

xDeveloper Community Tools

Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Xaraya community. It does not specify an Xaraya standard of any kind. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

When time is a less scarcer good, someone might convert the plain text into structured XML so we can benefit from it.

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1. Original content

RFC 0031 xDeveloper Community Tools

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS (0031)
xDeveloper :: Community Tools
 Previously Known as ...
 Xaraya Community Enhancements (RFC0009)
 and
 xarCommunity

VISION

xDeveloper is a "super-module" or suite of modules which will serve to strengthen the entire Xaraya Community - developers and end-users alike. On many levels, xDeveloper serves as a replacement to SourceForge.net built around the PN Core. While initially built to serve the Xaraya Community, xDeveloper will also be an aggressive first step towards a corporate "killer app".

Note: Our friends at Xoops have a similar initiative underway called Xoopsforge. I'd advise anyone involved with the project to look there for additional inspiration.

PLANNING & EXECUTION

Many of the components listed below exist either as current PN or PHPNuke modules or as other open-source projects. To build xDeveloper, we need to bring the best elements of each of these apps together under a common, tightly integrated platform. To accomplish this, we will need to complete the following steps ...

01. Review & Select Best of Class Components

Review all relevant, pre-existing modules and or non-PN Apps (complete list below). Where more than one candidate exists to fill a particular component niche (ie. BugTracker), select one app to act as our core component for that niche. From the remaining apps in that niche, select the features we want to pull into the core component for that niche.

02. Establish Standard Component Architecture

Clearly, xarAPI and xarModule API are the core standards. However, as xDeveloper is a suite of inter-related components, we will also need to architect the relationships across components. Perhaps this is more simple than I anticipate. Erring on the side of caution, I think we should at least discuss the common component framework before we dive into building xDeveloper. It is likely to save us some headaches down the line.

Initial core architecture considerations for non-PN apps (including PHPNuke modules not-yet ported) include: Adapting user tables to use the Xaraya user tables & permissions schema Adapting SQL to Xaraya's ADODB standards and inclusion in Xaraya DB as opposed to an independent DB instance. Adapting code to xarModule API standards (wrappers, function calls, theme calls, etc.)

03. Build Project Plan

Pretty straight-forward. Determine what are the most crucial milestones from Release 0.01 through Release 1.0. Put resources and timelines against each component.

04. Execute Plan

Build, test, tweak, release cycle.

xDeveloper COMPONENTS

The following list is by no means exhaustive. It is simply a "first cut" at what might be the core components of the xDeveloper platform. After the initial listing, descriptions of each component are provided along with links to relevant OSS archives/websites for apps under consideration as xDeveloper components.

01. xarCVS
02. xarFunctions
03. xarProject
04. xarFeedback
05. xarForums
06. xarKnowledge
07. xarDevelopers
08. xarPortfolio
09. xarLibrary
10. xarJobBoards
11. xarRatings
12. xarPrinter

COMPONENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Detailed descriptions of each proposed component. As available, I have included links to OSS projects that may serve as the core component once adapted to PN standards. Where more than app exists for a component, the first app listed is the one I think is best suited for the task at hand.

Note: Some of these apps have functionality that crosses over. Where this occurs, we would ideally incorporate the best features of each app.

01. xarCVS

Pretty self-explanatory.

Possible core component:
BrowseCVS
Chora CVS Viewer

02. xarFunctions

Think of the Function List available at PHP.NET. This tool would list all PN functions complete with user supplied comments and examples.

Possible core component:
RFC 0019 from CHV
PHP XRef
PHP Autodoc
PHPDoc

03. xarProject

Developers and project managers would use this tool. It would provide a central task list complete with resource assignments, milestones, etc.

Possible core components:
PHPCollab
PHProjekt
Groupware
DotProject
ZenTrack

04. xarFeedback

Bug Report/Feature Request/Documentation Requests ... Traditionally managed by bug tracking software (eg, Bugzilla), each of the above tools would be a form available to developers and end users. Each would have specific attributes but could be simply reclassified as one of the other types by admins as needed. Once confirmed by an admin, each of these would be come a task in the project manager. Each report type would have tracking reports associated with them for admin use.

Note: Documentation Requests are perhaps a little less obvious than the other two types. Doc Requests would be calls for new FAQ, manual additions, new inline help etc.

Possible core component:

Mantis Bug Tracker
Marcel von der Boom's SF Bug Tracker port to PN
PHP BugTracker

05. xarForums

Redeployment of existing support and development forums based on Comments API. Key to success is tight integration with other components to facilitate efficient project management and documentation. The forums should be a place where the components below can be easily fed as needed from forum posts by forum moderators. Conceptually, this would be a series of admin/moderator-only buttons along these lines ...

Make Bug Report
Make Feature Request
Make Doc Request

Clicking one of these buttons would be similar to "Post Reply", except it would direct the admin/moderator to appropriate form within the Feedback Component (see above). This would auto-populate the feedback form and include an admin comment field OR just provide the admin comment form and a link to the post in the forums.

Submitting the forum-fed feedback form would also somehow flag the originating forum post as referred to the feedback component with a link to the to Bug/Request in the queue. This would reduce repetitive posts and reinforce the feeling among end-users that the forums are monitored, used and therefore useful/valuable.

Core component:

Comments API derived forum (includes threaded & flat views at user discretion)

06. xarKnowledge

Knowledge Management/Knowledgebase/Help Desk Tools ... Fed in large part by the Feedback: Documentation Requests, the xarKnowledgebase is an extension and possible next generation of Documentation Central. The objective is to make life easier for the Docs Team by giving them strong online tools. Doc Requests would help queue and prioritize documentation needs both for FAQs and more expansive docs like User Guides.

Ideal features would include an updated, sitewide search engine; feeds from the knowledge base to PHPLive and or IRC.xar.com to help live support staff push repetitive answers to end-users; and context sensitive help driven by an Autolinks style module.

Possible core components:
WIKI Module (xarCore)
FAQ Module (xarCore)
Autolinks Module (xarCore)
Cerebrus HelpDesk

PHPLive
OWL Intranet Engine
Google/DMOZ Search Modules
Drupal KMS

07. xarDevelopers

A directory of PN Developers that serves several purposes. First, it provides the developer community with a central list of developer profiles which includes their skills, interests, etc.. Think of the dev profiles on www.sourceforge.net. Second, this directory provides end-users the same directory so they can direct their inquiries to the appropriate developer. Finally, when tied to Xaraya Portfolio, it provides developers a place to "hang their shingle" for potential clients who may want to hire them to install/manage a PN site and/or create custom themes, content or modules.

Possible core components:
X-User Module
Developer's Module
Dynamic User Data

08. xarPortfolio

YAPNS/Weblinks/Gallery combo ... similar to many of the themes galleries available online now. This is YAPNS on steroids. It provides a small thumbnail of the site (or not ... user decided). A brief description of the site which might include a list of the modules installed, custom work done on the site and other credit information. Also applies categories to YAPNS so they are simpler to surf for those looking for ideas and or devs for their site.

Finally, once a YAPNS addition is added to the PN Portfolio ... it automatically creates a brief news story (abstract) on the site where the "Read More..." link points to the Portfolio Entry.

Possible core components:
Weblinks (xarCore)
Gallery
My eGallery

09. xarLibrary

This idea comes from Module Submissions (<http://mods.Xaraya.com/mod-submit.php>) at mods.xar.com. Rather than providing an HTML template for a Module Release news item, we provide a form which captures all the same information, uploads the file to the PN site (if allowed - security issues to be fleshed out) or verifies link out to the source site. Adds submission to the Downloads Library and, like pnPortfolio, automatically creates a brief news story (abstract) on the site where the "Read More..." link points to the Download Library Entry.

If the module was developed by some one in the Developer Directory, it would automatically provide a link to the developer's profile(s). If it is in use at a site found in xarPortfolio, links could be autogenerated to Portfolio sites.

Possible core components:
Downloads (xarCore)
NukeOwl
Comet File Manager
Weeble File Manager

10. xarJobBoards

Human Resources Management ... As an adjunct to the Developer Directory and xarPortfolio, the PN Job Boards would be a place where

folks could post Xaraya-related jobs for developers to review and apply or bid on. This tool would also be key for PN Project Managers who need to assemble a team to address an issue on the core product.

In a "Monster.com" sort of twist, it would be cool if the person posting the job could rate the desired level of skill for the job (eg. PHP - Advanced) and run a query which would return a list of PN developers who meet the minimum requirements. In addition, developers could set up an agent/bot that pinged them with an email, IM or PM when new jobs went on the board that matched their skills.

Possible core components:

PHPProfession
 PHP-HR
 RezML
 XML Resume Library

11. xarRatings

Uses existing PN Ratings API to apply ratings to everything from Project Tasks (priority rating), Developer Profiles (Skills Rating), Module Submissions (Quality Ratings), etc.

12. xarPrinter

Printer-Friendly Tools Online resources (particularly documentation) will be made readily available in a printer-friendly format generated via a print-friendly XML/XLST and or PHP's built in PDF functions. The end-user would realize this through a ubiquitous "Print This Page" button which would reformat pages as needed for optimal printing.

Possible core component:

PHP PDF Class

xDeveloper DEVELOPERS

As with components, this is not an exhaustive list. Many developers will be required to make xDeveloper happen. The more, the merrier. The names listed below have either already committed to the project or have been recommended based on a current work in progress that may dovetail nicely into xDeveloper.

NAME (NICK)	ROLE	COMPONENT
Gregor Rothfuss (Gregor)	Project Sponsor	
Doug Daulton (Apakuni)	Project Manager	
John Robeson (Johnny)	Lead Dev	Developer Directory
Chad Kraeft (St. Ego)	Lead Dev	Project Management
Carl Corliss (Rabbitt)	Lead Dev	Comments API
Frithjof Pfannstiel (BlackVArt)	Lead Dev	Function Library
Jan Schrage (Jan)	Lead Dev	CVS Tools
Veres Ferenc	Lead Dev	Xaraya Library (Downloads)
Volodymyr Metenchuk (Voll)	Lead Dev	MantisBT Conversion
Vladimir Shundalov(CHV)	Lead Dev	Documentation Module

Note: Johnny, Gregor, Rabbitt and I will be the project council that makes key personnel decisions for xDeveloper. Please do not take that to mean we are on a power trip . It is simply a matter of someone needing to lead the project. All point's ove view will be considered and factored into our decisions.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Additional information (complete with comments) regarding the drivers behind xDeveloper may be found at Xaraya Documentation Central: RFC9 - Xaraya Community Enhancements.

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 Author: Doug Daulton - Xaraya Marketing Lead

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