

Communities Will Lead the Way



Colin Walker, 2012-01-02

Competitive advantage for network technologies will be determined by a vendor's ability to allow its customers to create custom features through a programmable front end and then share these ideas with a broader community. The community will become a self feeding ecosystem that will create a higher level of stickiness with network technologies.

- Zeus Kerravala

A blog post by Zues over at [Network World](#) describes just how important community is to innovation these days. He focuses specifically on the networking world, as that's his focus, but the concept is a solid one in general. Group like minded people together and innovation accelerates. Community for me is all about getting to communicate (go figure, right?) with people looking to achieve similar things. Whether that is writing code, playing video games, cooking or pretty much anything else, I know that I am personally inspired and driven more when engaged with others that are supporters or fanatics of whatever interest it is that is capturing my time at the moment.

The same seems to hold true for many people, though I am no expert on the matter and have no empirical evidence to lay before you. I can tell you that in my experience, whenever a community of like minded technologists amass themselves to solve a particular problem, great things happen. It really is as simple as the cliché "2 minds are better than 1". Well, in our case, 90,000+ minds are certainly better than one. Keep in mind it is not just processing power gained by those minds, but also experience. While brute force processing power to solve problems is great, far more powerful still is bringing in someone that has solved the problem before to educate on how it was done. This is a theme we see time and time again in our community here at [DevCentral](#).

Personally I'm a fan. A big fan. I've been a geek and working with technology for quite a while, and in that time it has become so routine and commonplace for me to seek out and throw in with the community of whatever new technology I'm trying to learn about that I sometimes forget that some people don't understand just how valuable and important community as a tool can be. Zeus addresses it very well in his post, and I highly recommend going and taking the time to read it. He even had some very nice things to say about DevCentral and iRules:

The concept of programmability and communities isn't a new concept. F5 Networks has set the gold standard for all scripting environments combined with a community site with its TCL based iRules and DevCentral community. iRules used to be this geeky thing that was used by only a handful of administrators. Over the past few years though, use of iRules has exploded so now it's a geeky thing used by thousands of administrators and is easily the reason F5 has it's 65%+ share in the ADC market.

That is the power of community. The power that each person that reads this, joins DevCentral, shares a link, posts to a forum, contributes a CodeShare example or takes part in any other form of community interaction lends to this community to achieve a common set of goals.

How powerful is community to you? What other communities are you an active member of and why? How has it changed the way you learn or do business?

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