interactive-centricity, massive installed base, easy-to-use Web site management, low-cost server-side development and runtime environment, and its efforts to improve usability.

After all, we are entering into a more pervasive, interactive and communicative world, from both a consumer and enterprise standpoint. In this environment, the user experience—developer to end user—is paramount. Surely a company that has this at its heart cannot be far from receiving the recognition it deserves.

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