

Monday, November 17, 2008

Zend Framework: Surviving The Deep End

Zend Framework: Surviving The Deep End
A Zend Framework Example Blog Application From Start To Finish

People have approached me over the months curious about why I don't just write a Zend Framework themed book, get with a publisher, and make mountains of money (or at least a modest hill). After all, most know I have had offers from at least one publisher. Writing a book would provide a great deal of publicity for my own skills, highlight my authority on the subject, increase my ego to dangerous proportions and give my stature in the community and with potential clients a boost. The benefits go beyond mere cash.

I usually start by explaining that writing a book on contract is no easy project. A book takes time, patience, incredible dedication and an all out attack on your preconceptions. No matter how "expert" you'd like to believe you are, writing a book will definitely blow that out of the water. In the words of myself, an expert is someone who consults the manual less, and knows where to find everything they don't know more efficiently .

I know from experience in writing the Zend Framework Example Blog Application Tutorial that explaining the Zend Framework is no easy task. It's impossible to do without plenty of forethought and care, and usually a detailed reading of the manual in conjunction with the actual source code (both what you intend writing, and the Zend Framework source itself). Even then you rewrite everything at least twice, and tweak it a dozen ways after. Why? Because that's the only way to escape one's dependence on ingrained experience and IDE auto completion which easily leads the "expert" to skip over the obvious and take knowledge for granted - not an advisable trait in any reference work.

This, for me, created an arena in which I felt compelled to utilise an old device: a single comprehensive example which tied together every facet of knowledge I wanted to explore. It had to be simple, creative, problematic and real - all at the same time. That's where a "blog" came to mind . It can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be which made it a highly flexible example, and everyone (plus their dog) knows how a blog works in theory. It also coincided with the web application framework equivalent of "Hello, World!". The fact I really wanted to write my own customisable blog was mere icing.

Unfortunately the whole initial project had one minor issue - I quickly realised the book I wanted to write was not the book a publisher wanted to print. I went from a loose index of about 15-20 chapters covering up to 400 pages in print, to getting a rearranged edited version for less than 200 pages sent back to me by an editor with an abridged content index. I was then asked to sign the dotted line. I declined. I've heard from them since but the initial experience was sufficient to make me wary of any more surprises. I had figured out what I wanted to write by then, and didn't find the sudden pushback satisfactory. I'm stubborn that way. I tend to rant at length when irritated (as a few would remember).

Here's why not to write a Zend Framework book then: when the book you must write is not the book you want to write! Writing a 200 page book on the Zend Framework can be done - just not by me. All my readers understand my writing style by now - I explore topics in detail with a dash of sometimes geeky humour and most importantly, I write at length. Miles of length . Cal Evans, formerly over at Zend Devzone, knows how my idea of a 2000 word article usually ends up as 4000+ - half of it smiles . I'm a verbose personality who finds it repugnant to summarise knowledge to the point it loses it's heart or only gets half the job done (and heaven knows there's enough of that on the market without me adding to it). From that perspective, a short book would be the ultimate regret, something I wouldn't likely find pride in, and something that I would always feel could have been a lot better. Since I'm not driven by the possibility of a major injection of cash to my bank account (seriously, few once off books are worth writing just for cash) it was an easy decision.

Which brings us full circle to the reason my blog has crashed...twice...this summer. Since the book idea wasn't working out, the only solution worth considering was the one which provided the greatest level of personal satisfaction - a multi part Zend Framework tutorial on my blog! Of course I kept it buried about the fact that the series was a shortened version of what I'd write in a book. I wanted to see how the community reacted first - and react it did. Enough to crash the damn blog twice and swarm me with emails when the series was down .

It's weird how things progress once they build up momentum. But with all the fun this series has been, it's near time I made the book idea a reality in some form which is more useful to readers than hard to locate blog posts, and carries a

sense of solid permanency. With that notion in mind, I've done bits and pieces over the Summer. The tutorial has been transferred to Docbook XML ready for further editing and an automated process for transferring this to HTML and PDF formats (I'm currently mid way into a tutorial on that whole PHP driven process on the blog) put in place. A strategy of editing, correcting, updating and expanding (where necessary) the original articles is underway as a "Revised" series to start next month. All such Revised versions will arrive in multiple formats - Blog, HTML and PDF - as free Creative Commons licensed downloads alongside a donation driven model for raising cash...for my next Macbook Pro upgrade (and maybe my Porsche?) if nothing else. Most useful perhaps, this all means I can roll out updates and corrections with ease (no massive lead time for printing).

So yes, I am going the self publishing vanity route . Let the ego swelling commence! I'm a persistent bugger and hellbent on writing this book if only to appease my appetite for writing something worthwhile and delighting in tracking its success (or epic failure) over time. I'm weird that way. I program weird stuff in my free time because it's an outlet for my creativity not because I profit from it. I've spent way more on hosting than my weirdo blog and mini-apps/libraries would ever refund, and that's how I like it.

As for the inevitable spiel over why you should consider downloading this new in-progress book once available (and maybe parting with some hard earned pennies in these uncertain economic times), I leave the blogged series as the ultimate testament. It pretty much captures the direction of this book. Instead of bogging you down with detailed parameter lists (there's a reference manual online for that) or treating you like the world's biggest dummy (I'm sure any 200 page book will cover that) I wanted to provide a book which looked at the bigger picture - building a real application and solving the problems any real application may pose. And I wanted to do it at whatever length I needed to get the point across (with smilies - obviously!) while still being an interesting read.

Zend Framework: Surviving The Deep End will kick off during December. The title is a humourous reference to what exists after you know your Zend Framework basics, i.e. how to use the basics and reference manual to achieve something tangible. Like a Pet Store - if only that were not already exhausted by those folk at BluePrints using J2EE...

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, Zend Framework at 17:22

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

An Example Zend Framework Blog Application Tutorial (Revised)

The Zend Framework has been with us for quite some time but exploratory articles which deliver a full example of how to use the Framework without getting completely buried in the detail remain thin on the ground. To add to the landscape last April I wrote Part 1 of an "Example Zend Framework Blog Application Tutorial" and the series continued for 9 Parts.

A lot happens in a short time! The Zend Framework has itself added more features, corrected bugs, and programmers have started to wield the framework in greater numbers. This "Revised" series is an update to the original series which temporarily ceased over the Summer months. In these revised articles I'll continue the tradition of detailed examinations of specific topics within the scope of a single real life Blog Application, which I will be deploying once completed, with the addition of corrections, better flowing steps and additional pointers.

No one person article is capable of being perfect. Over the months people have made dozens of comments by blog and email and these will also be incorporated along with several intermediary editing entries. The result should be a fantastic introduction to the Zend Framework which gets down and dirty with a real application but keeps the overwhelming details at a distance. The point is to see a real application being developed in simple consumable steps without repeating the entire reference manual.

The revised series will also spark the process of a more formalised publishing process. As new Parts are unveiled, transformed PDF and HTML versions will come online (at an undisclosed future location) for download. You will be able to print off copies for future reference outside of the current blog format. Unlike the blog, these are more malleable to subsequent updates and corrections. Manning's MEAP in other words - without the upfront cost (though donations to offset server costs will be appreciated).

The PDF/HTML publishing process has been setup and automated for quite a while. Some of you might have remembered the test PDF release of Part 9 to see how the format struck readers. I'll talk more about that process in a future article because it's nice to show that professional looking documentation isn't remotely difficult and just takes a little bit of patience to get your environment setup for it.

Expect Part 1 (Revised) in the very near future!

I had a lot of internal debate over what to do with the tutorial. The summer months made it clear that hosting the series was beyond the capabilities of a shared host, and I later discovered even my Slicehost account was running into swap space. To balance my complete devotion to free access to the series with the resources needed to keep it online, I'll be adopting a mixed donation/advertising model. The blog will always (emphatically!) remain ad free but the PDF/HTML versions will have a prominent donations button and at least one advertisement column (ed: not in the actual PDF file - just its hosting page). The resulting funds should cover the hosting costs quite handily.

More details soon. It's been a long time coming.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security, Zend Framework at 09:12

Friday, October 31, 2008

Example Zend Framework Blog Application Tutorial: Parts 1-8 Revisited

By now many readers are aware of the all-consuming mega tutorial I've been writing illustrating one method of writing a blog application with the Zend Framework. What started initially as a possible book project switched over to a more open process of blog posts with a future PDF version as a standard reference project.

Back during the Summer I had to put the series on hold, but it's time to get kicking again. So to spark the revival here's a quickie tour to allow readers catch up on my intentions since Parts 1 to 8 were originally published.

If you're looking for the series, here are the relevant links! Subsequent parts will follow soon.

Edit: Part 9 will be reposted within a few days. I located my text file backup of the original (preferable to relying on a third party snapshot sans corrections).

Part 1: Introductory Planning

Part 2: The MVC Application Architecture
Part 3: A Simple Hello World Tutorial
Part 4: Setting the Design Stage with Blueprint CSS Framework and Zend_Layout
Part 5: Creating Models with Zend_Db and adding an Administration Module
Part 6: Introduction to Zend_Form and Authentication with Zend_Auth
Part 7: Authorisation with Zend_Acl and Revised Styling
Part 8: Creating and Editing Blog Entries with a dash of HTMLPurifier

My plans for the revival require a short detour to the original articles. It was always my intention to run a multi-step process. First I would write the code as quickly as possible. Secondly I would create a blog post which bumps the maximum entry size for Serendipity. Third I would transfer the entry into a longer more detailed Docbook format for easy transfer to HTML and PDF. Fourthly I would make the new formats available on a donation funded website.

Plans being plans - sometimes they go awry or get delayed. That's what happened over the Summer when my time was occupied, too occupied to even keep my blog online!

Over the next month I will polish the first 8 entries, and proceed with the final chapters. I have a rough plan of what future parts remain (more than 1, less than 100) but it's not certain and luckily I don't have a publisher who is happy to restrict me to 200 pages. Self-publishing for fun has its perks!

Obviously a lot happens in programming over the course of months (sometimes weeks) so for every part you can currently read, you can expect an updated version which reflects my own, and others', growing body of habitual programming practices where the Zend Framework is concerned. One debatably major update will be to polish areas I simplified too much (like setting up database connections) since at the end of the day, simplification has led to subtle inefficiencies (like database connections loading even if a database is not required).

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security, Zend Framework at 18:16

An Apologetic Tale of the Unexpected

When you're a programmer you very quickly learn a few things. At the top of the list is knowing that if you do not properly backup data, it is inevitable that you will lose it. Guess who fell afoul of that rule? Yeah...me!

Some months ago I became crazily busy and at the same time commenced centralising a lot of diverse web properties to a single location. During the process I took backups, took second backups, took third backups. Then I scattered them across several hard drives for good measure to avoid any hiccups like HDD failures. After I'd reenabled all the original properties with great success and limited downtime I left many of my personal websites offline since, being crazily busy, I just didn't have the time.

About a month later I attempted to get one of these back up and realised to my horror that something in my backup strategy had gone horribly wrong. Archives refused to deflate, some files appeared to have vanished into thin air, and I quickly realised I had committed the cardinal sin of the backup world. I'd only made one damn archive of my personal sites! I managed to recover a lot of data, but several database backups were irretrievable and I was left with older copies I had squirreled away some time earlier. Unfortunately, the newer backups contained more recent adventures in writing

which I personally considered to be quite valuable (then again, as a writer, everything I write tends to have an inflated value).

The upshot was that I lost two months of blog posts and comments. I was not a happy programmer.

To make matters worse, I switched from crazy busy to insane busy (this is a step in the wrong direction). So I ended up in a situation where getting the blog back online was an ever shifting target continually assigned to that mysterious force called "maybe next week". If you ever meet this force in your life, please feel free to shoot it the head and email me a snapshot. I have the frame here ready!

But let's put this nonsense, for which I apologise profusely, behind us and get things rolling normally again. The blog is online - albeit with the most recent post behind this one being May - and I slowly piecing together the remaining posts I lost. The first 8 of the massive Zend Framework tutorial is also back online. Many were thankfully archived as text files, some are in subversion repos, and others are mere outlines which knowing me I can re-draw from memory better than ever. I will only focus on the main informative articles and omit those which dealt with news items and personal opinion.

To everyone who has emailed me (all 50+ of you!) the Zend Framework Tutorial series will be back with Parts 9-12 posted in coming weeks. I had plans to create a free resource using it, and the only part of that which has changed is time. To make up for the long long (long * 1000) time I'll try accelerating the articles transfer to more permanent HTML and PDF formats. Those who realised the source code archives never went offline probably know a lot of articles were already transferred to Docbook already.

Did I mention I'm back? I'm hosting the blog on its ancestral home of Dreamhost until I get around to configuring my better equipped Slicehost server.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 09:34

Sunday, April 20, 2008

He creepeth back into PHP

A number of folk have displayed some concern over my absence from all things PHP for the last month or more, something excacerbated by my lax attention to incoming emails.

To fill in the why, I recently lost a close friend to cancer after he endured a four year battle with the disease. Following this loss I haven't had much in the way of enthusiasm for open source or writing hobbies and the path to renewed vigor for plaguing you all with articles, critical posts, and my usual rambling on random topics has been a long one. I've continued to work away on Eve Online which has been one of the few sources of distracting fun these days...and not much else online outside the 9-5 job.

C'est la vie.

My friend always had a few things going for him. He was incredibly courageous in facing the inevitable. He remained intensely faithful to God, an all too rare display for young people these days when I count myself as one of the few under-thirties to attend local church in my community, and one of the fewer who consider it not just another boring pointless practice. And I have never once witnessed him act out of anger or unkindness.

He was one of those bright lights in a person's life that leaves a horribly empty void behind when they are no longer with you.

Rest in peace my friend.

In my absence I've turned away from a few opportunities in PHP I would ordinarily have been overjoyed to have. Chances are I'll look into how salvagable some of those are but I'm not too anxious about them to be honest. I'm looking towards the blank slate of the next few months if they're not retrievable and wondering what to fill them with. PHPSpec/PHPMock and the mailing list (I'll catch up on the last few emails soon) goes without saying. The book I was considering is more than likely a lost cause unless the author position remains unfilled - no recent emails there so that appears possible. Well, more time to freelance a few articles . Maybe I'll poke around the ZF mailing list to see if I missed anything interesting and get some of those Microformat proposals moving.

For now I'm going to nip into Eve and figure out whether I really want to train Heavy Missiles V. Once that's done I'm going to hit my usual PHP train of activity and pick up the pieces from the last month. All the usual haunts will once again see Maugrim The Reaper putting in an appearance and finding someone to argue over something with .

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP Security at 11:34

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Kicking The Bad Habit Of Being An Overworked Paddy

It's hard to believe we are already almost 1/12 of the distance into 2008. By now all of you have broken your new year resolutions. I know I've broken several at a minimum!

After some months of desperate oft-despairing struggling with work schedules I've finally once and for all conquered my lack of free time. It's an ingenious solution - I'm taking a small break from work before rekindling an interest in financial services in these doubtful times (ask Soci@t@ G@n@ale if you want to know how doubtful, or the US Federal Reserve).

The outcome of this reorganisation of my career direction is twofold. Firstly I get extra bags of cash. Secondly, I get slightly more vacation time. Thirdly, it won't require as much overtime. Fourthly, there's less chance of last-minute-scrambling which became exceptionally evident over the last few months as the Irish market continues to swell (in defiance of the laws of EU Economics). Of course added together this provides more of my most sought after commodity - personal time.

All that's left is how to use this new-found wealth. In between the extra pub-crawling exercises, engagements as the designated baggage mule on shopping excursions, and the other things an average 20-something is inclined to do, I want to enjoy some travel, take up writing again, and commit some completion time to the open source projects I contribute to.

I've been a very bad boy in that regard in the last six months and at one point I became an absolute nightmare for anyone who needed to contact me by email. It was not my finest hour, and I seriously doubt I escaped with a pristine reputation for being dependable. C'est la vie. A few of these "instances" shall we call them, have since been resolved to my satisfaction so I'm 95% back to nominal form as a powerhouse of innovation, inspiration and ingenuity (see, even my ego is back rockin' at full throttle!). Yep, you can always measure the normality of an Irishman by his level of self-directed sarcasm .

Anyways, enough self-critical analysis - it weakens the ego - since I'm back in fine form after two extremes (a two month vacation, and a four month chaotic period of non-stop work) I have the luxury of directing some of this time where it was always supposed to be: in supplementing my PHP experience with some open source doodling and manic self-promotion . The first target of my ire is a small project with Till Klampaeckel (Seek. Kill. Destroy.). After that is PHPSpec 0.3.0 (Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!). After that is that frickin' promise-but-never-effing-do component for implementing a Yadis service (Off With His Head! Off With His Head!). I swear that thing has been sitting in a personal subversion repo begging for a few final hours of attention!

After that I'm taking a long breather, attending oodles of conferences, and finding something with a lot of words to write

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, Openid and Yadis, PHP Game Development, PHP General, PHP Security, Zend Framework at 19:58

Monday, December 17, 2007

Compiling PHP for Windows Vista using Visual C++ Express 2008 - Seriously!

Over the past week or so I've been figuring out how to compile PHP on Windows, specifically Windows Vista. It's been an interesting ride since I'm not very familiar with compiling on Windows to start with. However with some perseverance and the help of all two useful online sources of information for the task of compiling PHP on Windows, I got around to accomplishing it.

The main source of information available is an excellent guide written by Elizabeth Marie Smith in December 2006 about compiling PHP5 and PHP-GTK2 using Visual C++ Express. The other basically refers back to Elizabeth's article and adds some details on needing ICU to compile PHP6. If you are currently using Windows XP and Visual C++ Express 2005, then you need look no further. This is the single most informative source about compiling PHP on Windows that I could locate.

If you are using Windows Vista, or intend updating/using Visual C++ Express 2008, then my blog entry is largely another coat of sugar on top of Elizabeth's guide to clear up any difference between the two approaches. There certainly are differences, but they are not overwhelming - esp. since I'll lay them out below. This set of instructions assumes you are building for Vista (32bits). If you want to compile for 64bits for Vista, see [http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/x4d2c09s\(VS.90\).aspx](http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/x4d2c09s(VS.90).aspx) which may help.

You need to download, and install:

1. Virtual Clone Drive 5
2. 7-Zip or WinRAR
3. Microsoft Visual Studio 2008 Express
4. Microsoft Windows SDK for Vista Update
5. Microsoft .NET Framework SDK 2.0

Installing The Windows Vista Compilation Environment

The reason for downloading Virtual Clone Drive is to allow us to mount ISO disk images. The downloads for VCE2008 and the Windows SDK for Vista are especially large, and I just found it handy to download the ISO versions so I could install multiple times without going through the web install options multiple times, or for multiple machines. WinRAR or 7-Zip should be available to decompress standard gzip/bzip tarballs where a zip download option does not exist. Download and install these at your leisure.

So, the first major download is Microsoft Visual Studio 2008 Express. This was released in the last month (as of writing) so I chose to use it. You can use VCE2005 on Vista but VCE2008 skips a lot of the setup tasks VCE2005 required to integrate with the Windows SDK.

At the bottom of the download page you can find the all-in-one ISO download. It packs quite a punch but includes the C++, C#, VB and Web Developer editions of Visual Studio Express including SQL Server, .NET Framework 3.5 (required!) and Silverlight. Actually MS seem to be pushing Silverlight (sort of a Flash alternative) since the page has Silverlight elements that prompt you to download and install the runtime.

If you took the web install option, just follow the setup instructions and accept the default installation path. You don't require Silverlight or SQL Server to compile PHP so feel free to deselect those options. If you downloaded the ISO you need to mount the ISO disk image using Virtual Clone Drive. To do so open My Computer, right-click the virtual drive, select "mount...", find the ISO image to mount, and accept. It should now autorun and execute the setup program - see the instructions at the beginning of this paragraph. Note installation may take some time. Start up VCE at least once (sometimes wants to setup the environment) and make sure the register it (you'll need an MS Passport or Email account to do this, e.g. Hotmail).

A word of interest. VCE2008 will also install v6.0A of the Windows SDK. I tried compiling PHP using this SDK version but it didn't seem to work out well. If you have any success doing so let me know via a comment. Otherwise let's press on and install v6.0 of the Windows SDK which VCE2008 seems to prefer using anyway.

The second major download is Microsoft Windows SDK for Vista Update. Please be aware this is updated from time to time and the current update is dated March 2007. New versions are generally commented on in the attached Additional Information of the download page. Again, this is the ISO download which is pretty heavy. There's an alternative web install option if you have a speedy reliable connection. Download and mount the ISO using Virtual Clone Drive as described earlier. During setup accept the default options and proceed. As with VCE2008, installation may take some time to complete.

The third download is the Microsoft .NET Framework SDK 2.0. Download and install using the default options. I'm not completely certain where PHP needs the .NET SDK - I can compile PHP with some standard options without it installed. Giving the benefit of the doubt, it's probably needed somewhere for something for someone so there's no harm installing it and avoiding any future obscure problems. Unlike the Windows SDK which VCE2008 will automatically detect and include, you need to integrate the .NET SDK into VCE2008. This is accomplished by editing VCE's vcvars32.bat file - try looking for it in:

`C:\Program Files\Microsoft Visual Studio 9.0\VC\bin\vcvars32.bat`

To edit, you first need to copy it to your desktop (you'll find other Vista editing VCE files is a task in futility even if you have an administrator account). Open in a text editor like notepad, and locate the lines setting the environmental variables PATH, INCLUDE and LIB. At the end of each, you should append the relevant path to the .NET Framework SDK BIN, INCLUDE and LIB directories just before the closing variable. Make sure you have semi-colons (;) between each added path. There's nothing else needed - vcvars32.bat is executed automatically whenever the VCE2008 Command Line tool is started, and it will detect other needed paths for the Windows SDK installed earlier.

If you're still here, give yourself a pat on the back. The torture is almost over. The very last step is to fix some problem PHP has finding a file called winres.h which doesn't exist. What you need to do is locate the file called WinResrc.h in `C:\Program Files\Microsoft SDKs\Windows\v6.0\Include`, copy it to the desktop, rename it to winres.h, and copy it back into the Windows SDK v6.0 include directory. You won't be able to copy&rename it on the spot, because Vista really doesn't like that .

Downloading PHP and Libraries To Allow Compilation

You have three main choices about what to compile. PHP 5.2.X where the source code for the latest stable version is available. PHP 5.2/5.3-dev which has regular snapshots of the source code for this development branch published to <http://snaps.php.net/>. Or PHP 6 development which also has published snapshots. I'm using PHP 5.3-dev.

Note: Under Windows Vista, possibly given the updated from XP's Windows Platform SDK to Vista's Windows SDK (no "Platform"), there is a bug in PHP 5.2.X which causes a compilation error in source code related to ipv6 (presumably) in `./main/network.h` of the source code. You can comment out the offending line reported in the compile error to force a successful compile of PHP 5.2 but it will probably break ipv6 which may not be a good thing. The error is not evident when compiling PHP 5.3-dev so it will likely not be a problem by the time PHP 5.3.0 is released.

Whatever your choice, download the source code.

Create a root directory on `C:\` called "PHPDEV". Copy the PHP source code archive into this directory and extract it using WinRAR or 7-Zip. Since I despise command line typing I usually rename it to "php-x.x" so it's easier to navigate there without remembering the timestamp .

Next you need to download the libraries and header files PHP and it's extensions may need. These are not included in the source code package but available from individual websites and download locations. Luckily, Edin Kadriaba keeps an archive of these in a single easy to update download which includes the standard ones and those needed for PECL extensions. So download <http://files.edin.dk/php/win32/zip.zip>, copy it to `C:/PHPDEV`, and extract it there.

If you intend compiling PHP6, you will also require the ICU (International Components for Unicode) libraries available from <http://www.icu-project.org/download/>. The current release is 3.8.x, and if you check the ICU4C download page the downloads include binary distributions for Win32. The mscv8 prefix refers to these been built for the Microsoft MSCVR80 C runtime - which VCE2008 tends to use. Older downloads of ICU4C for version 3.6.x were built for MSCVR71 if required. Download and extract into `C:/PHPDEV`.

And we're done. If you were bothered by the number of directories don't worry - when compiling PHP, the required files will be looked for in sibling directories of the PHP source code automatically.

Compiling PHP on Windows Vista using Visual C++ Express 2008

Now we get to the good part, where we find out if this all worked or failed miserably. If it does fail don't get too dejected I've given up on this working first time out. I find I have to restart my PC a few times before VCE gets the messages and starts using the right environmental variables. This might just be my PC though - registering VCE2008 failed a few times before I managed to get through.

Note: PHP compiled under this set of instructions will require the MSCVR80 Microsoft C runtime (also fondly known as mscvr80.dll) which is generally available on Windows Vista. Windows XP or earlier probably uses mscvr71.dll which generally means you should install MSCVR80 on any XP system (if not already present) if you intend deploying your newly compiled PHP there. Get it from <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=32BC1BEE-A3F9-4C13-9C99-220B62A191EE&displaylang=en>.

So! From the Start Menu, find the Visual Studio Express 2008 folder and click it. From Tools, select the VCE2008 Command Line tool. It should open a standard MS-DOS console window - the main thing is that it should also have executed vcvars32.bat automatically so this console is ready to start some heavy duty compiling.

Navigate to your PHP source code directory at C:\PHPDEV\php-5.3 (or whatever yours may be called). Compiling PHP from hereon out should be fairly typical - just bear in mind some options may require you to download additional libraries. For example, we already know PHP6 requires the additional ICU4C libraries. Many others will use the files we downloaded from Edin's site.

From the command line run:

```
buildconf.bat
```

This will generate a configure script containing all the possible options to configure PHP with. This includes the typical configure options, and others based on the available extensions.

You can run the following the list all the available options:

```
cscrip /nologo configure.js --help
```

We'll test everything using a simple configure line. I'm re-reading Sara Goleman's book so I'll borrow the starting configure line from there since it seems suitable (as well as minimal!). This is a good first step before jumping into adding new configure options. It will only create a command line executable, adding configure options for Apache/MySQL or other exotics is left to your own devices.

```
cscrip /nologo configure.js --without-xml --without-wddx --without-simplexml --without-dom --without-libxml --disable-zlib --without-sqlite --disable-odbc --disable-cgi --enable-cli --enable-debug --without-iconv
```

Once you've run the above, there's only one more step. Take a deep breath, relax and run:

```
nmake
```

This usually takes a while, and generates a ludicrous number of warnings. Warnings under Windows are par for the course so they're nothing to get worried about. Takes about 5-10 minutes on my PC, and slower on older machines. Once it's done (hopefully without experiencing any compile errors; a bit more fatal than mere warnings) you should find it's created a new directory in your PHP source code location called Debug_TS. Inside there's a sparkly new php.exe file waiting for you. Unlike a traditional Windows PHP binary, don't expect to see many .dll files for extensions - .dll extensions are only generated if an extension has been compiled "shared", otherwise it's just lumped into PHP. You may also notice the absence of a php.ini file (or it's dist/recommended templates). This is normal. I'll explain

Change to the Debug_TS directory where the PHP binary is located, and run the command:

```
php -v
```

You should now have executed PHP using the command line, and received a few lines of output giving the PHP version and it's compile time. From here you can experiment with configure options to get exactly what you need and delve even deeper into the dark world of compiling PHP on Windows....

Last bit - to install PHP somewhere after installation, set the installation path using the `--enable-prefix=C:\path\to\php` configure option before compiling. Once compiled, call:

`nmake install`

That's all I have for now. If anything more needs explaining I'll edit this blog entry for it. In the meantime I hope this small article helps someone out who like me is crazy enough to need to compile PHP on Windows for some reason . Good luck!

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security at 14:22

Friday, September 7, 2007

Prodigal PHP Developer Returns

First blog entry for a long time, and predictably it's the infamous "I'm back!" topic. So I'll be quick. I'm back. The Maug lives - though the four weeks I spent offline (mostly; I couldn't evade certain persons who pay certain salaries forever though...) has left me bumming across my previous haunts scratching my head like a bumpkin tourist.

I'm sure I'll settle back in to a few interesting posts here, and elsewhere, and in the arcane planes occupied by mailing lists. Just need to get my bearings, put up with "red-man" jokes (I can bum around Spain and get sunburnt, but mother nature, in her sorry excuse for Wisdom, decided I didn't need to tan afterwards!), and figure out how many emails I missed during August. I've replied to a couple of the more interesting ones - the rest of ye land lubbers can wait 'till tomorrow! If you're desperately needing to contact me throw an email to the usual place - I am staying current right now so few delays in responding.

Those who have been showing interest in the OpenID library I kickstarted during July will be happy to see it progressing once again shortly. Draft 12 of the OpenID 2.0 Specification has been recently published so I'll be reviewing it for any necessary changes in the libraries operation. I suspect there will be few, if any, fundamental updates. A large part of the remaining work on the library is creating an integration testing platform to recreate the various conditions and options OpenID 2.0 allows for. Unit tests (as opposed to integration tests) were always sparse since the library is specification derived (i.e. you need around 95% of completed code before OpenID Authentication even works in a basic form).

The library is, of course, being persued for distribution via PEAR, and PEAR2 in the future. It's been a month since I had a chance to discuss things with Dmitry, so a Zend Framework outlet may still be possible. I'm reasonably sure the Zend_Yadis proposal (a separate specification OpenID 2.0 requires) will be available with the Zend Framework eventually since it's 99.9% complete barring unit test coverage. You can knock around OpenID For PHP for the current versions (from July - alpha status) used to obtain acceptance to PEAR.

I suppose my other main interest is checking in on where the whole Zend_View Enhanced / Zend_Layout debate has moved over the last month, and whether there has been any adoption of solutions in my absence.

So, for those who sent emails, IMs or other stuff to me over August - working through them now. Until next time!

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, Openid and Yadis, PHP General, PHP Security, Zend Framework at 13:40

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

The Irish PHP Users Group

There may only be just 4 million+ of us Irish folk, but we do have an Irish PHP User Group which started up recently. If you're anywhere near Dublin or Cork cities on the last Wednesday of any month, meetings are held at 8pm on those days at two venues:

Dublin Meeting: The Longstone Pub on Townsend Street (close to Tara St. DART station), 8pm, last Wednesday of every month.

Cork Meeting: The Gresham-Metropole Hotel, Cork City Centre, 8pm, last Wednesday of every month.

Besides drinking, attendees discuss all things PHP (honest!). The first Cork meet is this coming Wednesday, 25 July 2007. In Cork? A PHP developer, or just enjoy a little hacking on the side? Drop by if you're free. You'll meet fellow PHP users to agonise with over which PHP framework to try using.

If you're not a Corkonian, or at least not living among the natives there, the Dublin meeting might be more convenient for you.

If, like me, you can't attend all meetings, you can grab us for a chat on the UG's IRC channel: #phpug on the irc.php.ie server. And hey, we even have mailing list. Go! Sign up!

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security at 17:34

Saturday, May 26, 2007

May's php|architect Magazine - worthy weekend reading

I usually don't extol the virtues of magazines in blog posts. However, I've been sitting down with a printout of May's php|architect Magazine and figured it was well worth some attention. A lot of PHP developers whether newcomers or even old hands just looking to expand their knowledge would love this issue.

The two that stick in my mind are Jim Delahunt's "Unicode and PHP: A Gentle Introduction" and Jeff Moore's "Test Pattern: Model View Controller". Both are something those seeking illumination on these topics should certainly read. Jeff's article presents an overview of the MVC Pattern and injects a lot of clarity into a confusing subject for many PHP developers. This is one of the few times reading about MVC in PHP that there's more than a vague reference to a really important point - that Views may (even should) be empowered to read data from the Model. As Jeff notes the continuing popular trend of forcing an application to shuffle between Controllers just to inject Model data in part of a View is completely unnecessary. In my own humble opinion, over-dependency on Controllers to inject Model data into Views is wasteful of resources by pushing folk into adding more and more Controller classes for every teeny View->Model interaction (more work and files to maintain). I'd be hard pressed to believe it doesn't impose a performance cost too.

Jim Delahunt's article is another noteworthy one. I have a pet peeve about developers and popular online websites which store usernames with Unicode characters, render HTML which declares itself UTF-8, and which results in garbage characters like question marks everywhere. For a long time, my own name with a common European character (a-acute) failed to render on most sites claiming to output UTF-8 - assuming of course the site even allowed me to submit my real name... These days there's a marked improvement. This excellent article digs into Unicode in an easy to access way. If you are still not familiar with Unicode, UTF-8, the other Unicode standards, and why they are essential knowledge when building internationalised web apps then this is the article for you.

What else is in the mag this month? There's a cool overview of the Symfony Framework, Ilia Alshanetsky on Dictionary Attacks, and a few other articles I really enjoyed but won't mention here directly. As PHP magazines go, this is an action packed issue worth being enthusiastic about. You can review and buy the PDF version of May's issue for a handful of Canadian Dollars over at php|architect.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security at 20:48

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

The 2007 General Election (when Ireland gets to choose another potentially useless bunch of political leaders)

**In the red corner: Fianna Fail, The Progressive Democrats.
In the blue corner: Fine Gael, Labour, The Green Party.**

The Winner? To be decided in a few weeks on a Thursday, so that anyone working from Dublin or attending University is unable to vote in their own constituency. Fianna Fail have smarts... It's going to be another low-turnout election.

I was leafing through the newspapers here today, and looking back on all the drama of the past two weeks. It's a fascinating spectacle. First our current Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Bertie Ahern, is hit by allegations of receiving (well, his partner apparently) a large sum of money from some dubious character. Since that news broke he has steadfastly refused to explain anything, the one thing guaranteed to outrage the electorate.

Then we had the whole thing where criminals in an Irish "maximum security" prison seemed to have developed a fondness for ringing up radio shows with their mobile phones. Our Justice Minister, Michael McDowell, went all out on this one. Somehow he managed to get a spot on the same radio show with 15 minutes of free air time where he was neither interrupted, questioned, nor any after-comments allowed. Now how the guy can swing that kind of deal with Ireland's national broadcaster, RTE, is beyond me.

Finally, we have the whole Health Service in a mess from a Nurse's "work to rule" protest. Just today I heard the Health Service Executive is threatening them with salary deductions of up to 30% over their protest actions. It's so cool to see negotiations going so well.

I wonder what's next? Maybe when Enda Kenny (defacto Opposition Leader, and leader of Fine Gael) stops giggling at this marvellous run of luck for his coalition of parties Gerry Adams will sweep the Polls and we'll end up with Sinn Féin looking for a place in Government. Yep, that's all we need. The Inept Party and the local Terrorist ("But we're now political!") Branch announcing an alliance to lead Ireland into the 21st Century...

Anyway, just to moan a little more... I'm hoping Fine Gael have the right stuff to get elected this time around. If they do I'll be watching for some kind of improvement.

1. To get the screwed up, ill managed, Health Service running in some halfway decent manner. It's practically pathetic living in a country which has a second-rate Health Service which thinks it perfectly normal to make people wait months for test result on ailments like cancer. Not like a fast diagnosis has any value, eh?

2. Meeting some kind of Environmental Standard. I've been told Ireland is a signatory to Kyoto. I also know we're never going to meet it, or any other target the EU sets. Fact is, the current government has no motivation to do so - since they're rolling in my tax dollars they think it's cute to do nothing and just pay for whatever carbon surplus the rest of Europe has instead. It would also be nice if the west coast got clean water (anyone intending to visit Galway should carefully watch the local water situation unless you like little critters called cryptosporidiosis).

3. Roads. Big roads which have more than four lanes of traffic. Roads which aren't packed day and night with traffic jams and those frackin' toll booths - tolls! For sitting in a traffic jam! Trains. Yep, trains which go faster than 40 mph. Maybe one of those fancy mainland ones that go like...over 50mph? God, do you guys have ones that go faster??? Is such a miracle possible??? If we really make the big time, maybe we'll get a few extra buses which run more frequently than once every 3 hours? I could be reaching too far there...


4. Broadband! Ah, my time honoured complaint for year after year... If you live where I do you have two choices. a) Get a satellite connection for a, ~100+ per month, or b) wait until hell freezes over for the local telecom (well, technically it's national...and a monopoly to boot) install a digital exchange. If all else fails, one can pray that a radio mast pops up within a few kilometers, has a direct line of sight, and doesn't involve building a radio telescope on the roof. Broadband...a man can only dream of ever seeing such a wondrous technology...

5. Proper road signage. I live on a small road you can fit one car up (anyone you meet needs to be very good in reverse). According to the local council the speed limit for that road is a humble 80Kph. I keep expecting the Garda to pull me

over for living on the edge doing half that.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 17:36

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Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 17:36


Saturday, March 17, 2007

Using online activity to assess prospective employees

A while back I was reading a blog post by Jim Plush titled "What separates a professional PHP web developer from a scripter?". In general it's a good list, and should provide good advice for many an aspiring developer. However one point in particular raised a red flag:


I should be able to find all sorts of good things on google that you're doing with php or web technologies, It generally is a red flag when I google you and nothing comes up(bonus points for having a project of your own or contributing to one).

The problem here isn't finding and assessing a developer's past work - any developer ought to have a few show pieces to show. It's the idea of googling for an individual as having a red or green flag effect.. I'll be cautious and note Jim used the word "generally" in there suggesting there are exceptions. Hopefully.


I'm a prime example, stick the following into Google: "Pádraic Brady". Now go google - you'll realise after a page or two that I seem to have only existed for scarcely a year, primarily on the PHP scene, and a little bit for much longer on some Linux and Irish websites (though my name is not quite as rare in Ireland so don't expect to know which is me ).


That's the length of time that's passed since I became more willing to use my real name on the internet, in a very limited way. Before that, I have used a collection of internet handles. In PHP, you'd see "Maugrim The Reaper" more often than not - assuming my blog title didn't give that away!

Going back a year, if during an interview a prospective employer decided to comment on my lack of online existence I'd have likely started getting worried. I've been on the internet since the mid 90's, since secondary school, and likely have posted a lot of stupid ignorant insanely offending messages. So do I a) tell the employer I operate under internet handle A and let them trace my existence for 10 years online, or b) refuse to hand the employer any personally identifiable details, or c) avoid the issue and hope I fall into some exceptional case reserved for privacy sensitive individuals not wishing to offend an employer by saying "no" straight out?

It raises a pretty intriguing question. How far should an employer value that online google check? Low or high? Personally, I'd lean towards low on the basis that if a prospective employee had a community involvement or a personal project they forgot to mention then they are either inexperienced in being interviewed (prod and prod again ,

or just don't have any. Checking online would be hit and miss. If I checked myself 12 months ago I'd be spitting red flags because I would have walked out of the interview rather than give up a list of my precious online anonymous aliases. Screw that.

Today I couldn't care less since my name has been barely used online for a year, and I'm almost certain in a non-offensive manner .

It's become a plus to associate my name with this blog and my own meagre contributions to the PHP community. I still however use multiple aliases which effectively isolate varying interests and online activities from each other - enough to defeat the tracking schemes of the average google-read-opine folk who aren't willing to dig around for a while. My "Maugrim" alias will net you little more than early PHP development on an online game ('00 to '03) and some references to the alias' source in a Yahoo Club (now Group) back in '99 where Maugrim The Reaper was a pissed off Irish druid in an RPG fiction writing club .

For those who've linked their entire identity, online actions, and blunders to a real name or singular alias however it's can be a pretty tough position.

The reason I raise this post is because I actually know people this impacts. I've seen 3 people over the last few years do their living best erasing themselves from forums, and opt-in services to get rid of their past. I know two of these were definitely having issues with employers. None actually noted an employer name, so it seemed to revolve around how easy it is not only for employers - but lest we forget, CLIENTS - to do an idle google for a name. Herein lies the danger of singular identities online - if you don't keep yourself ringfenced to an alias, or at the least wary about openly posting certain types of, eh, criticism under a real name then you can be fried. Hell, two years from now I might regret using my real name in this entry... That would (or will?) be a shin kicker.

Still doesn't answer how to respond to that employer question about your online contributions... I don't have one if an employer puts too much value on prying (sorry, checking) into a person's private activities online innocent though they may see it.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms, PHP General, PHP Security at 00:16

Monday, March 5, 2007

Join the New York Parade! (But gay people need not apply)

St. Patrick's Day, that time of the year when we Irish take the opportunity to attend mass (for once if we're not practising), see those odd family members who only appear usually at Christmas, and of course loyally wait for the local village parade to swing down main street in all its glory. Alright, so a parade of tractors, trailers, the local school groups and clubs, and the odd humorous jab at the government are not necessarily glorious, but every village in Ireland does its best effort.

Amid the build up I was surprised to learn that the New York City Council Speaker would be attending the Dublin Parade at the invitation of the organisers. Surely, I thought, she's be at the huge New York Parade? Apparently, she is not welcome to march in the New York Parade however, since she happens to be gay. Huh? You know, Ireland isn't exactly bursting at the seams with tolerance - we're still heavily entrenched in a conservative mindset though that has changed drastically over the decades.

Apparently the Ancient Order of Hibernians has banned gay folk from marching in the New York Parade - so what happens? The Irish people in Ireland have to invite a prominent member over to Dublin so she can openly partake in a St. Paddy's Day parade to rival New York's. I hope the AOH take this as a firm shot across the Atlantic from the ol' country - St. Paddy was a saint, not a discriminating bigot. If we Irish can shrug and tell gays and lesbians to take up banners and join the party (why not?), then surely those old fogies over in the AOH can see their way to being a bit more inclusive in the future. Afterall, we're celebrating the birth of Christianity in Ireland by an infamous nobleman turned cleric who spent his youth enslaved by the very people he returned to teach and convert. Patrick wasn't discriminatory - he returned to Ireland and made it his job to convert his one time tormentors.

So why should the AOH be free to taint our celebration of the great man himself in such a ludicrous manner? Because they belong to some "Ancient" order? Honestly... Surely these jokers have better things to do than tell everyone who can and cannot take part in a celebration of a great and famous Saint? Really, look at a calenders boyos - it's the 21st century. Get in line with the genuine Irish people over here on our wee little island with our quant little parades in our picturesque towns where gay people can throw up a banner as is their God given right as Irish people.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 21:31

Thursday, January 25, 2007

Time to tease...

A cryptic message was posted to lamsure's blog earlier: <http://kabal-invasion.blogspot.com>

I'm not sure what's next, but will we have to wait another month to find out?



Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 11:31

Tuesday, January 23. 2007

Now broadcasting from astrumfutura.com

In case you haven't noticed, the blog is now hosted on the astrumfutura.com domain. I've added a set of HTTP headers on the quantum-star.com domain which should transparently redirect many of the old links to the QS blog to the correct location here.

Since the blog has moved, I'll explain why. Back in December the blog fell offline when a series of bad PHP files were written into all the writeable directories. Since I was using Hostrocket, these are writeable only under a 777 chmod. It's a pain in the ass, but unavoidable because of how Apache is set up for Hostrocket's shared servers. Unfortunately, this keeps happening month after month regardless of changing passwords, updating version, etc.

Astrumfutura.com is on the other hand, hosted on Dreamhost. Dreamhost have this nifty thing going where Apache runs under the local domain user account. Result? Apache (and therefore PHP) need no special permissions to write to the server by default - which of course means no 777 permission anywhere. It has it's own issue (PHP apps have default write permissions) but it avoids the pain in the ass world-write situation.


Anyways, enough of my moaning. Back to blogging!

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 10:00

Sunday, October 8, 2006

Engines are Go...

If you're reading this, then DNS servers worldwide are connecting you to the re-established quantum-star.com domain. A small explanation. Since I was away over the Summer, I missed all the warning notices from my registrar, and the domain expired. I was a bit preoccupied during the week so I didn't get around to rescuing quantum-star.com until this morning.

Well, its back - and so is my blog. Finally... 

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 06:35


Wednesday, September 13. 2006

The Longer Story ;)

Our story starts in June. At a staff meeting my employer announced that we would be starting a project for a client based in County Kerry. Unfortunately I got assigned - the result was over a month living in a hotel in rural Kerry. Hotels in Ireland charge a lot for external phone calls - including of course internet access. Net result was my leaving my online activities for the entire period except for essential email checks and such.

In July, I finally escaped the torture but was left with another dilemma. This was the year I was due to sit the Final Admitting Exam to the Institute of Chartered Accountants In Ireland. The exams cover Financial Accounting, Taxation, Business Finance, Management Accounting, Auditing and a more "big picture" Multi-Discipline case study. Before I go on, I think I definitely aced most of them - though Auditing was a pure mule and I was unable to finish the entire paper in the allotted time (a hefty 4 hours). Anyways, studying for these exams took up a huge amount of time. I organised 6 weeks of leave from work starting in late July which helped immensely and it was all consumed with study.

As a result off I vanished, leaving everyone wondering where I'd mysteriously disappeared! I originally tried just tracking emails, but eventually I threw in the towel and simply disconnected completely. The problem with hitting the internet for a "quick look" is that you can easily get stuck in for a few hours without knowing it.


Anyways, it should be worth it. My result will arrive in November and hopefully with a full pass. That will go a long way to bumping up my future career prospects (not to mention my wallet ).

So where from here?


Now that I am back and reconnecting with friends and foes alike, I am assessing all my various online commitments. I suppose I am a bit odd in some respects. For all my internet involvement I don't actually spend huge chunks of time online. It's surprising how much material I simply suck onto my hard drive, format, and print for reading material on the daily commute.

First up, the Patterns For PHP website is going to get some attention. I need to check for version updates to MediaWiki and phpBB. The PFP Forums should be online over the next 24 hours. I've been in contact with my main partner on the website, Edward Yang (Ambush Commander to Devnetwork junkies). He is due to get shell access to the server to help maintenance and such - besides which he knows MediaWiki far more than I do by a long shot.

With maintenance and forums completed, I'll be returning to the publicity trail to try drum up additional articles and contributors. I'll still be chipping on my end, but often other folk have more experience with certain key Patterns which makes their input invaluable. I'll also be following up on several offers I received over the Summer.

In other news, yesterday I received my first Google Adsense cheque by mail. This can only be a good omen I think - hot on the heels on my return to the internet .

. The net sum of US\$116 is now winging towards my current account through Bank of Irelands bureaucracy. The whole thing will be spent on renewing the QS domain, and prepaying for hosting. Just to note - PFP will not see advertising arrive. I prefer my documentation sites ad free.

On the games front. Before I left I made a whole ton of changes to Quantum Star SE Evolved. Check the commit log on the left panel of this blog. The last piece in the puzzle was a Front Controller setup. I'm currently leaning towards bundling the Controller section of the Zend Framework with a few extensions for the specifics of the game. With this last piece slotted, and a migration to Template Lite instead of Smarty, QS is well on course on a desperately needed update. Goodbye 1999 PHP 3 code, hello shiny new PHP 5 code with Unit Tests. 

That's all from me for now. Since I'm back fully - I expect the blog activity will soar as things sort themselves out in all these activities. Still need to catch up on the Protoshell project, and others. But those subjects are reserved for another day.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 19:30

Monday, September 11, 2006

Long Story Short

I am alive, well, and kicking.

It's a short and sweet update!



Seriously though - I am back online full time again. I'll regale everyone with why I was gone for so long tomorrow. In the meantime, anyone know where lamsure's blog vanished? Has Panama Jack updated ADOdb-Lite (the big question for me this month!)? I'm still catching up...slowly...on emails and forums. In the meantime drop me a line if you wish to the usual email addy (if you don't have the privatised contact email let me know and I'll forward it - spammers are hell).

maugrimtr@hotmail.com

Back tomorrow with a more wordy post to make up for the two month absence!

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:15

Friday, August 4, 2006

He lives!

Well, as I warned most people I have been offline for well over a week. Luckily I was compensated by the unusually fine weather over here in Kerry, Ireland - nothing quite like the heat folk over in the States have been experiencing, but excellent for a country where temperatures above 70F or 20C+ is a cause for celebrations.

My absence was unfortunate in some ways for my online activities. The Devnetwork PHP Book was at the stage of deciding upon a license (likely the GNU Free Documentation License) and debating the initial contents list. I'll be heading over to check its progress during tomorrow after I recover from the last week of non-stop work. I'll also be catching up on my emails, quite a few of which have been waiting for a reply for quite a while. I had hoped to get around to some of you last weekend but, alas, that was not possible.

This could be a posterchild example of the state of the Internet in Ireland. Unfortunately the country is ruled by a telecommunications monopoly which has sole responsibility for the phone and broadband network here. Mix that up with the company's (Eircom) financial situation and its predictable monopolistic uncaring attitude for consumers and you wind up with a poor network which hasn't seen significant improvement in years. From where I live, my broadband options are limited to Satellite access (prohibitively expensive, leaves upload speeds unchanged) or the future ray of hope in the form of a microwave network being heavily subsidised by the government. Fingers crossed that one makes it to completion in the near term. The joys of technology access in rural Ireland...

Anyways. Kerry, two weeks, no internet. Emails to be replied to at the weekend. I'll be back there again in about two weeks - until then I'm playing catch up.

Back on track... My nearly two month break from developing the Quantum Star SE game (the all new version) will be finishing up fairly soon. I took the break way back when because I was losing all interest in it - one of those critical symptoms of developer burnout. I've been working on and off on QS since 2003 and the last 10 months has seen the older v2 scrapped and left out in the wilderness. Version 3, or what we project developers are calling the "Evolved" branch is powering along primarily on the backend. This side track into framework territory has been quite a learning experience. Honestly, if you want to get a handle on PHP OOP and best practice building your own framework as a side project is quite a fun experience. You learn a lot, research comes to the fore, and it's valuable experience.

I'll soon be back on track with QS and catching up on Protoshell (another game, possibly in Java, with Moocat) also.

Have I forgotten to mention anything? Patterns For PHP, of course. I have a list of "demands" from Ambush Commander (handle) regarding the site's CSS and some other MediaWiki requirements. I'll be pushing forward with those in the coming week. I'll getting back on track with adding new Patterns soon also. With some luck, I can drum up some more willing contributors. As always if interested, contributing is but a registered account away - the site is a public wiki.

In addition I will be writing more for this blog - as if any force bar God is going to stop that...

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 04:50

Saturday, July 15. 2006

A week without blogging...

It's one of those weeks. You are set up to get a Patterns repository online, the first material is added, contributors trickle in, and bang - a client has an emergency. Slgh.

After a week spent stamping out wildfires It's almost the weekend. I'll be down south in county Wexford for most of it trying to relax and soak up some of the sunlight that has appeared in the Irish skies once again. (It's a rare thing - sunlight in Ireland).

Next week, I will be returning my attention to the Patterns project. I have three signups, and two active contributors. Arborint, Ambush Commander, and SantosJ. If I were not too exhausted I'd dig up real names and blog links for all three - though I already link to SantosJ's blog. It is planned to put this wiki on a proper domain by mid next week (that's including the DNS resolution delay). The host will also change since I am moving some of my projects to a PHP5 enabled host with PostgreSQL and MySQL support. As a nice host, it also offers subversion repositories. I'll identify them in another post when things are setup and I see what my experience with them is like.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 02:37

Friday, June 23, 2006

Couldn't help but preen a little...

I just noticed that [PHPDeveloper.org](http://www.phpdeveloper.org) are reporting my blog entry on the Factory and Abstract Factory patterns. The fixed url is over here: <http://www.phpdeveloper.org/news/5657>. First time I've had a blog post highlighted by a site I read practically every day. Cool.

Edit: Two of my blog posts also receive a mention over on the [Zend Developer Zone](http://www.zend.com). 

How I do love the web. The web gives us the illusion of anonymity and the freedom to experiment with our inner demons. One such persona of note to the PHP community is Padraic Brady aka "Maugrim The Reaper". Padraic posts on a variety of topics in his blog but never fails to inform or entertain. Let's look at two of his recent posts.

Posted by Padraic Brady in Irishisms at 14:42

Friday, June 16, 2006

Yet Another Blog Update

It's that time again, with the [release of Serendipity 1.0](#) I have upgrade the blog and taken advantage of the new features to install some additional plugins. One of the neater ones is [Akismet](#), which if you have never heard of it before is a new webservice which can be used to scan comments and trackbacks to identify spam. I look forward to less comment moderation...hopefully.

In addition I have once again changed themes. We're now using the Coffee Cup theme for Serendipity which does a little content squishing due to a smaller font. I like it so far. I've also added a few additional changes, like reducing the RSS/Atom options (the older variants are still available - just not linked to), upgrading several side panel plugins, and improving the PDF support.

Overall, welcome to Serendipity 1.0 - if you run a [Serendipity](#) blog I highly recommend upgrading ASAP.

Last - if comments go weird like last time I did a major upgrade - drop me a PM over at <http://www.quantum-star.com>.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 22:09

Monday, June 12, 2006

You have a head case on your hands...

It's official. My cat is insane. My diagnosis is based on rigorous examination of the evidence. Within 4 months of being born, and then emigrating to the sanctuary of my backyard, she managed to break her hind leg in several places. The resulting vet appointments led to one amputation (unfortunately) and a lighter wallet. In misapprehension I figured this was the end of the playfulness for the rest of the year. Stupid me.

After a year of occupation (and after earning the affectionate nickname "Tripod") she has managed:

- a) To attract the attentions of every Tom within 10 miles, each of which feels compelled to yowl and screech and brawl with each other at all hours of the night. (T was neutered, so this is a little puzzling).
- b) To adopt the living habits of the common Badger - and bringing a whole new form of terror to the local rabbit population.
- c) To invade the innards of my car by means unknown (with three legs, mind). Proven by the claw marks left across the insulation over the window-jet water tank.
- d) To persuade me that leaving golf balls in a basket outside is not a good idea.
- e) To taken up the practice of running around in circles for no apparent reason.
- f) To avoid figuring out that a shadow is not something incapable of being chased, mauled and eaten. Why a grey blur on the ground gets such a reaction is unknown. All other cats merely ignore it.
- g) To form the belief that insects are edible. (Ugh)

Other weirdness includes:


- Apparently enjoys scratching her ear with her phantom hind paw - without noticing its missing.
- Developed paranormal reflexes (missing a hind limb does wonders for back flips).
- Believes an idle hand is valid prey (and she doesn't hold back with the canines).
- Is showing the signs of a Psychopath in training
- The whole concept behind feline pupils has escaped her. They appear constantly dilated.

Overall, this is one weird cat. I've seen some sociopathic felines in my day (I owned several) but this one is way out there... Anyone else owned a possibly insane cat?

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:45

Thursday, April 27, 2006


Slight amendment to blog description.

To cut off any funny ideas - the mangled form of Patrick is indeed my real name, and it's not mangled. It's in Irish (or Gaelic to everyone not Irish). Decided to note my actual name somewhere in case anyone was wondering whether Maugrim happened to the crazy person's real name. 

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 20:17

Wednesday, April 26. 2006

Duty calls...

It has been decided that since I'm such a brilliant writer (since when?) and I'm involved in open source PHP projects, I should make a few presentations to a local developer group. Honestly, they must never read this blog or they'd know better... 


. Since these are pencilled into the official calendar for early Summer I've kick-started the process.

I finished up a first draft of a tutorial on PHP DataObjects (which will make a bit more reference to ORM when I get to Draft 2 maybe) based off the Data Access regime I wrote for QS. I still need to make a spiel about code generation, and link it all to ORM making certain everyone is aware of the whole hog alternatives like Propel, Zend's possibly imaginary DB Objects, etc.

Since its a tutorial it's basically a from scratch guide to creating the Partholan classes - so it's not complex since what I wrote is really really simple in comparison. But hey, it works quite well and does the job its supposed to. I even planted multiple references to why its so simple so I don't look completely lost. Anyways, since its draft 1, for a public audience, and my own work I have also submitted it to the Devnetwork forums for consideration and review.

I'll probably get another two tutorials pieced together in the next few weeks - one is more presentation style than practical, an overview of the impact of open source in Irish business. At least here I can nod my head sagely and note Ireland still exists largely in the Stone Age - what open source? That's going to need some digging for something interesting. Another is going to be on Web 2.0 mainly the practical applications in making oodles of advertising revenue from everyone else's hard work - a popular subject. Sir. Brian (Esquire, Count of Monte Killiney) who is the resident Ruby (and apparently that ugly thing... What do you call it, Brian? Coldfusion? My God!) is helping out with his insightful comments on the imminent demise of PHP while waving his Ph.D. in my face.

Apparently its going to be titled "Web 2.0: The Death of PHP". Catchy. Personally I think Brian is on a quest to terrify the ex-Coldfusion developers who defected to the "cute but unnecessary templating language" and abandoned him. Poor guy. Sorry, Brian. At least Java lives on - you could get a shiny Coldfusion-free job over at Upstart Games - they're on the hunt again. I think plain old "Web 2.0" will cover us, you can drone for a while about Basecamp if it makes you feel better.

P.S. I did hear someone has actually written a PHP frontend for a marketing database over in the fair land of telecommunications. 

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:09


Boredom has no mercy...

Last night, being thoroughly bored and having one of those moments where I am at a complete loss what to do with myself, I decided to watch Season 1 of Stargate: SG1. You know that feeling when you sit in a room in front of your PC, an open text editor on the monitor, and realise there's absolutely nothing you can think of that's worth writing? Yep, horrible.

Indicative of this depressing trend - maybe it's the weather over here which veers from a warm spring day to an ugly grey clouded afternoon like God is flicking a switch and cackling insanely at the Irish people - I have sought to escape this dreary existence in SG episodes. I have most of them on DVD since the TV DVD market crashed into a low price frenzy and I could pick them up cheap.

There's something really cool about the Stargate series. You can watch them - repetitively - and they never seem to get boring. I'm not certain whether its a personal brain disorder, or simple quality Sci-Fi goodness, but they just stay interesting. Maybe its MacGyver's (sry, R.D. Anderson's sarcastic sense of humour, or the comedy of watching a race of parasitic aliens too stupid to realise all those pillars in their facilities make excellent hiding places for hordes of humans with P90's.

I think I'll go now actually and stare glassy-eyed at a few more episodes before sleepwalking into work tomorrow...

I'll find something more interesting to blog about tomorrow. Probably a juicy PHP tidbit I can regurgitate or something... 


Yep, thoroughly bored.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 01:58

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Twas inevitable...and who is this Norris guy?

After 2 weeks waiting for the bug to bite, it seems the long running progress on Quantum Star SE Evolved has finally stumbled to a halt. On a regular basis I reach points in time where my attention span on a hobby project will simply drop. As of today, I have not really worked on the code to any great degree for a few weeks, and have instead fallen into a backup cycle of planning the next stage of my plan for world domination of the browser game market...as if. Maybe I'll have a few epiphany moments - always a sure sign the activity is about to accelerate once more. Anyways, until further notice I will not be actively developing QS. The break may last anywhere between a few weeks to a few months depending largely on what I end up doing as an alternative.

I know folk rarely like hearing such sentiments, but I'm not a machine (unfortunately ) and I need to take a break from projects to let my brain recharge and come up with some nifty new ideas that will re-ignite my enthusiasm. Watch this blog. The project is not dead, Maug just needs to recharge his QS batteries...

In the meantime having recognised the symptoms I have been casting about for a creative outlet. I'm already committed to a performance management module for ADOdb-Lite (still enthusiastic about finishing that off, just held up by TES IV: Oblivion). I'm also thinking about digging around in my fiction notes and pulling together a storyline to build into a Mod for Oblivion. I've been kicking around the Silgrad Tower forums to keep an eye on mod developments - and wondering if it would be too embarrassing to add my thick Wicklow accent to the recently formed Oblivion Voice Actors' Guild group. Maybe would be embarrassing - as much as I can write decent english, speaking it is quite another thing. Looking on the bright side, the hard to quite recognise as english accent may be useful. It's certainly unique unless the Guild is swarming with fellow Irish.

Morrowind mod making was something I always regretted missing - but in 2002 I was a mere noob on the bottom of the corporate career ladder with an obligation to work atrocious working hours for peanuts. 4 years later and I'm not about to let the fun slide away. I have stories to tell, and a medium to tell them with. More on the mod scene in later posts no doubt after I get a little working experience with the fiendishly difficult object lists in the TES Construction Set.


On a final note, I have found further [confirmation that the legendary BNT mailing list](#) does indeed exist. This sanctuary of all things BNT where admission of new initiates is rumoured to involve the ritual sacrifice of a goat, two chickens and an iguana, is rumoured to be the source of the first Chuck Norris Fact. Chuck's publicist declined to comment stating, "Chuck Norris doesn't go on the internet, he has every internet site stored in his memory. He refreshes webpages by blinking."

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:44

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

What happened to the Google ads?

Folk probably (or not) remember the day when there were two squat text blocks from AdSense on every page hosted by quantum-star.com . I removed them back in October I think when redesigning the public web offering to get rid of that phpNuke horror. Just to warn people who have a habit of stating an ad-free website is cool - it's not so cool when you are needlessly forgoing a little income to pay for the hosting.

So the ads will be making a return. As before they'll all be fairly small Google AdSense types - all text and no images. You don't have to click them, you can probably I assume block them, and feel free to do so 

. I'll just work towards getting at least one cheque in a year to pay for a few month's hosting. The ads will not however appear on the blog - it's my personal space, so not interested in giving space to a bunch of ads here.

In anticipation of ruining everyone's browsing with ads ;), I checked my own account for the first time since May 2005. Really, before now I saw no point. I was a bit surprised to see the number \$80.36 appear. It was \$35 or something last Spring before I took those months off for study. That covers (or will) about 4 months hosting costs - or at least compensate me for 4 prepaid months.

Anyway, enough of my rambling...


Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 18:09


Thursday, March 9, 2006

He lives!

Wow, it's the 9th of March. Here I sit after spending 4 days being subjected to the horror Man calls the flu. Yes, 4 days of tiredness, getting sick, hacking like I just chain smoked my way through a few packs of fags, etc. Horrible.

And no, I still don't feel great.

Anyways. 9 days to St. Paddy's day. Maybe this year will break the world of calling it St. Patty's Day. I mean folk do realise Patty is a girl's name right? No offence to the females, but someone needs to keep up with Irish name conventions... 

And wouldn't you know I'd miss at least one PHP somethign happening online? I missed the release on March 4th of the Zend Framework - hurrah, it really does exist! 

More interesting for me, John Lim has posted an ActiveRecord implementation using ADOdb. I'm still fiddling with the internals of Partholan's DataAccess Object using ADOdb-Lite from time to time. Maybe I can get some extra inspiration...

What else is weird and wonderful in PHP for the last week I missed? Iamsure's blog is apparently MIA, people are still testing QS 0.19pa, the Zend Framework may or may not be GPL compatible (a lot of debate about the Zend Framework License), my blog has been targeted by the spam bots more than is usual. The Spam is odd. Generally I get an average 10 pieces a day, over the last 5 days I've received an average of 225 junk emails a day. They are nearly all comment emails from this blog - so it appears my blog is now being targeted by the evil spammers. It's probably time to move from moderation to auto-delete settings. None is getting through - its the usual poker/drugs crap spammers love to send to Serendipity blogs...

More amusing is the newest IE7 site - <http://www.ie7.com>. The folk over at Microsoft should have seen this one coming. I wonder who the FF fan is?

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 15:57

Monday, February 20, 2006

Should source code be copyrightable?


Apparently Mr. Greg Aharonian does not, noting source code is a collection of "algorithms" and "data structures" which are uncopyrightable ideas or processes. Wording here borrowed from the article at http://patentlaw.typepad.com/patent/2006/02/court_upholds_d.html.

Huh? It may surprise everyone maybe... Fiction, and all written text is just that after all, it's hardly limited to source code. Any writing is a preconceived structure of rules, data and ideas. What's important is not the presence of such, but the methods and intent with which they are congregated and phrased. If source code is not copyrightable then neither can any form of written word.

Source code is written in a language. Like any work of fiction it expresses the authors intent in a unique and personal way. It is their property, and any argument to the contrary is pure foolishness. Yes, the ideas might well be common to millions of similar texts. Yes, it follows a predictable pattern (grammar). Yes its composed of largely previously known information. But its still unique. It still retains value as a complete work.


Not copyrightable? Pull another leg...

How hard can it be to see that source code is identical is every way to the written word?

Sort of an aside. There's usually a few funnies on the patent-o blog: <http://patentlaw.typepad.com/patent/>. 

There is currently a patent for a warp drive in process (the patent office has requested a working copy) which may prove interesting. Maybe there's an Einstein successor at work in secret. This is followed by a few interesting applications which anyone half familiar with physics will find hilarious. There's even a vague reference to casimir attraction:

2004-197727 GENERATOR USING CASIMIR POWER SUCH THAT TWO METAL PLATES PARALLELLY PLACED IN SLIGHTLY SPACED RELATION IN VACUUM ATTRACT EACH OTHER


Stating the obvious makes for a good patent case apparently... 


Maybe I should apply to patent "forward motion generation via the sequenced placement of rods one afore the other in alternate succession". Hmmm. I could charge the entire planet's population of walking animals a small fee.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 06:00

Thursday, February 16. 2006

IE + CSS = Frustration

You make a site - write up the XHTML, add a basic CSS layout, and test. Firefox OK, Konqueror OK, Opera OK, Epiphany OK, lynx (non-CSS) OK. Then you make the mistake of testing it on IE6 - definitely not OK. 

I won't rant or rage. I'll just point out I spent as much time fiddling with the [devsite](#)'s CSS file to make it work under IE than I did writing the thing in its original working valid form. (Well, almost valid. Small border issue with Firefox). It's irritating to say the least. I don't like too much web design to start with, once I get past the basic layout I founder on the ultimate challenge. Picking matching colours! 

Anyway for what it's worth to the millions of IE6 users out there I've fixed most of the original IE problems. Thanks to matthijs on the [DevNetwork forums](#) for his suggestions on CSS fixes for IE, and pointer to the small tweak of adding a `br /` tag within all DIVs with a top-border containing left/right floats. Avoided a lot of hair pulling with that...

Now to proof read and maybe extend. A few tweaks, a news posting function, and the site can be dropped onto the base directory.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:22

Tuesday, February 14. 2006

Dumping Sourceforge - not everyone uses broadband

As of last night I have abandoned using Sourceforge outside anything except lynx from my home connection (and even that from a remote server through ssh). You can't blame the SF team for the cool work they all do, however the unfortunate update a few months back to their new CSS based layout has wreaked havoc across a population of open source developers who live and work without broadband. Maybe it's the new graphical ads that have emerged, the Google text ads occupying the top of every page or even their CSS scheme. Whatever it is it's unuseable - quite literally in my case. It's taking long minutes to load even a simple page and its just no longer worth using from home. I didn't even really notice the trend in my usage until recently. Where once I used SF quite regularly its now become a rare occurrence...for no reason other than bandwidth issues quietly and gradually pushing me towards using Freshmeat or just plain Google instead.


Hopefully someone on the SF team will address the issue as the site is updated more substantially, but the trend over the last year or two has been to increase overall HTML and CSS filesizes without regard for we 56Kers. I just hope the recent trend towards CSS2 continues (with proper use!) - its incredible what a difference proper use of CSS makes to those of us on slow connections - it may not even be considered by designers, but cacheable compact CSS and XHTML files can increase a slow connection's display speed two or even threefold compared to using tables and older HTML standards. Misusing them has the opposite effect - but that's pretty rare to be honest and usually on legacy web apps.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 17:49

Monday, February 13, 2006

Me hates American english...

After doing some google searching and getting a bit worried about my lack of progress I discovered a previously unknown (to me) quirk. Americans spell "Behaviour" as "Behavior". After applying this to a few Google searches about CSS and Internet Explorer **Behavior**, lo and behold I discover previously undiscovered resources and articles.

I'm guessing US citizens are not going to happy with Quantum Star SE Evolved. Imagine all the uses of "colour", "armour" and who knows what else awaits them. Maybe I'll take that post on a translation system from a week or so back and create a "en:US" translation... 

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 22:49


Monday, February 6, 2006

Linux for Humans...

It started with Debian, shifted to RedHat, moved onwards to SuSE, migrated to Fedora Core 4, and is now back at the start, albeit with a flamebait distro, namely Ubuntu.

My computer has been around the block a few times. Since I have this habit of patching it (without replacing it all at once) with new hardware once in a while it tends to have some weird quirks - the worst is probably the 512MB HDD which has been imitating a very loud cricket for over 10 years. Still its yet to fail, it maintains backups of files from as far back as 1995 (there's even some edited Duke Nukem game and user configs in there).

So, where was I before reminiscing?

Ubuntu! I have severe limits on how I manage my Linux desktop - its pretty much an upgrade path issue. You see I have a very slow, possibly prehistoric, telephone network connecting my home to the world. As a result broadband is impossible...literally. I'm also too far away to avail of cable, or radio options - though that scene is perking up in another month or two. Time in Ireland does run a little slower 

So for me Ubuntu makes a sense. Install, wait 6 months, upgrade. Repeat. Repeat again. See, no internet apt updates required unless I'm desperate, or can't just fetch the deb package manually when I am working off broadband at the weekends.

So yesterday (that was one busy weekend!) I got around to installing Ubuntu "The Breezy Badger" onto my freshly cleaned HDD (definitely not the aging 512MB model). I then proceeded to install XAMPP, the restricted Nvidia drivers, a few other favoured packages from the DVD (carried part of the Universal pool), and pulled up chair to give the brackish brown Gnome desktop a workout.

I was pretty impressed at this stage. I dumped the last Ubuntu in disgust after using Nautilus for a few hours and getting a bit **angry** at its habit of opening a new window for every subfolder. Thankfully that deadbeat useability killer has been fixed - it couldn't have been a feature no matter what the developers may have been thinking. I also tested a PHP compile since the last attempt in Ubuntu "Hoary Hedgehog" was a Twilight Zone experience. Ubuntu also seems to have no developer mode - when you go compiling you live with using apt to fetch dependencies. I just clicked through the Synaptic interface and threw them all in and its worked so far.

Overall I really like Ubuntu. I actually did the Quantum Star SE test website using XAMPP, with gedit (the Gnome Text Editor) as a code editor. Since it supports tabbing, syntax highlighting and near automatic UTF-8 encoding it was good enough for the task. I'll get around to installing Eclipse when I have more time and can grab it from the net. The brown Gnome theme used by default is pretty drab - nothing that can't be fixed.

Only niggling point is mount handling. Although Ubuntu will auto mount the local harddrives/removable devices (i.e. Windows partitions, and my USB stick) it doesn't grant your user write priveleges automatically. I even had trouble reading, let alone writing. Its easy enough to edit /etc/fstab and set a more permissive umask for mounting HDDs, but for "Linux for Humans" claims that won't go very far. Still, its a small niggle. Using "sudo " in the shell is likewise irksome at first. I'm sure there's a way to reset the obscured root password - better be.

A small bump in the road that will occur just after you logout of your first ubuntu session may be the monitor resolution reset. I found that although my resolution was initially set to 1200*768, it has reset to the horrible 800*600 on my next login. This is apparently what happens when you forget to install the nvidia-glx package (if you have an Nvidia 3D card).

It may have been just an isolated issue however.

I'll find a more exciting killer problem to spice up my next set of blog entries...



Honestly though, very neat easy to install distro. No serious issues, and good for my limited internet speeds it has a 6 monthly release schedule.


Next stop will be "Dapper Duck" in April.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:20

Tuesday, January 17, 2006

Irritating Maug; First, accuse him of an license violation...

For who it may concern.

I would ask that anyone with the least intention of emailing me with certain accusations supply proof (you know, as in evidence 

). Yesterday marked the third copyright/license breach or infringement related email in the last year which was sent my way without a shred of proof or explanation attached. At the very least I expect people to read the code, read the forums, and then quote both with a line number and filename.

I honestly despise such emails since they are so easily proven wrong, and yet the author usually retreats with the resistance of a tick. Its even more loathsome when the author is an open source developer who deliberately (unless honestly ignorant) misquotes and misrepresents the meaning of open source licenses.

I won't moan about the other 10 or so emails during the year which were framed as enquiries - those individuals showed respect, a willingness to cooperate, and were happy to discuss things in an open and friendly manner. If anything I applaud them. None of them has a case - but I don't condemn honest mistakes.

But the others?

Misquotes, misinformation, relaying facts with obvious flaws, etc. Horrible. For those who may consider such actions in the future I'll remind you that I'm not a child. I have a brain, I know the difference between copyright and a license, and I happen to know quite a bit about my rights. I can spot false information or facts a mile away.

I also can remember what I write, and keep copies - I mean honestly, twice now people have quoted from forums and emails in support of their cause. Unfortunately they put the quotes out of context, or removed subsequent replies which cleared up the issue quickly. That's not evidence - that almost reaches the summit of a direct insult. You might as well just add "By the way, I think you're stupid!" to the argument.

Before I rant all the way up to a three page torrent... If you wish to question a copyright or license issue then please do so, but please please use a little common sense and make sure you can prove it first, or if uncertain just give me a shout. I'm an honest guy, if I ever do end up on the wrong side of the rails unintentionally I'll move back quickly with an apology (though I may debate a little defensively - no one's perfect and I'm an argumentative sod at times!).

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 23:21

Monday, January 9, 2006

400 Years...

2006 marks the year when my native County Wicklow "celebrates" the 400th anniversary of its creation as a Shire (an Administrative Region). "Celebrate" is an odd word for it. In the face of commercialism and the incompetent bureaucracy of the local county council however its probably inevitable the event would be celebrated for the cash it will drag in from tourism...

The truth of the matter is that its the 400th anniversary of the final defeat of the local O'Byrne, O'Kavanagh and O'Toole clans in their incessant resistance against the invasion of the Normans/English. These clans controlled most of the county, and defeated all comers who dared attempted to take over their lands, or impose the rule of some foreign ruler.

Of course the defeat led to the Irish clans losing most of their lands - booted out in favour of whichever Lords were in favour at the time. In the years that followed the persecution of we rebellious Catholic peasants only grew worse.


Definitely not something I would be "celebrating" in 2006 with festivities and special events...

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 17:57

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

Its Back!

The blog is back in action after some timeout to clean up the server. Theme has changed for the moment until I can put the original one back in place.

Can I have my accent back now? 

'Fraid I lost the last entry - all about the Devnetwork takeover and the events of the weekend.

COMMENTS ARE NOW ENABLED 

Also adding some more PHP game centric RSS feeds to the left column. I do actually watch these - not all unfortunately have RSS feeds (that's iamsure out for the moment). The Serendipity feed does not support Atom for some stupid reason.

Posted by Pádraic Brady in Irishisms at 21:41