
From: Mike Beckerman
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 11:57 AM
To: Linda Averett; Dan Plastina; Chadd Knowlton
Subject: FW: Media User Interface (MUI)

fyi

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

From: Steve Capps
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 10:13 AM
To: Mike Beckerman; Joe Belfiore; Will Poole; Chris Jones; Ian Mercer
Cc: Eric Rudder; Harish Naidu; Dave Fester; Bill Gates; Jim Allchin
Subject: RE: Media User Interface (MUI)

First of all, this MUI memo is 8 months old and talks about a prototype done over six months prior to that. Many things have changed and yet many things remain the same. Mars and WMP guys are working through a lot of the issues, but our respective tight schedules and differing business goals are going to dampen any super-deep integration. (and our egos haven't helped either)

The key to this (and it's supported by our focus groups) is integrating the player into the frame. Yes, it's a simple thing and yes it's not all that different (to us nerds) from the start menu/task bar integration, but that simple difference is demonstrably better and a opportunity we shouldn't pass up. However, unless the shell is modified radically for Whistler, it just isn't going to happen except in Mars -- which is fine because music is becoming more and more an online activity. (for instance: see www.scour.com -- they supposedly are going to add browsing and chat soon to their SX product) The business goals of WMP drive to make it a "destination app" which is counter indicated by this desire to make it an integral part of the Windows UI and Mars.

Mars is about to go internally public on 4/4 (<http://mars/tryit/>), so you guys can try it yourselves. It may require a reboot, but after that it's self-updating. It won't "take over" anything on your machine so there are no worries about that, either. It exemplifies much of the stuff I discussed below (alas no NetMeeting).

Simple example: for Mars customers (and I daresay for Window's customers), music is a background task to browsing, chat, etc. So being held captive in a player application is just plain wrong. We feel we have to have a "spinner.com-like" background radio station service (simple, pick-your-genre, almost brandless UI). However, WindowsMedia guys can't host the service so they are limited to being simply a directory of existing ones. Most of the providers they point to are *all* striving for eyeballs which is the opposite of the term "background radio".

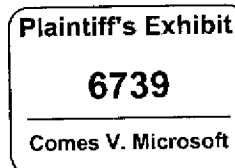
These two seemingly contradictory ideas *can* be simultaneously pursued. In fact, the WMP guys have made good progress in exposing the needed services via API's so it's not a technical issue. The problem lies more in aligning and/or accepting different biz goals; I still don't see anything insurmountable here.

I'd be glad to demonstrate and/or chat about existing Mars stuff and ideas/plans for future stuff.

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

From: Mike Beckerman
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 8:13 AM
To: Joe Belfiore; Will Poole; Chris Jones; Ian Mercer
Cc: Eric Rudder; Steve Capps; Harish Naidu; Dave Fester; Bill Gates; Jim Allchin
Subject: RE: Media User Interface (MUI)

Agree on the chronology; timing is going to be very tight



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

From: Joe Belfiore
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 7:20 AM
To: Will Poole; Chris Jones; Mike Beckerman; Ian Mercer
Cc: Eric Rudder; Steve Capps; Harish Naidu; Dave Fester; Bill Gates; Jim Allchin
Subject: RE: Media User Interface (MUI)

Steve will appreciate my honesty here...our degree of traction on this stuff so far is very low, unfortunately.

1) Whistler integration... we need to invest in doing whistler integration somehow, or the ui experience will be lame. Our shell dev team has offered, and I offer again, to do design work and even help out with writing code to make WMP and moviemaker integrate well. (use new commctl 6.0 visuals, skin the frame, integrate with fs storage, etc.). The truth is that until these teams are mostly done with millennium, we don't even have a source tree we can help out in.

the moment you guys turn the corner on millennium work, let my team know immediately and we will immediately get your feet on the ground running with whistler integration.

2) After that, actually doing what Capps is talking about will require a significant design investment SOMEWHERE, though it wouldn't necessarily have to be Will's team. (could be mars, could be DMD, could be something else entirely). To do this, I suspect there will be componentization reqmts on WMP stuff.

In any event, the chronology should go like this (in my opinion):

- a. get Whistler integration done as quickly as possible the moment you guys are done with millennium
- b. as soon as we can roll off that (this fall?), we should get a few people together to look at which group could do something more media-centric according to the ideas capps has prototyped

thx

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

From: Will Poole
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2000 9:55 PM
To: Chris Jones; Joe Belfiore; Mike Beckerman; Ian Mercer
Cc: Eric Rudder; Steve Capps; Harish Naidu; Dave Fester; Bill Gates; Jim Allchin
Subject: RE: Media User Interface (MUI)

We're definitely interested in how to increase shell / UI integration with music and video media, for Whistler (whishful thinking) and Blackcomb. Mike and Ian are the right guys from DMD to engage

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

From: Chris Jones
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2000 8:49 PM
To: Joe Belfiore; Bill Gates; Will Poole
Cc: Eric Rudder; Steve Capps
Subject: RE: Media User Interface (MUI)

adding joe. joe, someone from your team should be the champion here.

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

From: Bill Gates
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2000 6:33 PM
To: Will Poole; Chris Jones
Cc: Eric Rudder; Steve Capps
Subject: FW: Media User Interface (MUI)

Our consumer guys wanted to do some stuff that integrated the media player that seemed pretty cool

I think it is worth looking at the prototype ideas Capps has and thinking about how we achieve them as a company.

I will send other mail on the technical coordination issues around using IM, voice, media, netmeeting to allow the PC to be the best real time communication device ever.

However I thought it might be worth you (will and chris) seeing the kind of thing that might be possible

--- Original Message ---

From: Steve Capps
Sent: Friday, August 27, 1999 11:48 PM
To: Bill Gates
Cc: Anthony Bay (Exchange); David Cole
Subject: Media User Interface (MUI)

The prototype I made for Mars 6 months ago is definitely the first instance of a MUI. Take the simplified browser/email/chat experience and put both WMP and a NetMeeting chunk "into the chrome" so 1) every user has it installed w/o a doubt and 2) it was a good shot across the bow of Real, AOL, et al. (In fact I think we could patent some things here, too) I had sat down with the media player guys and the NetMeeting guys and tried to get them excited about this. The level of excitement varied, but I never could get folks to sign on the dotted line for OSR2. To be fair to these groups, I couldn't even get the official Mars team excited about (and then committed to) an embedded player until months of pestering. The sad thing is I finally got Jane Dailey (of NetMeeting) committed to do a few tweaks to support us, but then the product got yanked into some business org and she had to cancel the efforts.

I'd be glad to demo you guys this prototype; just let me know when/where. The cool thing is we have 95% of the stuff doable with activeX so I can demonstrate a pretty compelling and fairly complete (though buggy) experience. This is certainly a case of taking *existing* technology and rearranging it into a compelling *product*.

Besides putting the stuff into the chrome, other semi-radical ideas were:

1) we ignore file associations with down level mars. Bluntly, if you install down level and somebody is already registered for, say, MP3, you don't touch it. But, on the other hand, you are then free to ignore the associations. If somebody goes to MP3.com within Mars, it will go to our embedded player regardless of what's in the registry. This is good for the user because there aren't a million little players littering the desktop. We've met with Cory Van Arsdale of Legal and he's blessed this approach.

2) We only needed a fraction of net meeting: the telephony (audio and video) and a back channel for data. The customer scenarios are simple: voice chat and shared browsing -- we could toss NM's text chat, shared white board, etc. (Or simply just ignore it). The shared window stuff might be nice for future versions (especially when you factor in remote admin)

3) We work with Windows Media and/or Tunes.com to provide a rich UI experience (that just improves over time). My analogy is to search providers. We used to just provide a Search button in the chrome, but then integrated it into the UI with explorer bars and then did the whole service with MSN/autosearch, etc. This would be the same. We provide the player (screen, transport controls, volume) in the chrome and then ramp up the service side to provide more and more features. Over time, we put CD ripping, etc, into the client -- justifying and embellishing the "chrome". To get out quickly, we might have to partner with folks like we did with search, but eventually this is an MS-only service.

So the plan-of-record of Mars is to have just a player embedded in the chrome. We're still defining how the player interacts with WindowsMedia.com. The current version of NetMeeting just doesn't offer enough so they cut themselves out. (I hadn't even gotten the rest of the Mars team committed to NM, either).

This issue touches on a number of themes we discussed today. This was a soup-to-nuts product proposal from CWD that required investments from MSN, WMP and NM. It's a solid answer to AOL and raises the ante. But, because it cuts across 4 major groups inside MS, it was close to impossible to get folks lined up. It represented only *more work* for these projects, as little as the changes I advocated.

We discussed aligning ship dates today. This is bigger than that: it's defining a compelling, complete customer-focused solution and getting folks excited about that. Again to be fair to all groups, even CWD didn't embrace this idea fully. I perceive it's because there's a lot of history that working inter-groups like this never pans out. We all know about the tension created between CWD and MSN over Mars; add two more groups and it might explode.

So, I'd certainly make this idea one of the product definition bets we should make to push UI (assuming the "new UI bet" has correctly evolved into a handful of new product classes). I'd also love to get a commitment from WMP and NM to fully embrace the product and make the one-off stuff we need *even for V1*.

This was just a quick note to capture what I think we could do if we committed to it. I've glossed over a lot and I'm

ignorant of just as much, so please bug me for clarification.