

**Start-Up Appcelerator Highlights Mobile Opportunity For Web Developers**

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The explosive growth of mobile applications over the last year has been one of the brightest stories of mobile. Apple's App Store has achieved an astounding 88,000+ applications and is approaching 2 billion downloads in only 14 months in the marketplace, setting the stage for mobile applications as a key area of innovation in the new decade dawning just a few months from now.

Somewhat lost in the flurry of mobile apps coverage is the need to better enable web developers to drive their applications and development energies into the mobile space, and for mobile applications to extend content, social interactions, and other web-enabled experiences. However the primary path to mobile application deployment is usually through mobile platform-specific application developer programs—and with seven major mobile ecosystems—Android, Apple, BlackBerry, BREW, Symbian, webOS, and Windows Mobile—the cost and complexity is daunting. Indeed it can cost 5X or more to port applications among ecosystems and devices as it did to develop the application at the outset—an enormously inefficient use of time and energy. With operators like Verizon launching their own applications developer programs, the application developer process is even more complex. And most of these developer programs are focused squarely on mobile application developers, with markedly less focus on web and desktop application developers.

One of the most interesting companies that I have recently met with is Appcelerator, an early-stage start-up based in Mountain View, California and which is focused on precisely that. Appcelerator's value proposition is to enable web developers to quickly create and commercialize native mobile, desktop, and web applications through its Titanium platform with the web technologies they use today like CSS, HTML, and Javascript. Appcelerator takes the best of the web – the ubiquitous, cost effective, and highly available web skills and technologies collectively built up over the past 15 years – and enables these developers to easily build apps with rich native functionality of popular iPhone and Android mobile devices as well as evolving PCs, Macs, and Linux netbook/desktop platforms. And it is that triple web, PC, and mobile focus that is currently under-leveraged by the collective mobile and PC industries, and which holds rich opportunities going forward. Appcelerator notes that with its Titanium Mobile beta only launched on June 6th, it already has over 7,000 new primarily web-based developers looking to develop native apps. Near-term product plans include support for Blackberry and sophisticated application analytics.

In addition to mobile opportunities, upcoming netbook opportunities and the blurring line between mobile/netbook/desktop presents an even more complex platform challenge that almost every online business will face. For instance, there is remarkably little discussion around Apple's clear integration of the iPhone with the Mac, and a potential announcement of an Apple tablet-like device would only further complicate this picture. Each can and does stand alone on its own—but the combination of the three—and the integrated applications experience Apple offers—is most compelling. Google's recent moves into PC-OS through Chrome is clearly linked with its central efforts around Android OS, yet the two platforms require very different development skills.

Companies like Appcelerator are emerging players to watch not only because of their triple focus on web, desktop, and mobile platforms, but by how they approach the opportunity. Appcelerator specifically does not promise the fallacy of "write once, run anywhere"—which does not work in mobile other than for the simplest applications. Rather, Appcelerator provides a single platform where developers can leverage the company's common framework for creating applications for the desktop/netbook, the web, and for mobile that look and perform native to each platform. This approach significantly reduces cost and complexity for

web and desktop developers, and provides a smoother, consistent mechanism for application integration among the mobile, web, and desktop environments.

As the mobile, Internet, and IT industries head into the next decade, new opportunities are presenting themselves. The tremendous growth of mobile applications, of increasingly functional smartphones over the last two years, and of the upcoming explosion in netbook/desktop offerings underscores the need to better support applications across all platforms. Indeed as the lines between the mobile Internet and the fixed Internet, between smartphones and netbooks, and between the mobile and IT industries continue to blur, integrating these different ecosystems is becoming increasingly important. The starting point for such ecosystems integration are the underlying web developer communities that have come to dominate the overall development landscape and who are in a prime position to drive much of the integration and provide the tangible applications to end-users quickly and cost-effectively. And companies like Appcelerator that are early movers in bringing mobile, web, and desktop platforms and applications together are emerging players to watch closely as they lay key foundation pieces down for the next decade of innovation that promises to be just as dazzling as the one now drawing to a close.

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