

Microsoft goes after ASP.Net developers

BY ALLISON TAYLOR

Targeting both seasoned ASP.Net developers as well as new Web developers, Microsoft Corp. recently announced the availability of some new resources and

tools in an effort to build its developer base.

The ASP.Net Resource Kit, which can be downloaded for free or for a fee through a Web hosting partner (which will host sites built using the kit), includes

tools, tutorials and samples to help new developers learn the Web server technology, as well as new controls and components for developers that currently use it, Microsoft said in a statement. The kit also provides dis-

counts on ASP.Net training, Web hosting and access to ASP to ASP.Net and PHP to ASP.Net migration guides with documentation, samples and utilities. Also included is the ASP.Net Web Matrix, which is a free tool used

to build applications on ASP.Net. ASP describes dynamically generated Web pages that carry the .asp extension built with ActiveX scripting — VB Script or JScript code.

John Carthy, director of marketing at myhosting.com, the only Canadian-based Web hosting company offering a package related to this resource kit, said it's a great way to encourage developers to start using ASP.Net.

"It's always tools and applications that drive an operating system and not the operating system itself," Carthy said. "The availability of these tools, affordability and functionality, makes it very attractive."

Carthy said resource kits are a good feeding mechanism to promote interest in ASP.Net.

Four Web hosting companies in the U.S. and myhosting.com in Toronto will be offering services for US\$9.95 a month, which includes Microsoft SQL Server database support, a hosting account and an ASP.Net enabled account.

Myhosting.com is a pure Microsoft hosting company, and Carthy said that Microsoft is trying to provide the tools to allow the developer community success on the .Net platform.

As Microsoft continues to focus on making the tools available, myhosting.com can pinpoint the development of the backend, including the server infrastructure, in order to be interoperable with the emerging tools, he added.



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The ASP.Net Resource Kit can be downloaded for free at www.msdn.microsoft.com/asp.net/asprk/. Developers can alternatively order a copy of the kit on CD.

Two years ago users and developers would have had to buy a server comparable to SQL Server, Carthy said.

"Slowly, hosting companies are offering this functionality in a shared environment...to provide everything necessary to build a proper application," he said.

David Senf, a senior analyst at IDC Canada Ltd. in Toronto, said Microsoft wants to make its platform easier and more fully featured than competitive platforms from vendors such as Sun Microsystems Inc. and IBM Corp.

"Moreover, building Web apps using open source tools and code libraries, like in Java, PHP or Python, is becoming increasingly simplified," Senf said.

"Microsoft needs to keep improving on the argument that building and, more importantly, maintaining applications — whether Web, server, desktop or mobile — is less costly within the .Net framework. At the end of the day, the business decision maker cares about total cost, not developer religious fervor."



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