
From: Linda Averett (Exchange)
Sent: Monday, December 06, 1999 8:18 AM
To: Linda Averett Staff
Subject: FW: BillG demos this Friday afternoon

-----Original Message-----

From: Anthony Bay (Exchange)
Sent: Saturday, December 04, 1999 3:20 PM
To: Mike Beckerman (Exchange); John Martin (Exchange); Kenneth Goto (Exchange); Dave Fester; Jonathan Gear; Will Poole; Kurt Buecheler; Chad Knowlton (Exchange); Linda Averett (Exchange); Ian Mercer; Kate Seekings; Sheldon Fisher; Kevin La Chapelle; Kurt Hunter
Cc: Anthony Bay's Extended Staff; Craig Eisler (Exchange)
Subject: RE: BillG demos this Friday afternoon

some additional comments.

a. we have come a long way in terms of how bill feels about the player. he feels the current player is very weak and has been vocal on that in the past. he didn't have any of those type of comments this time. so we have gotten from we suck to we are OK based on current progress of cyprus release. and we aren't done yet with either its feature set or its UI. but we all have to understand that he (and the market) won't evaluate us on how much better we are than the current player, or CD Deluxe, but rather how we compare to the competition.

b. bill was comfortable with the feature set, with the exception of making it easy to add a plug in for ripping to MP3 or other formats within the media center.. as opposed to migrating to another app. he is fine if this is delivered by a 3rd party, but eric felt we should write the plug-in and distribute that code to key partners so we knew it worked right. interesting suggestion to think about.

c. bill wasn't excited about the UI. he wonders if we can't do something much sexier, feels microsoft is boring. also didn't like the implementation of the anchor at all. we should definitely look for ways to make wmp sexier without becoming more cluttered.

d. bill liked the idea of take5 as it scrolled the user thru what's new. i think we can do a lot here with wm.com and the guide. but bill is also clear that we are a technology partner and referral engine for sites using windows media, not a media network. so we need to continue to walk the line of great guide and search but not taking over the user experience from the media companies/ICPs.

e. bill played with iMovie. had some bumps but in general feels that will be the benchmark user experience for moviemaker. i explained they are DV only and we are both analog and DV. i also don't understand how QT fits into iMovie. whoever did the demo told him that iMovie isn't using QT as the native format.

f. as mike mentions, bill was very intrigued with napster. pointed out that it is an alternative to having to rip songs from CDs you already owned. mentioned that for him, with high speed internet connection, he would prefer to just grab the songs he already owns off the net rather than having to rip them himself. interesting idea. discussion about how we could do this while respecting rights management. eric feels the peer to peer infrastructure is already there via messenger and we should look to be creative on this.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Beckerman (Exchange)
Sent: Friday, December 03, 1999 9:48 PM
To: Windows Media Platform Group FT; John Martin (Exchange); Kenneth Goto (Exchange)
Cc: Anthony Bay's Extended Staff
Subject: BillG demos this Friday afternoon

Anthony and I presented this afternoon to BillG as part of a "demo day" agenda for Bill. I believe that this is the first time Bill has had a demo day, and it's really cool that we got to be in. In fact, others were bumped to ensure we had a slot.

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First off I want to acknowledge the great work of **everyone** on the Cyprus team. People are working hard driving toward our 12/17 CC date and the effort really shows. It's extremely gratifying to see all of the progress over the last several weeks, and it's enabled us to show solid progress to everyone from Bill on down. Code talks.

And a special thanks to those in KipO's, KirtD's, and JohnMart's teams who really went all out yesterday and today, some working 36 hours straight, to make sure the demo was solid (the person whom I found asleep in my chair this morning when I came in shall remain nameless, though I'm sure he would have found the couch in his office to be much more comfortable...) They fixed key bugs and delivered working implementations of a couple more of the really cool features for this demo. We went to the wire, but it was worth it, and without that effort the presentation wouldn't have been anywhere near as smooth-all of you rock.

We demo'd three things to Bill:

- 1) Cyprus
- 2) Real's new Take5 site as integrated into RP7
- 3) Napster

We were given about 15 minutes to go through it all which means that we didn't get all of the rich feedback you'd normally expect from a 1-2 hour session with Bill. But he was far from silent ;-). I'll highlight the discussion of each demo.

Cyprus

The demo went really well. No crashes, no funny states or half-refreshed UI, just good solid stuff. Even survived Bill absentmindedly removing and replacing my Cassiopeia from the cradle before I started the demo, thus causing ActiveSync to rear up.

Remember, we've already shown Bill working Skins and other concepts, so this was much more of a "here's how it's all coming together into real code" than a "here are 1500 new innovations and ideas that you've never seen." When we finished he left us with "this is good." If you've ever been to a Bill demo, you know that closing like that is important. But of course we have more work to do, and as you'll see there were definitely some things that Bill found less than appealing in the UI we have at this point.

Started off by launching John Green's cool new demo player skin. Though it's not yet done it does a great job of illustrating the power of Cyprus. Check it out (put it into your Prog. Files \ WMP \ Skins directory).
[<< File: wmp.wmz >>](file://wmp.wmz)

We need to be sure that when we install we have two links: Windows Media Player, and Windows Media Center, where the former just runs WMP with our favorite default skin. People, including Bill, just get this, and it makes their eventual exposure to the media center much more understandable and less threatening.

Showed a 300k video, and tweaked with EQ and video controls. Bill thought it was cool; wanted to know if it was what the RTM player will look like. Not exactly, but that there will be equally cool skins shipped.

Explained the WMP anchor. He didn't like it. We said we'd probably have an accelerator key or something else to cause the player -> media center transition. That, he liked. But we didn't have a deep discussion about how the anchor provided other functions which are not so easy to access w/o explicit UI.

Showed him Media Center, starting with Media On-Line from which I played a music clip. Not a lot of comments, but he got it. I think the seamless UI integration really made this into an implicit "of course" for him, and that's a credit to the quality design work done in the WMC team.

Next, CD Audio. Asked if we could play back and rip at the same time. I explained the difficulties given CD drive access constraints, and we talked about what configurations users would likely have (24x CD drive? 36x? P300+ CPU? Etc.) He commented that if our competitors have figured this out and enable simultaneous ripping / playback, we certainly must do that, too.

He asked if we could rip to MP3. When we told him no he was pretty quick to jump on us about why not and that we should. We explained the rationale of focusing on Windows Media, and on having a 3rd party integration strategy to allow someone like MusicMatch to provide that. The discussion ended with him noting that it was a gutsy strategy, and one that he agreed with. In Dev and PGM we've done a lot of thinking about what kind of extension strategy we could enable in Cyprus, and currently we don't have one planned. Based on strong marketing feedback in the last couple of weeks we've already begun to take another look at that (no, not for 12/17 CC); Bill's comments only reinforce the need to take another look.

Media library was next. "Why's that so ugly?" "How come there aren't any graphics, album covers, or anything?" The net was that he doesn't like the listbox or the tree control (explorer-like views in general), and he didn't understand the issues around getting some of the metadata he mentioned. We educated him that we're working hard (JohnMart's and WPoole's groups) to get rights for all of the cool and rich metadata that we can and that the RTM product will expose it in the UI. Took him through the categories, how to add to a playlist, etc. No issues

Started up a video playlist then went to Now Playing. Had the playlist and EQ controls visible. Anthony pointed out the metadata, and explained that when we have more this is a likely place we'll show it. It's really fun to see this all work as you click around on visualizations and playlist entries.

Spent 30 seconds the Portable Device section. More comments about ugly list controls. Demo'd controlling the Cassiopeia from media center. Short discussion about portable devices and how we're doing with our WM evangelism to OEMs. No red flags.

Closed with a demo of the Yellow Submarine skin, explaining that this was an example of the kind of thing that we expect ICPs to be all over in order for them to provide cool interactive branded content to users. He got it.

Take5/RP7

Quickly showed the Take5 integration into RealPlayer 7. Bill was impressed by the nice little SMIL production they use to summarize the day's top 4 interesting pieces of content. JohnMart's team is working on designs for similar behavior, as well as great designs for the far-more-deep integration of WMC into Cyprus.

Showed how cluttered Real can get. From Take5, launched a video, which brings up a separate player over RP7. Then, back at RP7, launched Real JukeBox as if I was going to do some ripping. Three UI's all showing at once, all cluttered in and of themselves, and together looking like a big mess on your screen. Our integration must be more seamless, and we need to really work hard to think about scenarios like this and to offer simple design solutions to our customers. We're on the right track.

Napster

Napster (and it's competitors like CuteMX) is cool (<<http://www.napster.com>>). It's a peer-to-peer MP3 sharing application that has been driven by the general phenomenon of music piracy on the net. When you start it you connect to a central Napster server, automatically registering your presence, your connection rate, and the number, sizes, and location of any MP3 files in your sharing directory. You can then see how many people are on-line, how much total music is shared from those people (hundreds of thousands of songs; gigabytes at any given instant), and can chat with them, look at their libraries, search for music using various criteria, and copy that music directly from those other user's shared directories. Lots of duplicate songs, and most all of it illegal, but the sharing concepts are very powerful.

Bill was really intrigued. We had a good discussion about how this model might be used and encouraged in a way that promotes ICP business models, adds value to users, and doesn't encourage piracy of content. We will be thinking more about this in our team. There's also some potential synergy with MSNs Messenger Service that we need to think about.

The net: smooth demo, constructive feedback, and productive discussions. We'll consider Bill's feedback in addition to that from Marketing, we'll make the right decisions for moving forward, and we'll ship an awesome Cyprus player in the Horizon release!

-Mike