ISVCon 2012 in Reno

by Gianfranco Berardi
President, ASP

After much preparation, last month the ASP hosted its first ISVCon, the new Software Industry Conference, in Reno, Nevada. The rebooted conference kicked off with a Thursday night Welcome Reception sponsored by Digital River's MyCommerce. It was a great opportunity to meet fellow attendees while enjoying some of the delicious hors d'oeuvrs and drinks provided by the excellent Atlantis Casino Resort Spa staff, a taste of things to come.

Friday started with a continental breakfast before everyone headed into the first of five Power Session of the day: Rob Walling of Software by Rob (www.softwarebyrob.com/) talked about marketing from day one, ways to write game-changing headlines, why boring products have a higher chance of succeeding, and

ways to increase the lifetime value of your customers.

Tom Beidle of MyCommerce presented ideas for developing a successful mobile strategy while leveraging your existing skills. He mentioned that while the market is still on track for hitting 2 billion desktop computers by 2015, the mobile market is growing much, much faster.

Avangate's Michael Ni walked attendees through the steps of transitioning from traditional licensing models to a subscription billing, Software as a Service (SaaS) model, explaining that there is a rapid market shift.

After a delicious lunch with an amazing dessert, Jonathan Lampe of Rhinosoft helped point out how to identify industry dinosaurs and capture opportunities that the bigger, slower companies ignore, with examples of easy, actionable steps a business can take to quickly improve sales with "anti-dinosaur" principles.

AppVisor/ASP Partnership
to Provide Full Update to the ASP PAD Platform

PAD SPECIFICATION 4.0 Introduces Certification, New Tools and Services

by Joel Diamond
PAD Chair, ASP

The early beginning of the idea behind AppVisor started around 2008, when President Michael Dulin was given the task to sell an ASP project called SaferDownloads. The idea was an attempt to establish a service that would support an industry-wide accepted standard for testing, qualifying and securing that a downloadable software title was safe for an end-user to download. The service would have been fee-based, paid for by

the publisher, and result in an ASP-endorsed banner. Unfortunately, after months of developing the SaferDownloads program, the ASP found that the project needed a far larger staff and more resources than could be provided as an ASP project.

Safer Downloads was based on the success of the PAD Specification. The Portable Application Document (also known as "PAD") Specification, introduced over 10 years ago, was originated, conceived, and developed by a very talented committed volunteer team of active members in the ASP; you can read the origins of PAD in

ASPects

Advertising Sizes

Full page
1 issue $120, 3 issues $330
6 issues $600

Half page
1 issue $70, 3 issues $200
6 issues $360

Quarter page
1 issue $40, 3 issues $115
6 issues $220

Business card
1 issue $30, 3 issues $80
6 issues $155

Email banner:
1 issue $30, 3 issues $80
6 issues $155

Trade Show Calendar

Game Developers Conference Europe
Cologne, Germany
August 13-15, 2012
http://www.gdceurope.com

Sociality Rocks! 2012
Social Games Conference #1
Kiev, Ukraine
September 27-28, 2012
http://en.socialityrocks.com

Business of Software 2012
Boston, Massachusetts
October 1-3, 2012
http://www.businessofsoftware.org/

Casual Connect Kyiv
Kiev, Ukraine, October 24-26, 2012
http://kyiv.casualconnect.org/

BUILD 2012
Redmond, Washington
Oct 30- Nov 2, 2012
http://www.buildwindows.com

European Software Conference
Munich, Germany
November 24-25, 2012
http://www.euroconference.org/

CeBIT 2013
Hannover, Germany
March 5-9, 2013
http://www.cebit.de

Game Developers Conference (GDC 2013)
San Francisco, California
March 25-29, 2013
http://www.gdconf.com/

ISVCon 2013
Reno Nevada
http://www.ISVCon.org

Multiple Dates & Cities, World-wide

Microsoft Devcamps
Free training events for Phone, Azure, Web, and Windows
August though September
http://www.devcamps.ms

WordCamp
WordPress Conferences
August through November 11
http://central.wordcamp.org/schedule/

Send conference news to the ASPects editor.
View the full list online at: http://www.asp-software.org/resources/events.asp

ISVCon 2012 in Reno

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Ending the day with promises of free pizza, Nico Westerdale of BitsDuJour explained how most software businesses are operating as if they are badly-run restaurants, and he gave some insights into how ISVs can change their marketing approaches to have a dramatic impact on their sales.

The next two days featured two tracks of sessions. The newbie track included basic software marketing and advertising sessions on Saturday. Marketing experts included Phil Schnyder of Avanquest and Mark Iverson of Digital River introduced ways to identify customers, craft an effective sales process, and leveraging social media as a part of it.

Aaron Weiner of Software Promotions talked about the fundamentals of Google AdWords and explained how to get started with it.

Gregg Seelhoff of Digital Gamecraft focused on quality assurance from the perspective of a small developer. Jean Cyr and Mitchell Vincent ended Saturday with a discussion of software protection approaches.

Sunday featured Gregg Seelhoff, Christopher Williamson of DreamQuest Games, and Gianfranco Berardi of GBGames on a panel discussing ways in which games are a different beast in terms of sales and marketing, with topics ranging from Kickstarter to test driven development to market research.

Wishery.com's Cooper Marcus gave a fascinating presentation on business app marketplaces. User privacy deployment strategies were the focus of SpiderOak's Ethan Oberman's

talk. And finally, Patrick Foley gave an overview of Microsoft's upcoming platform offerings with tips and insight into how an ISV can best take advantage of them. He also gave away an Xbox 360 with Kinect to a random attendee.

The advanced track started on Saturday with Aaron Weiner providing a range of new ideas and practical advice for improving the performance of your AdWords campaigns.

Jim Coutu of vworker.com gave advice for hiring and managing freelancers and other outsourced talent, highlighting some of the most common problems he's seen with such relationships.

Alexander Halser of Help+Manual covered issues and trends in desktop and online help, including an overview of the technologies and file formats as well as advice for creating help content that people will actually read.

Digital River's Denise Purtzer covered content creation techniques in general with an eye on appealing to both search engines and prospective customers.

Gianfranco Berardi

Saturday's last advanced session was all about affiliates and bundling as alternative ways to sell software, presented by Erik Engleman of Ask Partner Network.

Twilio's Jonathan Gottfried kicked off Sunday's advanced sessions with cloud service-based techniques to increase customer adoption, retention, and engagement.

Christopher Pryce of Digital River highlighted features of Windows 8 and the Windows store, described the business model expectations, and gave and overview of development opportunities on this platform.

Christopher Williamson shared his experience developing apps for iOS and Android devices, gave an overview of cross-platform tools, and described the realities of app pricing and marketing.

Kevin O'Brien of Constant Contact outlined the trends in email marketing, explaining ways to enhance your offering and connecting it with other business tools.

The excellent sessions and speakers weren't the only things to see in Reno. The breakfasts and lunches were terrific. Saturday's lunch also featured a few awards, including an ASP Hall of Fame award for Dennis Reinhardt [see other article]. Friday night, the ASP took a number of people to enjoy the minor league Reno Aces and their

home run derby, winning 7-2 over the Salt Lake Bees, and providing an amazing fireworks show. Saturday night's fun was blamed on the boogie as many ISVCon attendees ate well at the Eldorado buffet and attended the "Man in the Mirror" Michael Jackson tribute show.

Sue Pichotta

Between the collection of great speakers, the smooth logistics, and the general organization of the conference, there's quite a few people to thank for the success of ISVCon 2012. Jerry Stern worked on the conference program book and took quite a few good photos. Rich Holler and Mitchell Vincent helped out in various capacities throughout the conference. Sal Gagliano did a great job volunteering in any way he could, especially with helping me record the sessions. Nico Westerdale helped out with marketing. Tony Bryer showed up days early to help Sue Pichotta with logistics and was the fist person you saw each day at the registration desk. And there is very likely quite a few people I forgot. Thanks, everyone, for your efforts!

Finally, Sue did a tremendous job as Conference Manager. In fact, she did the work of multiple people as she worked out the deal with the hotel, found the sponsors, created and maintained the website, and managed attendee registration, among a half million other duties and roles. Without her efforts, ISVCon 2012 couldn't have been pulled off nearly as well, if at all. Thank you very much, Sue!

Gianfranco Berardi runs GBGames, LLC as an indie game developer at www.gbgames.com.

Dennis Reinhardt Joins ASP Hall of Fame

by Gianfranco Berardi
President, ASP

The ASP Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have helped make the ASP what it is today. During Saturday lunch at ISVCon, it was my pleasure to present the ASP Hall of Fame award to Dennis Reinhardt.

A member since 2000, Dennis Reinhardt, owner of DAIR Computer Systems, has contributed in a great number of roles. He was the founding chairperson for the PAD Committee, where he introduced regular expression constraints to formalize PAD definitions. He also wrote the first validator and was heavily involved in releasing PAD Kit, seeding the growth of download sites. He was also the founding chairperson for

the Website committee, where he completed work to implement a web-based forum.

He spent much of his time in leadership positions. As a director, he sponsored and named the Townhall forum, and as chairperson of the board, he played an important role in securing member approval of ASP bylaw revisions. He drafted parts of the Newsgroup FAQ and maintained them. As trademark manager, he worked with an attorney to draft submissions for seven trademarks related to the ASP and PAD.

He served as Secretary and as Vice President before becoming President in 2010. Along with his regular office duties, he was involved in two major sales negotiations. First, he signed the sale of Safer Downloads

to WUGNET, and then he oversaw the sale of SIC assets from the SIAF to the ASP. He retired from the position in October of 2011 and remains a supporting member.

Congratulations, Dennis, and thank you for all that you have given to the ASP!

Gianfranco Berardi runs GBGames, LLC as an indie game developer at www.gbgames.com.

Why Appvisor?

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Richard Holler's article (See the July 2003 *ASPects*, page 18.). Its success and contributions to the software industry and marketplace have rarely been acknowledged, but to-date, its impact is enormous–it is estimated that over 40,000 active software publishers have produced nearly 200,000 PAD XML files as the basis for marketing, promoting, and distributing their downloadable software applications. And nearly 6000+ independent PAD-supporting websites have been created, who accept submissions of PAD files, as indexed on Google. And several of these PAD sites remain in the top 100-most-trafficked websites, according to Alexa.

Mike Dulin approached WUGNET Publications Inc at the Software Industry Conference the following year, announcing to ASP members and others that the ASP was looking for a long term solution to help the organization with the PAD platform, including providing support for the thousands of publishers using PAD, maintaining all the tools and resources that the ASP has offer the community for free, as the ASP no longer was able to provide this. It was during these discussions between WUGNET, Mike and other members of the ASP, that we identified a much greater problem with another key asset owned by the ASP, namely, the PAD platform. Many had long speculated that the PAD platform had been enormously successful but very little attempt had been made to measure the impact of the PAD Specification, or the number of publishers and pad sites using PAD.

Rather than focus on what to do with SaferDownloads, WUGNET and Mike developed a long-term partnership plan to have WUGNET take on the responsibility of updating and developing the PAD platform under a business model that would result in royalty revenues for the ASP.

There certainly were plenty of commercial tools and services that publishers used for their PAD files, but there wasn't any program in place at the ASP to collect, track, or measure who was using the PAD Specification or ASP-related PAD tools or resources. What did exist was the ASP's PAD Repository, containing nearly 150,000 unique listings, but little effort had been made to qualify if these were truly PAD files from legitimate publishers or bogus or

Erik Pelton, Michael Dulin, Joel Diamond, and Jim Coutu at the Dallas SIC in 2010, commemorating the agreement to update the PAD Specification.

spam PAD submissions.

As far as the other PAD tools, PADGen, the #1 PAD creation tool, has had, at most, two updates in the last four years. The actual PAD Specification, v 3.1, has had little updating over the same time period. It was also apparent that the actual specification lacked many obvious fields that both publishers and pad sites needed, including social networking links, video fields, and new OS categories. It was apparent that the ASP lacked the resources to update the specification, improve the ASP tools that helped publishers authors maintain and create PAD files, clean/update the publicly-available PAD Repository, or provide the technical support for a specification that is used by over 40,000 publishers.

Thus, AppVisor has been formed to support, protect, and enhance the ASP's PAD platform, the intellectual property of the platform, and the integrity of the platform, and to reinvest in the platform, so it meets the needs of current and future members of the ASP.

And that brings us up to 2012. AppVisor, will soon launch a new PAD platform, along with a much needed PAD Specification 4.0, that will support impending new PAD specification features (certification, social networking, video fields), tools (new web-based PAD authoring), and resources (virtual PAD Repository, etc) , and will offer support to the software community and websites based on the PAD standard. More importantly, with the introduction of PAD Certification, the AppVisor platform will also be adding premium submission services for certified publishers applications' as well as new categories of software. Finally, good news for all ASP members . All current members shall be offered a free Certification of their current PAD files for one year.

Beta-testing of the Appvisor web site will begin during August, and will be open to ASP members. No submission

fees will be charged during the beta period. Visit www.appvisor.com starting in mid-August for details and to help the ASP and WUGNET move the PAD standard forward.

Call for Advisors

AppVisor and the PAD Spec Committee are looking for active ASP members to help us in providing suggestions and feedback on all the PAD platform initiatives that are planned for 2012. With the goal of inclusion of all categories of APPS, extensive new content features, and many new PAD services planned, active feedback and support is urgently needed. AppVisor Advisor Board member candidates should be active professionals with interest and expertise from PAD Sites (Software Portals), Ecommerce Providers, Publishers, SoftwareMarketing Providers (affiliate, advertising networks). Please contact Joeld@appvisor.com if you are interested.

The Benefits of PAD Certification
Why does the PAD Platform Require Certification?

by Joel Diamond
PAD Chair, ASP

1. Eliminate Fraud and Secure the Publishers Content – As much as 70% of the NEW software applications submitted to web software portals, are fraudulent or illegal digital content. The rise of offshore software publishers are from third-world and developing countries, who publish software with little understanding for international trademark and copyright law,

2. Eliminate PAD Spam – Similar to fraud, too many illicit third parties attempt to use the PAD platform to submit their products to PAD sites, hoping they automatically generate product listings that may benefit their SEO or illegal affiliate links. This has several negative consequences, including directly impacting software publishers of legitimate software applications while increasing time and costs to review PAD submissions.

3. Provide Security to both Ecommerce Providers and Affiliates – Support the entire ecosystem of app distribution and publishing, making sure that the ecommerce links and solutions included in an application PAD file are legitimate.

4. Providing Technical Support for PAD Sites – With over 1000+ third party websites that accept the submissions of PAD files from publishers, the ASP does not have the resources, volunteers or staff to answer questions from these sites. It has also delayed the need for new requested field support in the PAD Specification, as there are no resources available to provide critical support to these sites.

5. Provide Tech Support to Publishers – with an estimated 50,000+ publishers who are currently basing their online marketing and distribution of their software products with PAD files, adding certification will allow updates and expansion of the PAD specification for the entire publisher community. Critical and premium support can be delivered through annual certification fees.

6. Add New Software Categories to PAD Specification – Neither mobile or web-based apps are supported in the original PAD Specification. With plans to include both with new PAD fields to support these categories, thousands of new publishers will be introduced to the PAD platform, requiring support. The costs of adding these categories to include technical and online support can only be met with annual premium certification.

7. Enable New Fields and Features to Existing PAD Specification – Freeware will be replaced by three new freeware categories, potentially affecting nearly 50% of all downloadable software. Addition of social networking, video and other rich media content will also require major engineering with the official ASP PAD client, specification and validation tools. Certification fees will offset the costs to update these tools.

8. Enhance the PAD Repository to Provide New Capabilities and Support – utilize the PAD Repository to track, report and access PAD files that legitimately and certified. Enhancements to the PAD Repository include options for using HTTPS secure links, virtual PAD content tracking and support for PAD Extensions.

9. Improve PAD Authoring and Validation Tools – This includes the licensing to legitimate third-party tool and service providers, who use the PAD platform without authorization from the ASP. With expanded support for new categories and fields that will be introduced to the specification, the PAD authoring platform will also have to be enhanced and updated. A major goal is to migrate the existing desktop PAD authoring tools to one single web portal tool, that will reduce costs and enhance capabilities to publishers and pad supported sites. This includes improved integration with the current ASP PAD Validation tools and vastly improved Quality Assurance support for PAD submission websites.

10. Prevent Software Publishers from False Claims of ASP Membership – this includes real time QA on validating whether publishers are members of the ASP; if the PAD-supported download sites are licensees of the PADKIT and are not only supporting the latest PAD Specification, but are committed to supporting the latest PAD Specification.