



Building Communities

Creating a conversation

February 2, 2006

Eclipse Today



- 120+ members, including major Java, Linux and Embedded vendors (Actuate, HP, IBM, Sybase, BEA, Borland, JBoss, SAP, RedHat, Novell, Nokia, Monta Vista, Wind River, Mentor, ENEA, QNX)
- 50+ open source projects
- 55-65% market share of Java IDE
- Downloads: 50 million++; 1 million in 40 days for last release
- 70 project leaders, PMC members
- 618 committers
- 24,426 registered Bugzilla users

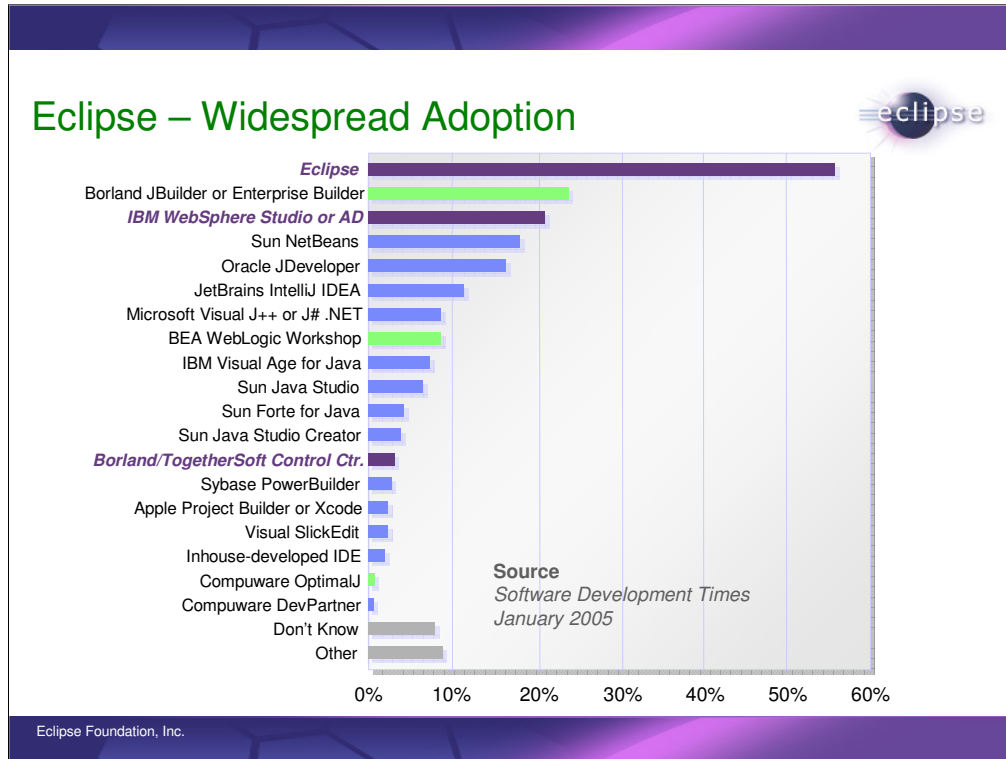
Eclipse 3.1 Metrics



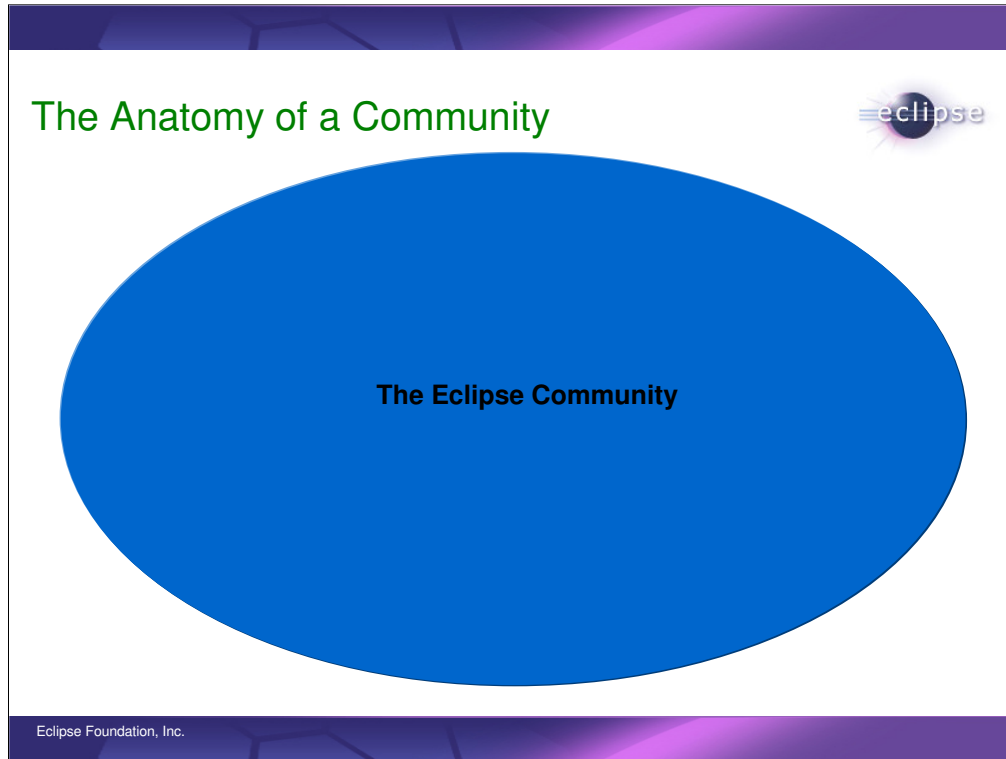
- Number of newsgroup posts: 32,223
- Number of mailing list posts: 7,792
- Number of Eclipse related blogs: 27
- Number of eclipse.org page views: 500,000,000
- Average Bugzilla queries per day: 600,000
- Bugzilla bug or enhancement reports entered: 21,831
- Bugzilla reports fixed: 9,871
- Most comments on a single bug: 202

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An example of the community activity is the metrics around the Eclipse 3.1 release.

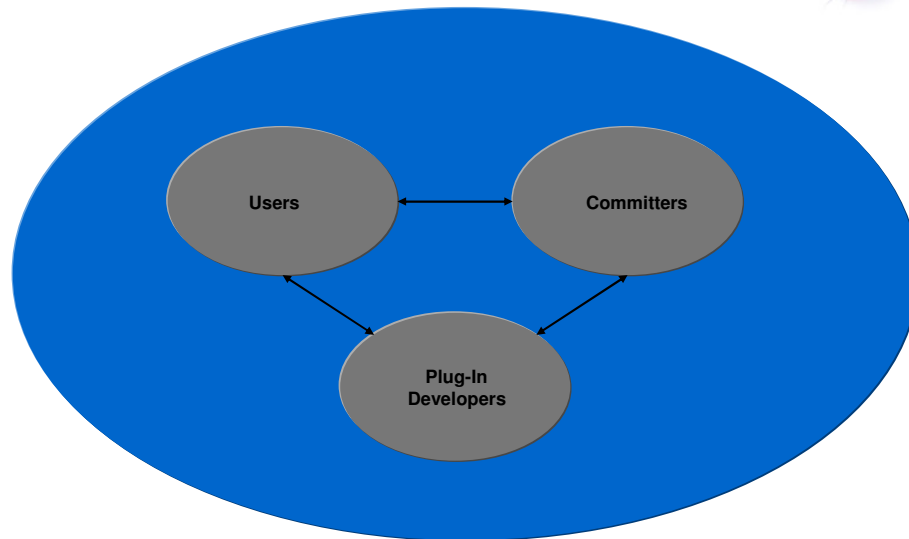


Of course a measure of success is that people are using us.



Lots of people think of Eclipse of one big community.

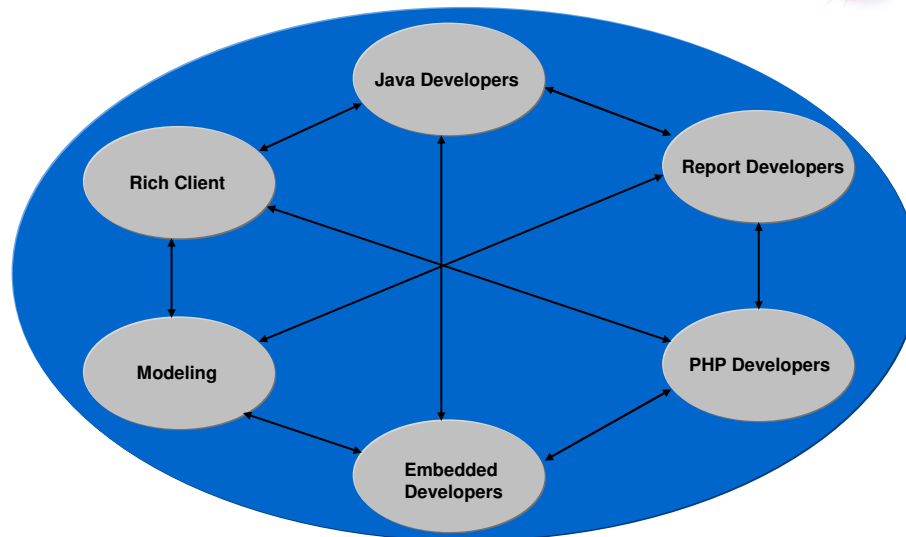
Role-based Communities



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However, we think of the community in two dimensions, the first begin role based. Within the Eclipse community there are users, committers and plug-in developers. Each of these roles participate in the community in different ways and for different purposes. Therefore it is important to approach each role differently.

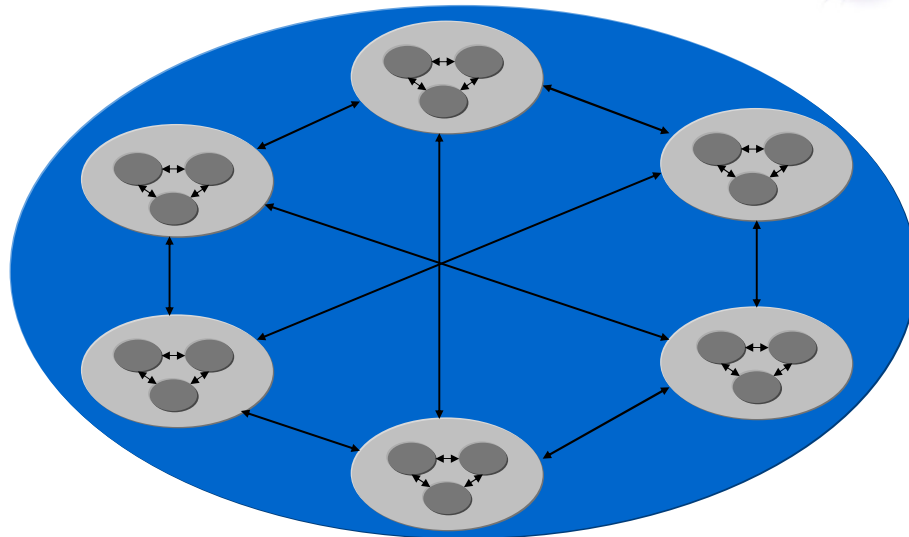
Technology-based Communities



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Eclipse is also a set of smaller communities that are developed around different technologies. They often leverage and work together but they do so from different perspectives.

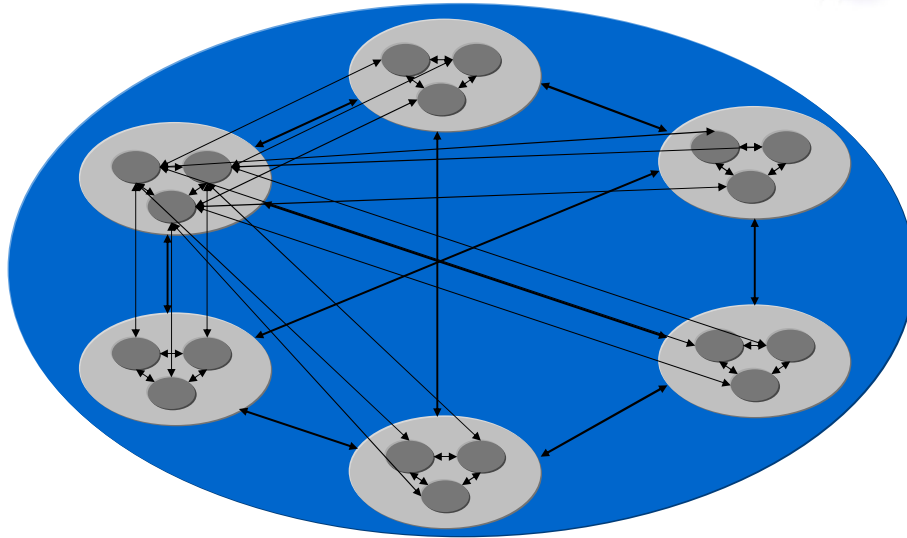
The real picture



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So the real picture is that within the different technology communities, there exists different roles. There is also a lot of collaboration between the participants across roles and technology.

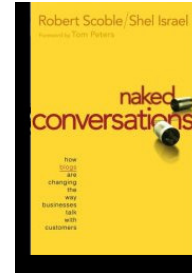
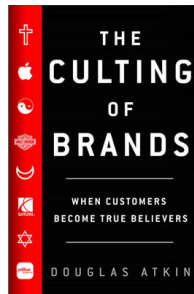
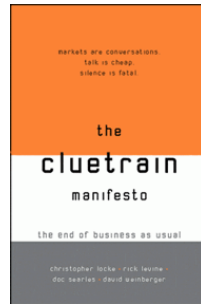
Metcalfe's Law Works for Communities as Well



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Of course the network effect starts to take off even within developer communities. The more users you have, the more plug-in developers you get and the more committers are attracted.

Communities are about conversations



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How do we think about building and communicating to the Eclipse community? A lot of what we do has been documented and discusses in different books and blogs. There are a few. If you would read one book, everyone needs to read The Cluetrain Manifesto.

Cluetrain Manifesto – 95 Theses



1. Markets are **conversations**
2. Markets consist of **human beings**, not demographic sectors.
3. Conversations among human beings sound human. They are conducted in a **human voice**.
9. These networked conversations are enabling powerful new forms of social organization and knowledge exchange to emerge.
- 62 Markets do not want to talk to flacks and hucksters. They want to participate in the conversations going on behind the corporate firewall.
- 90 Even at its worst, our newfound conversation is more interesting than most trade shows, more entertaining than any TV sitcom, and certainly more true-to-life than the corporate web sites we've been seeing.

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The Cluetrain manifesto include 95 theses that describe their approach. For the purpose of this presentation, the key thing is that markets are conversations with human beings. These conversations are doing enabling powerful networks. For vendors is be part of the conversations you need to use a human voice and not use market-speak. The risk of not doing this, is that these conversations are where people are turning to to get their information.

Starting the conversation



Developers want to talk to
developers

Fire the Marketers!

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The starting point for any developer oriented community must be developers talking to developers. Developers see through market-speak and don't respect it. Marketers shouldn't be fired but they need to change their tactics if they are going to be successful.



“My development manager thinks we are being out marketed, so I would like to do a press release....”

- Developers and Marketers need to share the responsibility of creating the community.
- We are all marketers!
- btw, press releases do not create communities

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The quote is based on a true story of someone talking to me. The important point is that developers need to take joint responsibility on the success of building their community. It is not just a marketing role.

Starting the conversation



The Conversation Starts with Code

18 month release cycles don't cut it;
Try 6 weeks

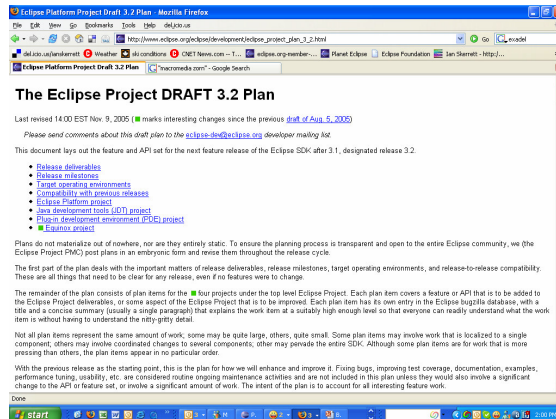
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Developers like to talk about code and technology. Before any community can be started you need something to talk about and that is typically the code. To keep the conversation going you need to provide updates often.

Case Study



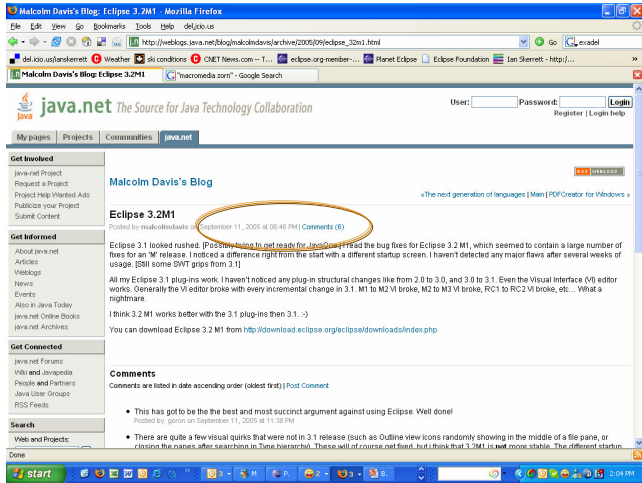
- Release due June 2006 but in January 2006 already 64,100 Google hit on “Eclipse 3.2”



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The Eclipse project is scheduled to release their next major release in June 2006. It is called Eclipse 3.2. There is already 64,000 Google hits on “Eclipse 3.2”.

6 weeks after the 3.1 release, the development team had the first 3.2 M1 release and the project plan for 3.2 up on the web site. They are creating an environment for people to join the conversation.

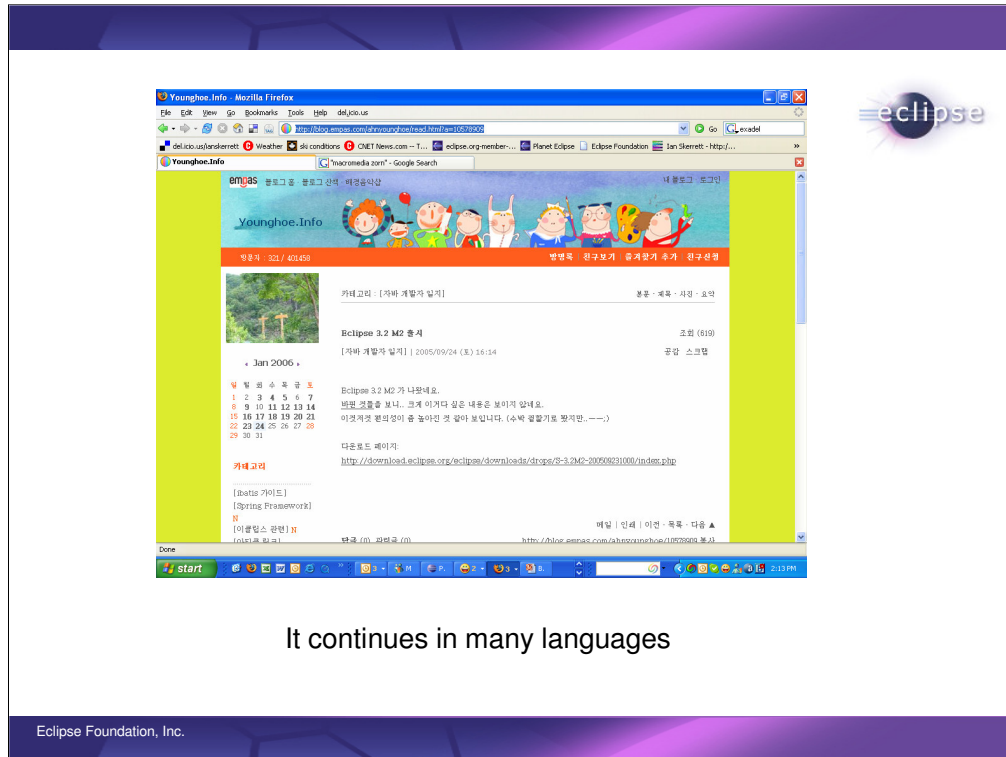


The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Eclipse 3.2M1 release announcement on Malcolm Davis's Blog. The browser's address bar shows the URL http://weblogs.java.net/blog/malcolmdavis/archive/2005/09/eclipse_32m1.html. The blog post is titled "Eclipse 3.2M1" and is dated September 11, 2005. The post content discusses the release of Eclipse 3.2M1, mentioning that it is a "next generation of languages" and "Main IDE/Creator for Windows". The post also includes a link to the Eclipse 3.2M1 download page: <http://download.eclipse.org/eclipse/downloads/index.php>. The Eclipse logo is visible in the top right corner of the browser window.

- The Eclipse 3.2 conversation started last September, 2005
- 9 months before the release!

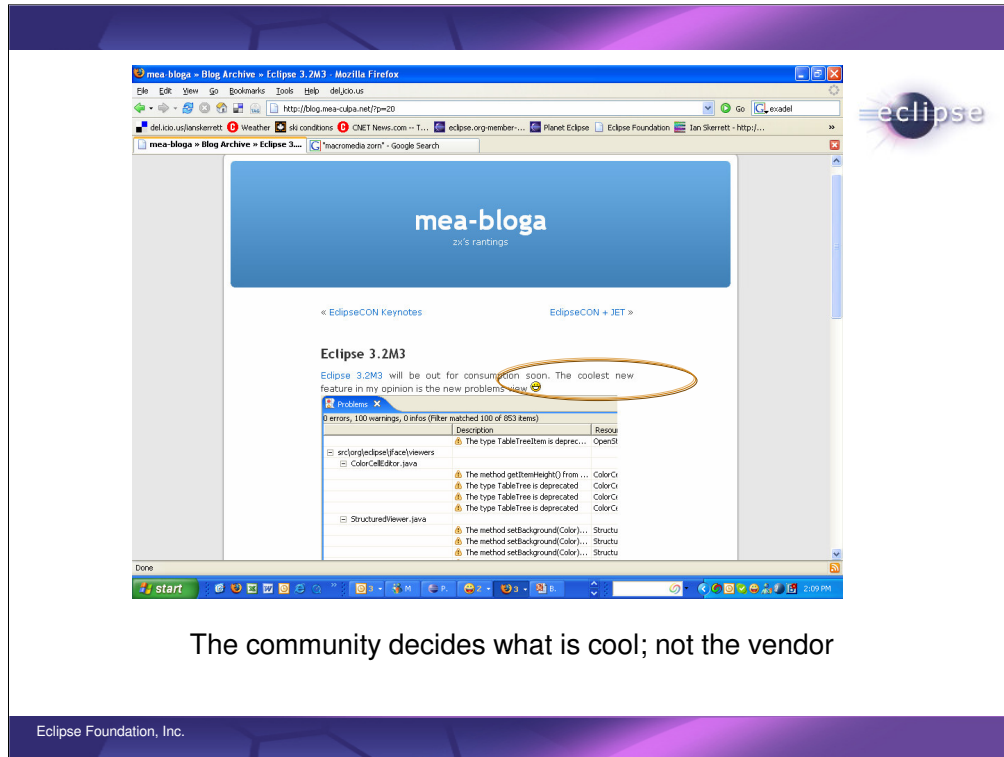
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But this conversation started last Fall. The bloggers were already talking about 3.2 in September. Every 6 weeks a new milestone is released and a conversation starts around that milestone.



It continues in many languages

The conversation also occurs in many languages. Communities are multi-lingual



The community decides what is cool; not the vendor

The community also starts to define what is cool, before the press release is written. This is a great resource for marketing types.

Joining the conversation

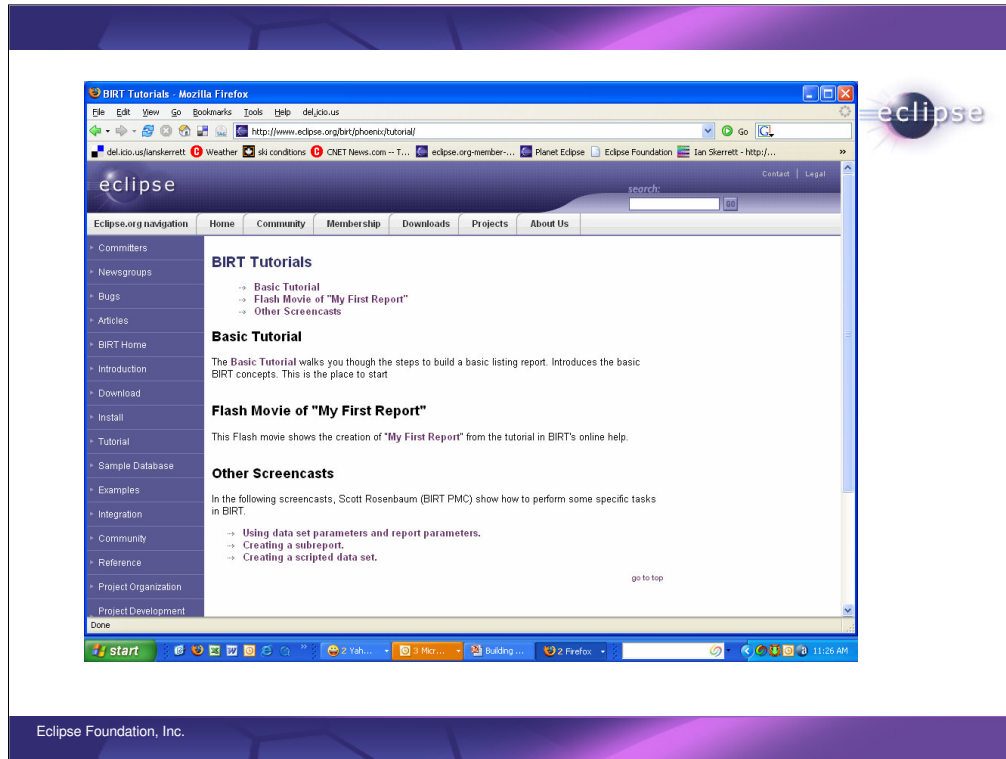


Make it easy to join the conversation

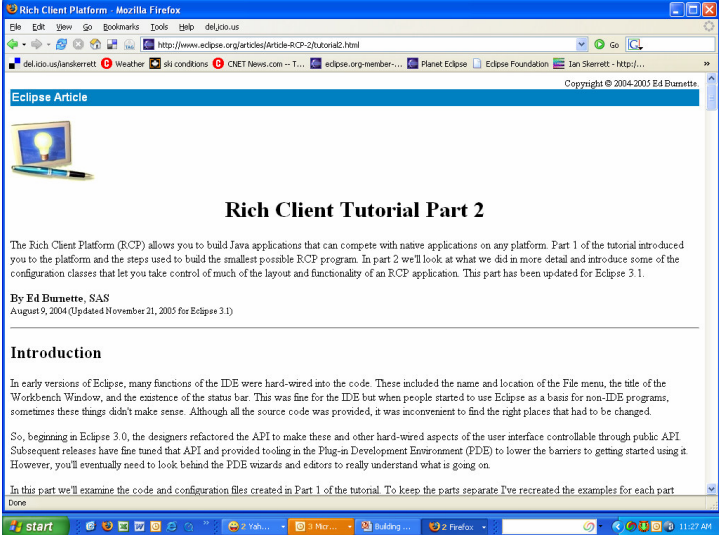
- Need to have low barriers to entry
- Tutorials, white papers, books
- Have experts monitor newsgroups and bug database

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Standard marketing states you want to keep low barriers to entry. Building communities is no different. This allows people to join the conversation.



The Eclipse BIRT projects is a good example



Rich Client Tutorial Part 2

The Rich Client Platform (RCP) allows you to build Java applications that can compete with native applications on any platform. Part 1 of the tutorial introduced you to the platform and the steps used to build the smallest possible RCP program. In part 2 we'll look at what we did in more detail and introduce some of the configuration classes that let you take control of much of the layout and functionality of an RCP application. This part has been updated for Eclipse 3.1.

By Ed Burnette, SAS
August 9, 2004 (Updated November 21, 2005 for Eclipse 3.1)

Introduction

In early versions of Eclipse, many functions of the IDE were hard-wired into the code. These included the name and location of the File menu, the title of the Workbench Window, and the existence of the status bar. This was fine for the IDE but when people started to use Eclipse as a basis for non-IDE programs, sometimes these things didn't make sense. Although all the source code was provided, it was inconvenient to find the right places that had to be changed.

So, beginning in Eclipse 3.0, the designers refactored the API to make these and other hard-wired aspects of the user interface controllable through public API. Subsequent releases have fine tuned that API and provided tooling in the Plug-in Development Environment (PDE) to lower the barriers to getting started using it. However, you'll eventually need to look behind the PDE wizards and editors to really understand what is going on.

In this part we'll examine the code and configuration files created in Part 1 of the tutorial. To keep the parts separate I've recreated the examples for each part here.

- Eclipse Rich Client Platform started as a community initiative
- Not planned by a vendor

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It is not always the vendor that creates communities or lowers the barrier to entry. The Eclipse RCP initiative was lead by the community. A number of individuals saw the potential of Eclipse to be a rich client platform. They started hacking, writing tutorials, writing white papers. In 3.0 the Eclipse project team decided to do the work to formally support Eclipse as an rich client platform.



Create an Architecture of Participation

- Enable users and other parties to extend and modify your technology
- Eclipse, Apache, Firefox

Defining the Term



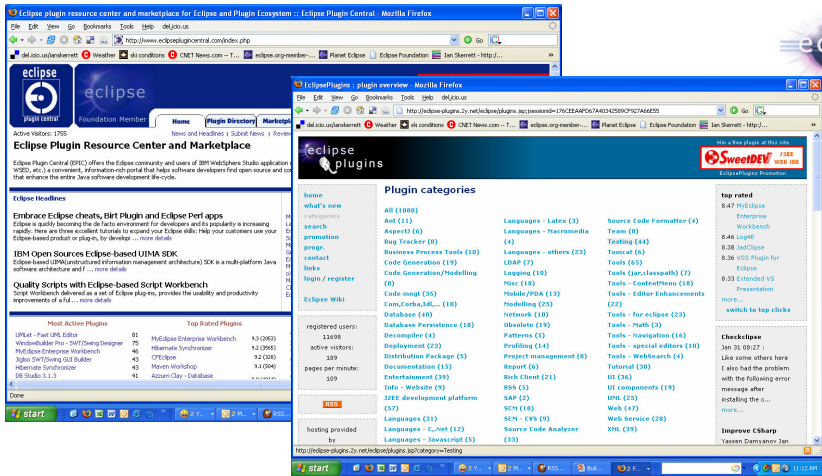
*"what really distinguishes open source is not just source, but an **"architecture of participation"** that includes low barriers to entry by newcomers, and some mechanism for **isolating the cathedral from the bazaar**. This architecture of participation allows for a real free market of ideas, in which anyone can put forward a proposed solution to a problem; it becomes adopted, if at all, by acclamation and the organic spread of its usefulness."*

Tim O'Reilly
<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/wlg/3017?wlg=yes>

Key Points



- You need a cathedral to enable the bazaar
 - This is not about joining the project itself *per se*, but about making it easy for individuals to add their own ideas to the ecosystem
- Low barriers to entry
- New add ons are first class citizens, not second class
- Empowering individuals and small groups is key
 - Innovation comes from committed fanatics in small groups, not corporate committees
- *Laissez faire* --- never ever ever pretend you can pick a winner
- Provide the seeds for a broad ecosystem



➤ Eclipse makes it easy for third parties to create plug-ins

➤ The result has been one of the secrets to our success

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The result for Eclipse is a strong ecosystem of over 1000 plug-ins.

Feeding the conversation



Create and publish technical content

- Technical content feeds the conversation
- People love to generate links

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I suggest you think about feeding the conversation for a community. One way of doing this is writing and publishing technical articles.

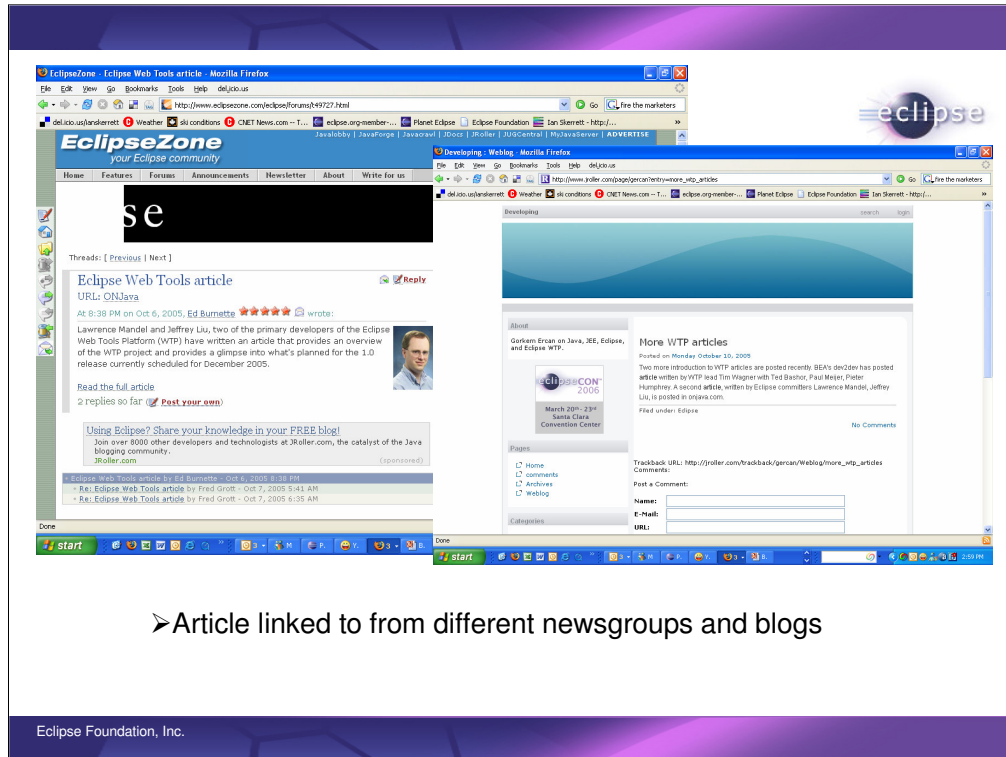
Case Study



An article creates the seed for the conversation

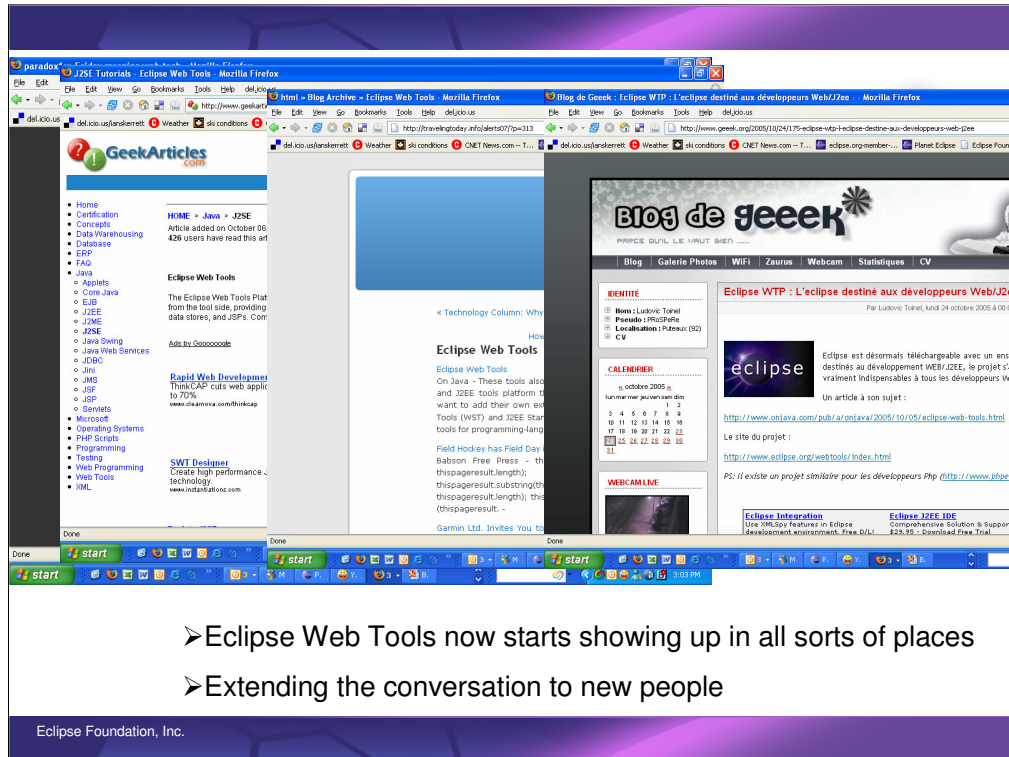
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For example, an article written about the Eclipse Web Tools (WTP) project was publishing on onJava. The article by itself is great to get exposure for WTP. However, look what happens next....

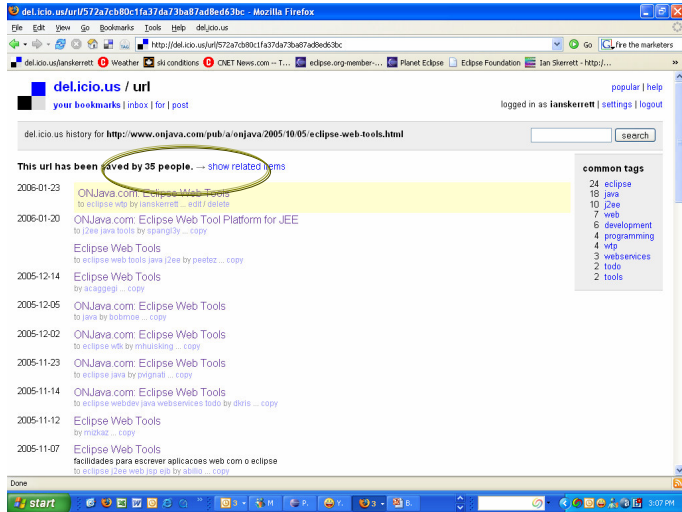


➤ Article linked to from different newsgroups and blogs

This results in some of the other Eclipse portals and blogs referencing the article; extending the reach of the article into other publications.



It is also picked up by other blogs that aren't usually focused on Eclipse, thus extending the awareness and education of Eclipse WTP into the communities not usually reached.



del.icio.us / url

your bookmarks | inbox | for | post

logged in as ian.kerrett | settings | logout

del.icio.us history for <http://www.onjava.com/pub/a/onjava/2005/10/05/eclipse-web-tools.html>

This url has been saved by 35 people. → [show related items](#)

2006-01-23 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tools
to eclipse web by ian.kerrett ... edit | delete

2006-01-20 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tool Platform for JEE
to eclipse web tools by ian.kerrett ... copy

2005-12-14 Eclipse Web Tools
to eclipse web tools java (jee by peatez ... copy

2005-12-05 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tools
to java by bobmoe ... copy

2005-12-02 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tools
to eclipse web by mthunking ... copy

2005-11-23 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tools
to eclipse web by progwell ... copy

2005-11-14 ONJava.com: Eclipse Web Tools
to eclipse webdev java web services tools by davis ... copy

2005-11-12 Eclipse Web Tools
by mthunking ... copy

2005-11-07 Eclipse Web Tools
facilidades para escrever aplicativos web com o eclipse
to eclipse (jee web tool) by ian.kerrett ... copy

common tags

- 24 eclipse
- 18 java
- 10 jee
- 7 web
- 6 development
- 4 programming
- 4 vfp
- 3 webservices
- 2 todo
- 2 tools

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➤ People also save it as a resource

It is also saved by individuals for future reference. Del.cios.us show 35 individuals have tagged this article.

Feeding the conversation



Nurture and promote your tribal leaders

- Persona of the community
- Speak at conferences; write books
- Often define the culture of the community

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Tribal leaders is a term from the book 'Brand Hijack'. These are the people that define the culture and pace of the community. They can be some of the core developers but also users.

Feeding the conversation




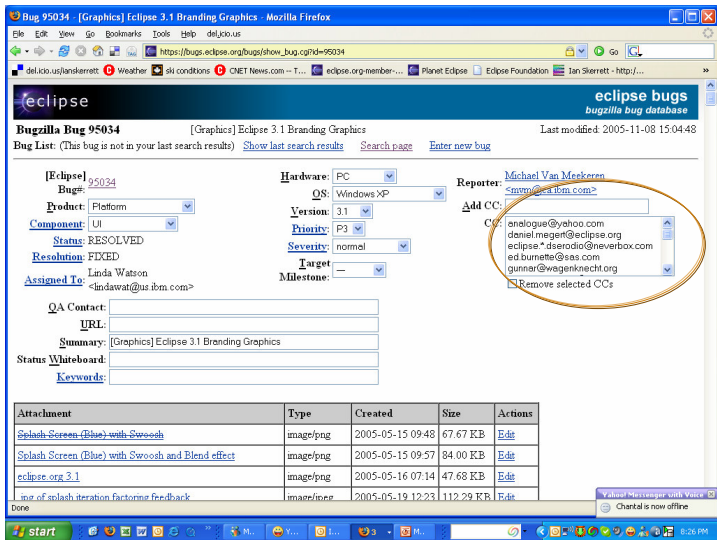
Be as transparent as possible

- Public project plans
- Open bug tracking databases

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Users are developers and they want to be involved in the development process of their community. To often they have been in a situation where they report a bug to a vendor and never hear back. A successful community is a transparent community. Develop in the open, exposure your bugs, everyone knows they exist.





The screenshot shows the Eclipse Bugzilla interface for Bug 95034. The bug title is "[Graphics] Eclipse 3.1 Branding Graphics". The status is "RESOLVED". The reporter is Michael Van Meekeren. The "Add CC:" field is circled in orange, showing a list of email addresses including enalogue@yahoo.com, daniel.megen@eclipse.org, eclipse.*dsradio@neverbox.com, ed.burnette@sas.com, gunnar@wagenknecht.org, and Remove selected CCs. Below the bug details is a table of attachments.

Attachment	Type	Created	Size	Actions
Splash Screen (Blue) with Swsosh	image/png	2005-05-15 09:48	67.67 KB	Edit
Splash Screen (Blue) with Swsosh and Blend effect	image/png	2005-05-15 09:57	84.00 KB	Edit
eclipse.org 3.1	image/png	2005-05-16 07:14	47.68 KB	Edit
img.of.splash.iteration.Factorize.Feedback	image/jpeg	2005-05-19 12:23	112.29 KB	Edit

17 people watching!

➤ 81 comments

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For example, the splash screen in 3.1 was being changed. Typically this change would have been done by the marketing folks with no discussion. For Eclipse it was done as a bug and it had 81 comments and 17 people watching the bug. Marketing was not involved. A good example of getting community buy-in.

Expanding the community

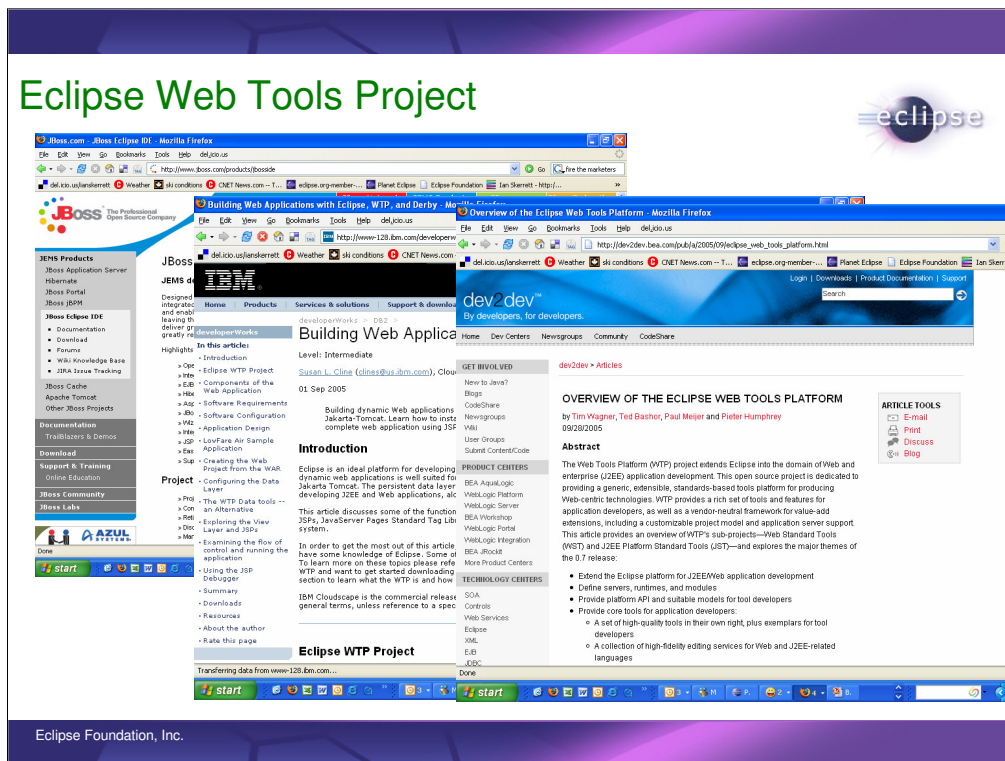


Get your competitors involved

- Allows you to link into other established communities

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This is more difficult for vendors as opposed to open source communities but if you can get your competitors involved you instantly start to expand your community.



For example the Web Tools project has IBM, BEA and JBoss involved. One each of the respective web site has information about WTP. This expands the reach of WTP to these vendors developer communities.

Thank the contributors

- Reference blog postings; bloggers love links
- Acknowledge community leaders
- This also help Google results

You need to think about giving back to the community. Link to blogs, give out awards, highlight other successes. Btw, this also helps with your Google results

Giving back to the community



Promote companies that
use or contribute to the
community

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Eclipse is very passionate about ensuring people adopt the technology for commercial adoption. Help promote the fact that other people are using your technology and they will help promote the base technology. A lot of this is an ingredient brand strategy.

Be Part of the Community



If you love something, set it free

➤ Win by letting go

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The vendor needs to be part of the community. It can't be a command and control system. Your community will know if you are authentic. You win by letting go.

Pitfalls



- Not all developers are good communicators; or want to be
- Marketers still want to be in control
 - Remember you win by giving up control
- Too easy to fall back into the old way of doing things
- How do you know when you are successful?

What is the marketing role



- Still need to do top-down marketing
 - High level messaging for non-technical decision makers
 - Provide support for developers trying to sell up the chain
- Be part of the community
 - Developers want to their community to be successful
 - Make sure you speak their language
- Create a partnership between marketing & development

Summary



- Start the conversation
- Need to make it easy to join the conversation
- Feed the conversation
- Invite others to be part of the community
- Remember to thank the contributors
- Be part of the community



Thank You

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