



# .NET Rocks!

The Internet Audio Talk Show  
for .NET Developers

With Carl Franklin   
and Richard Campbell

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Carl Franklin

Carl Franklin and Richard Campbell interview experts to bring you insights into .NET technology and the state of software development. More than just a dry interview show, we have fun! Original Music! Prizes! Check out what you've been missing!



Richard Campbell

*Text Transcript of Show #125*  
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**Jeffrey Palermo on ASP.NET**  
August 5, 2005

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(Music)

**Geoff Maciolek:** Hey, Rock Heads! Put down that issue of HMWVV Weekly and listen up. Its time for another stellar episode of .NET Rocks! – "The Internet Audio Talk Show" for .NET Developers with Carl Franklin and Richard Campbell. This is Geoff Maciolek, here to announce show # 125 with guest, Jeffrey Palermo, recorded live Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

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And now the man who just realized he has to live in an RV with Richard and me for 25 days, Carl Franklin.

**Carl Franklin:** Thank you. Thank you very much Geoff and you are listening to another great episode of .NET Rocks! Dare I say the original podcast but ooh!

**Richard Campbell:** You can't say that.

**Carl Franklin:** Somebody is going to flame me for that.

**Richard Campbell:** For sure.

**Carl Franklin:** One of the originals anyway. And yeah, we have been podcasting since before podcasting, haven't we Richard?

**Richard Campbell:** Absolutely.

**Carl Franklin:** Richard Campbell, my co-host on the West Coast in Vancouver, British Columbia.

**Richard Campbell:** Where it is hot, real hot.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah, in the tropics of Canada there.

**Richard Campbell:** The tropics of Canada where my AC for my server closet is going, dude.

**Carl Franklin:** What's up with that?

**Richard Campbell:** I don't know. I am going to go rinse it out, trying cool it down a bit. It's in trouble.

**Carl Franklin:** So did you kill any hardware off yet?

**Richard Campbell:** No it hasn't gone that hot. It's got up to about 78 in there, which is hot for a server closet but not hot enough to kill anything.

**Carl Franklin:** Well Richard the first order of business is obviously the .NET Rocks! Visual Studio 2005 Road Trip, which is official.

**Richard Campbell:** It's happening.

**Carl Franklin:** It's happening and it's baked. And you can read all about it at [dotnetrocks.com/roadtrip](http://dotnetrocks.com/roadtrip) or just click on the goofy graphic that Dax made, which is actually pretty cool. I thought he took about a 100 pounds off me.

**Richard Campbell:** And I get one photo taken to me without my glasses on. And now I am never going to wear glasses again.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah that's right. And it is a pretty cool graphic. Anyway what we are doing is we are hitting the road. We are going all across America starting October 12<sup>th</sup>, ending up at the launch in San Francisco of Visual Studio 2005 on November 7<sup>th</sup>. And we are hitting Boston on October 12<sup>th</sup>. We are hitting Hartford the next day, then New York, then Philadelphia, then Baltimore, then Washington DC, to Raleigh, to Atlanta, to Jacksonville, all the way up to Nashville, to Memphis, to Dallas, to Houston, to Austin, where our guest is from tonight, to Phoenix, to San Diego, to Los Angeles, to San Francisco and then Richard, to Los Vegas, Nevada DevConnections, where we will on the 10<sup>th</sup>, I believe.

**Richard Campbell:** That's 19 shows you realize by the time we do this I have to quit half way through, that will be my 50-show mark.

**Carl Franklin:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** That's right I am done I am going home. That's enough of that. This is a 25-day tour. Are you out of your mind?

**Carl Franklin:** I am crazy, I don't know. I want to meet the people.



**Richard Campbell:** I am all over that.

**Carl Franklin:** Want to meet the fans. We have been hearing from the fans by email for years, literally years. And we want to go out and shake some hands. And that's what this is all about. We are doing two things on the road folks. We are doing a standard evening event at your local user group venue and will actually have the venues and times and all of that stuff posted as soon as we aggregate them all. And we are doing two segments, three segments actually. The first part will be me talking about some new and cool things in VB 2005 stuff. You probably haven't seen some stuff you may have already seen. But you know me I am always full of surprises, we will show you some content you haven't seen before and its all our content by the way. And then Richard is going to talk toys, he is going to talk mobility development in Visual Studio 2005 and you are going to bring a bunch of toys, aren't you?

**Richard Campbell:** Oh yeah, it's going to be gadget land, its going to one of everything, it's going to be a lot of fun.

**Carl Franklin:** In fact I asked Dex, our graphic artist to make the .NET Rocks! mobile there stuffed with toys just falling out the windows, like pocket PCs and cell phones and smart phones. We are going to really get into that. And in every city we are going to give away a unit.

**Richard Campbell:** Something, we are still arguing over what that something is going to be. But it's going to be something good.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah we are trying to get pocket PC phones and smart phones obviously we will try to give away devices that work in that area; that would be bad.

**Richard Campbell:** What I am really excited about and hope to be able to show off is we are trying to get engineering samples, stuff that's so new that will be some of the first units out there.

**Carl Franklin:** Right and we think we are going to have an exclusive piece of software from Microsoft about mobility. And we will be able to give that away. So we may have some exclusive stuff. We don't know as of yet, if it's going to happen. But that's what we are shooting for. Also after that we are going to do, oh I don't know 30 minutes of a few sponsors demos of products that we like, that we advertise, our sponsors on the show Telerik, Data Dynamics, Developer Express and a new one InnerWorkings, which we are working with. They do testing software and

not just testing software but training software. Its interesting stuff, we will talk about that.

**Richard Campbell:** But wait that's not all.

**Carl Franklin:** That's not all. In every city we are also going to record a .NET Rocks! show. Now granted it's going to be 10:00 pm and everybody is going to be dog-tired but we are looking for you. If you have got a story and you are going to be in one of these cities, if you have got a story about working with .NET 2.0 the beta or you have got a success story of .NET 1.1 that nobody has heard yet and you want to tell the world, we want to find a quite place to interview you possibly in the RV itself if we can wake Geoff up off the floor. We are going to have the equipment with us and we would like to sit down and talk to you. So our goal is to publish a new show everyday that we are out, the following day we'll get it online. And of course we are going to be blogging and taking pictures and even taking movies while we are on the road for the next .NET Rocks! movie, right?

**Richard Campbell:** Absolutely. And for me this is what excites me the most about this tour is a chance to meet folks in their towns and talk about the software they built. And a lot of the favorite .NET Rocks! shows for me and for a lot of other people are just talking to people who have built software. And we are going to get a chance to do a whole bunch of these during the tour.

**Carl Franklin:** I totally, totally agree. I couldn't agree more. I have enjoyed all of the user groups that I have been to over the past few years but the thing is that it's not a big volume event like this is. We want to stuff these venues and get people to come out and drum up a little excitement.

So that's what we are talking about at the top of the show here. But I guess that's about everything I wanted to cover about the .NET Rocks! road trip. I want to read some email now. Just one piece in particular that we got from Max Healey, he says, "Hi Carl, Richard and Geoff. I have been downloading .NET Rocks! and playing it back on the way to work every Tuesday morning for several months now. And simply want to congratulate you on the show. The show is professionally produced and full of good information. I can tell you this as someone who has worked in commercial broadcasting, radio and television for the past 20 years. Much of that time was spent on the air. From that point of view the show is fantastic. It's tightly produced and the content is well targeted at the audience. Any time a guest is losing me, Carl seems to chime in with the, 'tell us about that,' even when I am sure Carl know that's how you say on the radio by the way. 'Tell us about that'. You change your voice totally



drop at, 'tell us about that.' Even when I am sure Carl knows perfectly well what the guest is talking about he also knows I may not. I have been well that's debatable guy. I have been working as a developer in the broadcast industry for the last 10 of the stated 20 years when I saw an opportunity to put the programming hobby that I had started on the Commodore 64 to some good use. Today almost every commercial radio station in Australia uses some of my software be at my 'Web App' for distribution of commercials or my 'Digital Audio Playout System.' You talked recently about the folks who still work in VB6.0 and have lost touch with the Visual Studio product because a large base of my code and most of the code that I am tasked with maintaining in my current job was developed in VB 5.0 and 6.0. I was one of the people that were slow to move to .NET. I have used every version of VB even VB DOS. And when I came up against the version that could not open or quickly port the project in the previous year into, I put it in the books on it away for a day when I was not so busy. It's a common story. ASP.NET was my starting point for some internal Intranet sites and now I am armed with some experience in the .NET way. You guys and the guests on your show have inspired me to put the time in to porting some of my desktop apps to .NET to take advantage of the cool features, I am still learning. I am looking forward to Visual Studio 2005 especially ASP.NET 2.0 from the beta I downloaded. I am sure we will get the last of us VB 6.0 is over once and for all. Keep up the good work I love the show. Max Healey, Sydney, Australia.

**Richard Campbell:** Awesome. That explains why he is listening to the show on a Tuesday he is on the other side of the dateline.

**Carl Franklin:** Right. And did I mention, Max that all of the -- not that it matters to him because he is in Australia, but did I mention dear listeners that all of the content we are going to show on this .NET Rocks! Road Trip is going to be in VB.NET 2005. Yes. So, sorry C#ers, you still learn all about .NET 2000 in Visual Studio 2005 but we are doing our demos in VB because that's what we know.

**Richard Campbell:** Curlybrace-free zone.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah. Well let's introduce our guest, shall we?

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah.

**Carl Franklin:** And by the way Sahil in the chat room wants to know whatever happened to the flames I guess he didn't hear last week's show. Just in case you weren't listening last week we

have sort of decided that okay flames were funny now they are sort of getting reparative. And unless we come up with a really inventive and really funny flame, we are done. I guess we are back to getting praise e-mails. Right?

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, or we're going to have to live with it.

**Carl Franklin:** All right. Enough self-aggrandizing lets introduce Jeff Palermo. I first ran into Jeff on this show. He was the caller when we had one of our first live shows back in, gosh, I don't know when, 2003 I think. And it was one of the first shows that we had experimented with live. And he called from Iraq and he said that he was called by Net2Phone and he said that he was listening to .NET Rocks! in Iraq. And we just couldn't believe it that there is somebody in the military over there driving around in tanks listening to DNR. So we asked him to send us an email and we read it on the show a long time ago. You probably have a hard time finding it in the archives unless you search the transcripts or something. But over the years we kept in touch and he works at Dell. He has got a lot to talk about in fact when we asked him for some talking points he sends us a 50K Word doc (laughing). So I got some talking points. Well anyway not having much of else of a bio except that that's how we know Jeff and he is a developer at Dell, obviously interested in talking about a lot of things. Let's introduce Jeffrey Palermo. Hey Jeffrey.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Howdy, Carl, Richard?

**Carl Franklin:** How are you?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** I am doing very well, thank you, beautiful weather in Leander Texas.

**Carl Franklin:** In Meander Texas?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** I live in Leander Texas, North West of Austin.

**Carl Franklin:** Leander I thought you said Meander like I am on Meander over to Texas.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** We do a little of that too.

**Carl Franklin:** Like Mosey Texas it would be. So tell me about Iraq, how long were you there and what was your experience like especially with access to technology and stuff.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well actually in theatre for a year and three days and I got called up, it was early February 2003 and about 10 hours later I was at a military base getting mobilized. And we contracted to build the house, 5 days before and



so my wife had to do all that when I was gone. So I didn't own a laptop when I left, so we got shipped over. However I did bring two like 600-page books about ASP.NET because here I work I was ramp it up with ASP.NET we adopted it in version 1.0, but there is a learning curve you takes little while to learn it. I brought that stuff and some technical magazines. I got over there and the Army signal companies had Internet access and people had to bring their laptops up to the signal company's tent to actually hook-up to the Internet. We were in Kuwait initially before we got moved up into Iraq and I found that opportunity to go to an ATM withdraw a whole lot of cash and buy a Dell laptop from Dell Kuwait, in Kuwait city.

**Carl Franklin:** Hey Jeff I got to ask you, is your job in the Marines?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** No I am in the Army Reserve.

**Carl Franklin:** Army Reserve. Is your job in the Army Reserve have anything to do with computers?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** It has nothing to do with computers.

**Carl Franklin:** Alright.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** I was with a specialized transportation company that drives the big trucks that are called HET, that's short for Heavy Equipment Transport. They have got 48 tires, they are wider than a normal highway lane, and they are meant to specifically carry the M1 Abrams tanks fully loaded, which ends up being about 74 tons.

**Carl Franklin:** Dude, can we use that for the Road Trip?

(Laugh)

**Jeffrey Palermo:** It doesn't have air-conditioning.

**Carl Franklin:** That's a deal breaker.

**Richard Campbell:** There you go.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah. But top speed is 45 miles an hour. So you just flow and go and they don't stop very fast. So the unfortunate people who like to cut in and out of traffic and then stop suddenly. Some of them got fender binders.

**Richard Campbell:** Squished.

**Carl Franklin:** Well now you say traffic you don't take this thing on a regular road. Do you?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah we would drive on the Iraq highways wherever we could. We stayed off smaller roads because we obviously didn't fit. But Iraqi civilian would -- well a lot of other countries you know how they drive. You just cut in and out. Well they don't realize that the truck and the tank is going to be well over a hundred tons and it couldn't stop that fast.

**Carl Franklin:** Wow! I can only picture like a house driving down the street you know? (laughing).

**Jeffrey Palermo:** It fits in about one and a half highway lane.

**Carl Franklin:** So it's like a wide load house driving down the street. So you are driving around, so your job is to drive around, you must have been shot out a few times I imagine?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Actually, after the third ID took Baghdad Airport and obliterated the Iraqi Army there was no enemy except for the roadside bomb or the occasional suicide bomber or somebody who lobs a mortar round and then runs through the hills.

**Carl Franklin:** So you got lucky.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** The United States Military, they crushed the Iraqi Army so fast, it's just amazing. And I think that I am in more danger riding my motorcycle to work than most people are over there like the latter part of when I was there even now.

**Carl Franklin:** So you are riding around and basically your job is to drive. And that's why you would listen to .NET Rocks! while you are driving around most of the time or while you are back at the barracks? How did .NET Rocks! turn up in your life down there?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well I discovered it after I was able to get Internet access over there. I got my laptop and then I worked out a deal with the signal folks that said, 'yeah you can hook in to Internet but we don't have any Cat5 cable for you to use, you are going to have to get your own.' So, I was able to work it out with the discretionary money and we went into Kuwait city and purchased some switches, a router, two DSL Modems and a bunch of Cat5 cable and I ran Cat5 to all of the tents in the company area because we just set up a big tent out on the sand in the desert. And I set the two DSL Modems between us and the Signal Company because it was too far for Cat5 cable to work. So I had to use a pair between the DSL Modems and then switch it analog back to digital on each end.



**Carl Franklin:** A true geek you are.

**Richard Campbell:** Yup. Still Cat5, just not Ethernet, DSL signals.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** So I got my crimpers in my RJ-45 ends and I made the cables and I ran them where they needed to be. And I had to come in and have the switches next to my bunk. So I could fix any problems and then I distributed to the rest of company tents from there. And so I could plug my laptop in when I wasn't down the road. And actually overnight, I was able to download from MSDN Visual Studio 2003 when it came out. And so I was able to browse and I discovered the .NET Rocks! show I think when Russ Fustino was on. And so I downloaded all the back episodes and had plenty of listening hours when I was out on the road. And when I just kept up with it and I think you did it every two weeks.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah we used to do it every two weeks.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** So I was chompin' at the bit, for the next show to come out.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah we used to do it every two weeks because if I remember correctly Mark Dunn was the host. And both of us were started to getting flack from our families that this sort of hobby thing that we started was consuming a lot of our time. And we weren't as committed to it. Back then it was a liability in expense of time and money. And then we started getting more serious about it, started getting sponsors and it became a real deal. But anyway, so you setup a blog, right?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah I set up a blog initially on blogspot and its still there actually. You can go to [jpalermo.blogspot.com](http://jpalermo.blogspot.com). But they don't allow you to edit your own template. So I added a Meta refresh tag to forward it to where my current blog is.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay and where is your current blog?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** My current blog is on [codebetter.com](http://codebetter.com) along with a few other bloggers and also alias on [jeffreypalermo.com](http://jeffreypalermo.com) its just automatically forwards to CodeBetter.

**Carl Franklin:** All right, so if you type in [www.jeffreypalermo.com](http://www.jeffreypalermo.com), you will get your blog.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Probably a lot of people already subscribed to the main feed of CodeBetter because it indicates quite a few bloggers who originally came from .NET junkies whenever the .txt errors started mounting up.

**Carl Franklin:** And this was your first exposure to the .NET community?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** It wasn't actually. I had belonged to the Austin .NET user group meetings before I got deploy. But there was in Austin .NET user group like right after .NET 1.0 came out. I ran quite a bit there as well Scott Bellware is C# MVP very active in the community and he started it and he and I are actually working at the same company right now. I left Dell over a month ago when I met a company called Pluck.

**Carl Franklin:** Oh that's right. I keep saying that you are from Dell and because that's how I remember you. But that's right you have started this new company. And I want to talk to you about that too. But you do have a lot of real stuff to talk about not just .NET Rocks! in Iraq and you have a lot of .NET things. In particular application architecture you have got some, what I would consider, opinions that run contrary to conventional wisdom.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well I would say not conventional wisdom but they ran contrary to what you would read from MSDN probably.

**Carl Franklin:** All right so what are you saying?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** For one, especially at TechEd there were so many sessions on Service Oriented Architecture. And you talk to other people and say, what is the service, what is it mean to be service oriented? And you get a lot of different answers. And so much so that it's really hard to talk about it unless you talk for a while first and agree on the definition of a service. Because once web service has come out now lot of people are starting to equate services with SOAP or remote where for a long time a service was just some process sitting on a box ready to be contacted. We tried windows services for a long time; there has been services on Unix. So service has had a definition for a long time and now there is another definition that people are talking about and so it's just confuse a whole lot of people and I am really confused depending on who I talk to.

**Carl Franklin:** I got to say that I share your confusion we have had some people on the show talking about SOA. And it's really true that the people that are talking about it seem to be, except for it like some very broad ideas nobody has got it baked down yet.

**Richard Campbell:** Well it's pretty darn hard to find apps out there that would quote comply.



**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. So what does it mean to be like one of the fortunate autonomous? Does that mean that everything used by the service can't have any other dependencies. And that's just hard to do because you've got applications that already exist, that are already connected in some way. I can relate what we did. I was at Dell for four years and so you said, oh large enterprises might need a Service Oriented Architecture for some things. And so, Dell a very large technology companies that have large IT Department. And we use Windows services, we have used Distributed COM+ and we have used web services but from everything that I have seen in Dell you don't really need what people are saying is a service-oriented architecture. Because there is going to be application that already exist have existed for some time and all you need to do is most of the time but it's like for instance we had to connect a Java system with a .NET system. We don't need to change it to make it comply with maybe the fore-tenants of service-oriented architecture. But all we needed was a web service in point and boom, the two applications are connected, they can speak in an asynchronous or synchronous manner depending on what you need and it works great. Your enterprise systems are connected and that's all that the business requires.

**Carl Franklin:** So you think SOA is sort of an ideal that if we could just start from scratch and design a brand new system over again without any dependencies on existing technology, we might consider this but is that what you are saying, that it maybe more of an ideal for the future than something that's practical now?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well I don't even know how a group of systems that were all services would be manageable because you have all these independent things distributed for what business reason? I am thinking about what business needs something. They need an application, they need a coherent application and then sometimes they might say, you know what we got this and it works really well. We need for this other application over somewhere to be able to use it, all right fine you don't need to redesign your application just make an interface that the other application can contact for a particular usage.

**Richard Campbell:** But when I see the same organization in control of both sides of a problem like that, I think well they don't need all this extra stuff, these guys can go get a beer and figure it out. Decide how they are going to make that intercommunication layer, stuff like SOA presumes this idea that I am going to have two completely separate companies with two totally separate applications and they are going to be

able to connect together somewhat automatically. And I just don't buy that that's true that people are going to actually do this, hooking software up is hard it's very intensely intimate.

**Carl Franklin:** Detail oriented, yeah "intimate" that's a great word Richard.

**Richard Campbell:** Normally from a technical point of view but also from a business relationship point of view, you are not going to have third parties connecting to your app in an automated way. And not have some phone call before hand.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. And another thing is I have seen some developers use a web service probably they are prompted because of all the hype surrounding it. And they control the client and they control the server and they are communicating through the web service to I think it detects for every call but they controlling both ends of the wire and in fact they are on a gigabit network. And I think to myself, why are you using this slow transport mechanism when you could use a faster one and you loose nothing and you gain performance.

**Carl Franklin:** Well if I could play devil's advocate I would say in case using a binary formatter it sort of locks us in to that formatter that might not be available in something that we develop our tack on in the future. Right? So a lot of problems with software come from things that aren't open enough and flexible enough to change when things change in the future that you have no idea what they are going to be.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. And I think that web services are really useful. But I don't buy all the hypes that everyone says is service-oriented architecture. I think of service as an interface into something and once I get into that something it ought to be good old object oriented component based a good domain model. And the service interface is just that. It's the way to get to it and use it.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay let me get onto the next point because we got a lot of them. RAD is evil, explain?

(Laugh)

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah, I mean application development. Well, it's a large part of the market after from Microsoft and they have done a lot of things with Visual Studio 2005 to make RAD developers happy. They have enhanced drag and drop and all that. For some applications that just need to be whipped up fast and they are going to be throw away or they are not going to



have to maintain it and keep up with it and change things as time progresses. And you might be able to drag a data grid on it, enable editing and connect it directly to a database table. But really for any system that you can foresee lasting a while or supporting the business on an on going basis you needed to have a good design and you need to structure the code in such a way that's coherent.

**Carl Franklin:** That's it. I have seen the light. I am going back to Notepad folks. All right. No, no I know just being, any opportunity for joke is what I am all about. Do you think the two are mutually exclusive good design and RAD?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** No, I wouldn't say yes because that's kind of extreme. However if I am dragging and dropping everything that my application consist of, it makes it very hard for me to monitor how the design is going. Now if I can isolate a few things that well, if I would have to write the code I would write it the same way as the designer is going to generate it for me that may be appropriate.

**Carl Franklin:** That's what I think of is RAD.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well what I see in practices people just opening up some web project. They drag a data adapter, they connect directly to SQL Server and connect right there in the code behind with the database, hard coding connection string and all that stuff and they never even look at the code. The code is never code reviewed and it's all generated for them and they don't know what the code is doing. All they know is that they dragged and dropped and now it works.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah, I am in total agreement with you. My rule is and I tell all my students this, don't use any wizard unless you know exactly what code is being generated.

**Richard Campbell:** And like it.

**Carl Franklin:** And like it.

**Richard Campbell:** That means the essential problem is just like agile development or extreme programming models people often use the term as an excuse for lousy work. I don't know the reason is like that is I did it RAD, that's my excuse for making crappy code.

**Carl Franklin:** So I wouldn't say RAD in and of itself is the problem because I think that even time has proven in the VB community that there are people who utilized the tool to its fullest potential. And then there is everyone else they make crap. People that just drag and drop and do the very minimum tool usage in order to make

something that gets them to the desired results at least once.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well maybe we could make another version of RAD and that's a version of RAD that does not use a designer. That's the version of RAD that maybe as heavy on code snippets and perhaps use something like CodeSmith where it generates stuff that you are still monitoring the code and you are still actually writing code and seeing code.

**Carl Franklin:** Well personally I wouldn't want to design user interface for that a designer. So I am not going to give that up anytime soon.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** I haven't designed a user interface with the designer in over a year.

**Carl Franklin:** Congratulations. I hope you enjoyed all that time that you wasted.

(Laugh)

**Richard Campbell:** How you are building your interfaces since then?

**Carl Franklin:** You are working on the web though. So we are talking about apples and oranges.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Okay Windows forms, yes. Yes I would use a designer.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay thank you, because I can make the argument for doing a web development in a text editor and I have done a lot in text editors myself. I don't think that RAD tools are as good for the web just because of the nature of the beast.

**Richard Campbell:** So the bottom line is if you could have a good GUI environment for building web pages that really generated stuff the way it was supposed to and the code underneath was not hideous you would use it. But the reality is that isn't, it's horrible, horrible code that gets generated that way.

**Carl Franklin:** And if you understand what that code is doing and that's I think the key that Jeff is keying in on is that don't use a tools as an excuse not to learn something. Right?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. And it's also very hard to make a web application that is going to look good in the different browsers and be standards compliant if your markup is being generated. The tools are not standard compliant right now.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, this is a failure of the tools this is not necessarily failure of the concept.



We are just still to this day ten years later we are still not there.

(Music)

**Carl Franklin:** Folks do yourself a favor and check out our friends Data Dynamics website [datadynamics.com](http://datadynamics.com)- 'Makers of ActiveReports .NET, Simple Powerful and Cost Effective Reporting for Windows Forms and ASP.NET,' very nice stuff. You compile the reports right into your application, chip them with your assemblies has all the great features you come to expect in a reporting engine. And you can use ActiveX controls right in the reports too, so great stuff. Data dynamics has been an excellent sponsor of .NET Rocks! for a long time. They deserve a little bit of your love and attention so go check them out at [www.datadynamics.com](http://www.datadynamics.com).

The other thing that I was going to mention is that often marketing of development tools and sales of development tools, which is ultimately what makes them viable in the market place and keeps you employed using them often requires these gee whiz draggy droppy wowi wowi demos. And so that kind of stuff is just baked in. When you take my class and we are talking about data adapters for example, I say, first I am going to take ten minutes and show you magic. I am going to show you the magic and we are going to suspend all reason and query and I am going to drag drop boom, boom, boom there it works isn't that great. And then we spend the rest of the day diving into what this thing is doing, the code that it's generating what's good, what's not so good, what are the issues etc. Alright, so let's talk about you just say that you are developing web stuff, what can you tell us about web standards?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well that's something that we definitely have to do for [shadows.com](http://shadows.com) and that's the application that I am working with my company right now. It has a tagging, reading, commenting, community system where you can make your own search engines, tag your own pages and we officially support Firefox and Internet Explorer.

**Carl Franklin:** What does this thing do again? Make your own search engine and tag your own pages, what is that mean?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, for instance when you create account one of the first things it will ask you to do is, import your bookmarks. Then whenever you log on to shadows.com you can have bookmarks, no matter what computer you are on because you can tag pages with as many key words as you want and then all you have to do is just search back for them, you can find them and of course you can see what other

people has tagged as well. And the thing has a community aspect to it.

**Carl Franklin:** Neat. So, what is this creepy picture on the front all about anyway? Or maybe I did it with one 'D', is it one 'D's or two 'D's.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Shadows.com plural.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah, is it one 'D' or two 'D's shadows?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** One 'D'.

**Carl Franklin:** One 'D'. I went to shadows with two 'D's and I found a creepy looking picture, sorry trying to spell and I can't. All right. So this is cool. So it's a beta app, it looks like you upload your bookmarks you say, is that what you were talking about?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah, after you create an account that's one of the thing you can do to start out is upload your bookmarks. And you can tag any page, the paradigm is that every page on the Internet can have a shadow page, which is a page about that page where people can rate it, tag it with keywords and start discussions on it. But it could turn every news article into your blog post with comments.

**Carl Franklin:** Very cool, my friend.

**Richard Campbell:** This is neat.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** This is running on .NET beta 2.

**Carl Franklin:** And is this your brainchild?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Me and the handful of other guys at Pluck are doing this.

**Carl Franklin:** Very cool. So you are obviously a big standards guy and I know that you are really into XHTML and to be honest we haven't really talked that much about XHTML on this show. A little bit here and there and we have given a little lip service but I know it's been around for a long time and yet we haven't really discussed it. So why don't you tell us about XHTML?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Okay. Anyone who want to learn more about it, I would say go to the [w3c.org](http://w3c.org) and just read up on what it is because that's where you'll find the standards. Right now we progressed, we had HTML 3.2, which most people probably cut their teeth at HTML and then settled on writing HTML 3.2 where you still had font tags.

**Richard Campbell:** And we have been doing that since 1997.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. And then came along HTML 4.0. We got cascading style sheet support and now we have moved on to XHTML, which is seeking to move HTML into with more XML like markup. And so XHTML 1.0 transitional is probably the highest standard that we could ship for because ASP.NET 2.0 even is not going to render valid XHTML strict. So we are kind of limited but XHTML also will support the HTML 4.0 markup tags that's why it's transitional.

**Carl Franklin:** I think maybe the first experience people have seen with XHTML is, why do I have to close all these paragraph tags. Right?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right.

**Carl Franklin:** That was the first hint I got that somebody was thinking XML-like about HTML was when all the paragraph tags started getting closed.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Think about the vision. If all about web pages, end up being XML then how easy would it be later on to just use the XML dome to change different parts of the page right there in the browser.

**Carl Franklin:** Well first of all, whenever anybody says XML dom, I go Ohhhh.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well, whatever mechanism there is in the...

**Carl Franklin:** I know what you mean. So you are basically turning the HTML data into XML data essentially, well formed.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** We are not there yet and like even with ASP 2.0, if you put an XML declaration at the top of your page, it's going to break in the browser because not all the controls render valid XML. You can however go with the transitional DOCTYPE. And a lot of people I talk to have never heard of what a DOCTYPE is. And I think that's really important because that defines what standard that your web page is implementing. If you don't put a DOCTYPE at the top of your web page, then every browser that looks at it has to guess as to what type of markup it is. And you might not think that's a big deal. But we have HTML 3.2, we have 4.0, we have 4.01. Then we have three sets of XHTML. I mean if the browser doesn't guess, the one it actually is, then it's not going to look how you intended. Most people only test their web pages in Internet explorer. And so they don't really design it with the standards in mind. They kind do trial and error and after it looks good in IE, then they put it down and say they are done. But Internet Explorer operates in quirks mode when there is no DOCTYPE

defined. And it might also be called compatibility mode. I found that the quirks mode will pretty much let's you write HTML 3.2 and still render reasonably. Well, it will try to guess and compensate for any errors you might have.

**Carl Franklin:** One of the best arguments I have heard for using XHTML rules inferred hearing to it is that on a PC it's powerful enough, it's got enough memory and it's got enough processing power to overcome the tags that aren't closed and to fudge around and figure things out. But when you are on some mobile devices and Smart Phones especially, they don't have the processing power to do that kind of stuff, to do that kind of parsing and logic. So you have to be well formed.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, if you use XHTML, you will also get better rendering CSS. For instance, if you use HTML 4, the rules for CSS are different than if you use XHTML. For instance have you ever noticed that if you use a font size, a relative font size like 85% and then you have some tabular data inside a table, you have to repeat the styles for the table cells because the style doesn't flows through like you intended it to?

**Richard Campbell:** And those are really HTML 3 artifact still. It's literally like its maintaining compatibility with those sorts of weird flaws that existed in the old HTMLs.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. Well if you use XHTML then you can set your styles and the effects of them will flows through every element to the lowest part of the hierarchy in your web page.

**Richard Campbell:** This is also characteristic of DOCTYPE. You are telling the browser, look don't maintain that compatibility, I am doing stuff properly.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Exactly and it makes a lot easier to write your CSS style and it get it what's you like to want. It will take so many headaches. But one another thing that you might find surprising is the default web form template in Visual Studio 2003, will put an incomplete DOCTYPE for HTML 4.0 on your page. But most people don't even think about it and they will put their page out their and it has an incomplete HTML 4.0 DOCTYPE, which will still cause Internet Explorer to operate in quirks mode and try to compensate for any errors that might come along from HTML 3.2 where you can fix that by adding the complete URL for the DTD inside the DOCTYPE tag.

**Carl Franklin:** So Jeff, you have been using ASP.NET in production for quite a while, do you



have any insights and tips, any nuggets of information you could offer our listeners?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah, I do I can say that if you get frustrated with the IIS binding for an ASP.NET web project but you can't get away from that. In 1.1, I have been using a class library project for my websites and does this get away from having to have IIS configured in the same virtual directory as all the other developers working on a project. I know quite a few other people out there in the blog of sphere doing that but some people haven't tried it and I think it's worth trying out. Have you done that Carl?

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah, you mean making an HTTP handler, just from a class, from scratch?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** No using a class library project instead of an actual web project.

**Carl Franklin:** That's what I mean. Yeah I have done that.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Okay. Also another interesting thing is making friendly URLs with URL rewriting. I do this a lot with my content management system easyweb and sometimes its real beneficial for you to have a URL that might not exist on the file system but for instance, `mysite.com/product/productid` and how you process it maybe with an ugly query string but it gives the user a friendly URL to bookmark and to email to someone else. And to that in 1.1 they added a method to the HTTP context just for that purpose called `rewrite URL`. And if you add a module or in the global ASAX file you can call that method on authentic request and it will actually rewrite the internal URL to be processed while the friendly URL stays in the user's browser.

And some people don't like using that because if you do a post back it will still go to the ugly URL. You can get around that also by rewriting the URL back to the friendly URL on the event. I believe its three-send request headers in your module. And so you rewrite it to the processing URL just so that you can process it and get a page out and then right before it's sent, you rewrite it back to the original URL. So from a user's perspective it's actually executing the same page but on your application you may have a single page, a single ASPX in the entire application. But your system may have many, many distinct URLs.

**Richard Campbell:** Hey Jeffrey are you up to speed on W3C specs, Mike was asking about the rumor that W3C is going to retire the Div table layer, I/O layer in span and come up with the new structure altogether.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** You know I had not heard that.

**Richard Campbell:** No I had neither and its just seems so unlikely. Although admittedly that whole group of functions are pretty screwy.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yes. Now a lot of people are talking about tableless layouts and `csszengarden.com`.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah we have that on the show, a few shows back there was the Scott Hanselman show, its just unbelievable site.

**Carl Franklin:** Scott Hanselman blew our mind.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, but they have some pretty good designs. But the current version of CSS still isn't perfect for columns and so you are going to run into some column problems. And I'm sure that if you live and breathe CSS, the CSS experts might be able to do a column layout you want. But I am pretty good at CSS but I still can't get columns in some scenarios to work exactly what, like I want to.

**Carl Franklin:** Now what do you mean by that?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well for instance if I want three columns layout and then in the center column I want that divided into a few other columns, well it's really hard to get a table list design with just divs and spans because when you start floating elements, it breaks...

**Richard Campbell:** The flow is messed up.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, like float right or float left. And I have tried for hours to get some complex column layouts just without tables but I go back to using a table just for columns and then everything looks exactly like I wanted to.

**Carl Franklin:** Now tell me this, why is using table is a bad thing? I mean that's what Scott was whacking me for saying, don't use tables, I do use tables, why is that bad?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** I am not an extremist on that subject the whole argument is the tables are for tabular data and years ago like everyone else, I laid out.

**Carl Franklin:** Obviously not just for that. That's what Scott said too.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well and I am reciting the argument against tables. So years ago I laid out entire web pages where if I needed something to be positioned I nested a table and another table that was going to another table that was going to



another table. And I got some really horrendous markup. Well now what I do is I use a div if I need to stack things on top to each other. If you div the block element and its going to cause a line break. But for columns I still use a table to break columns. And I find that to be a good combination that works really, really well.

**Carl Franklin:** So you have one table split up into maybe three columns if you have got a three-column page. And in each column you have got divs and spans.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay, so do you think there is any improvements that could be made to dynamic HTML to support better column support in CSS?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well if you look at some of the things that W3C is working on, the next version of CSS is supposed to have specific property modifiers to address column layout. So I think that they recognize that that's a deficiency to the views of any CSS form and search for columns there is all kind of people having problems with them.

**Richard Campbell:** And this is what ties to the conversation in the chat room about whether or not the W3C was contemplating deprecating div and span and I/O layer and all that stuff in lieu of some new structure, which of course they can't really deprecate anything we are always adding new features and never taking away. But I am sure everyone would love a better layout system than what we have got right now.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** The next version of CSS does promise some new columns attributes. But one interesting thing is you know that if you just start another ASP .NET project from scratch you put asp:panel on it and then open it and a browser other than Internet Explorer and I have tested this specifically with Firefox what you don't get a div like you are expected to, you get a table with a single cell and a single row because Firefox out of the box does not recognize an up level browser. And I looked ASP .NET 2.0 in the beta 2 and the only recognized browsers are Internet Explorer. Though all the other browsers are recognized as down level browsers and the ASP .NET controls will bring there down level HTML because of that. So that may be another reason why websites look different in Firefox if you are using ASP .NET. Because you think that you are putting divs all over the place and they are actually getting render it out as a single cell tables.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah that's really got a change. Its time to recognize the fact that there is

other browsers out there that are capable of HTML for properly.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well I can see both sides because for ASP 2.0 I was kind of surprised but they didn't put built-in knowledge of Firefox since its .NET. I guess they are saying, that its got up the non IE browsers its got more market share. But since they don't control the life spend of that browser I can see not shipping knowledge of it. But it does require you and I to add something to our web.config to mitigate that. There is a browser caps section that you can fill out to web.config and that's what we have done for shadows because we have to support Firefox. And so we add that knowledge of Firefox's capabilities to the browser caps section in the web.config and then the built-in web controls do render the same markup as they give to Internet Explorer.

**Richard Campbell:** Well and that's really all that needed to be done its not like they have to write a tremendous number of code, its really a recognition that Firefox does understand that up level mode.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right. And out of the box just people that open up the IDE slap together in website and then put it out there on the live web there are going to be rendering down level markup.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah you might as well running Netscape 3.0.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, exactly. And other stuff too like, for instance, if you put a data grid and then you define some styles for the data grid up level browsers its going to render in-line CSS right there in the markup. But for a down level browser its going to render font size equals whatever, its going to render HTML three markup tags for all that formatting.

**Carl Franklin:** Hey ASP .NET 1.1 and 2.0, how compatible are they?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** The runtime is almost completely compatible from what I have seen. There are a few breaking changes, but most people either will not run into them or will be able to quickly work around them. One thing that I ran into immediately, I logged a bug against them and they said, they wouldn't fix it. But I was able to work around it quickly. For a login control, in a particular scenario I would impose back and on the event handler, I will evaluate something and do a server.transfer back to the same page with some different information. And when you do server.transfer typically the form post variables in 1.1, the form post variables do not come with it,



only the query string or they change that in .NET 2.0 where you have a parameter says, keep the query string information? Well, now that parameter in 2.0 will keep the query string and the form post information. So what I just did is I post back to the form, it does the server.transfer back to the same form and now in 2.0 because the form post information comes with it, the .NET runtime thinks that I am doing a post back on that guy also and it goes into an infinite loop of server.transfers. So in that scenario, yeah, it's an incompatibility and my project wasn't a seamless upgrade. But once I found that what was happening; I was able to work around it.

**Carl Franklin:** Does Microsoft know about it?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yes, I did log a bug with them. And they said that, that was a design change and that they are not going to change it.

**Richard Campbell:** And so their answer was 'don't do that'.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Exactly, after it was changing. But after I changed it, I guess there is no big deal if they had a good reason for doing it. The IDE is the thing that changed the most for web projects especially. For instance in 1.1, there was the project converted that you can run through and it will do most things for you but if you have perhaps a base class for all your pages and in your base class you make a reference to maybe a header control that have to be on every page. And because of that you don't have to declare a protected member in every code behind because your base class has that member already declared for you and as long as that, maybe a user control or custom controls and the markup, it's going to be wired up correctly in your base class will be able to control it. Well with the partial classes, because that partial class is going to declare that variable for every piece of your markup. There is no way for you to inherit the member from the base class and any interaction with it you are doing from the base class will break. So, let's do some work around to get that stuff working again.

Aside from that, the web project is fundamentally different and I am happy with it in some cases and I am very unhappy with another cases. For instance it could be IntelliSense everywhere is often and there is even better IntelliSense for CSS, for Java script, XML. The web.config if you have the proper XML name space declaration, you will get IntelliSense in the web.config. And if you choose to write instant pages that have maybe your page load in the markup side on script run at server, you will get IntelliSense in there. But they got rid of the web project files and it's all file system base. Now the good part about

that is, is they got rid of a file binding in the web project, but the bad part is now there is no place to store a project reference. So when you add a reference to a web project it's not persisting it anywhere. It's just copying the current binary to the bin folder. Well that's going to cause problems when you have shared source repository and a team of developers that are all working on the project because maybe a version of the binary changed somewhere. Well, if you have a project it will detect any version of binary import over, but this is just file system based. So it will continue using the old version until you manually copy over the new version. That was a pain. Another pain is that because there is no project file, they took away pre and post build event. That was a big one for us coming from version 1.1 because we use pre and post builds.

**Carl Franklin:** For what?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** We use them for may be changing settings in IIS, for creating some directories, for running some database scripts since the web projects pretty much owned -- The web project was at the top-level of the solution. So when we deployed with Enet, Enet would use a solution task and just do the whole solution. So all we have to do is that some pre and post build events for anything that was required after the other projects built.

**Richard Campbell:** It's really good for distribution.

**Carl Franklin:** When I first heard about that technique is from Chris Kinsman he was doing that too. And I also found out that I think that Visual Basic didn't have those events and C# did, I think I remember hearing that.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** It's interesting.

**Carl Franklin:** I am not sure.

**Richard Campbell:** But now they have gone away in 2.0.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, they have gone away. So now we have to have a work around. So now we have the second level projects in this solution, which is a class library doing the pre and post build events to just show that they were happened when we do a built. It's just very frustrating and I wished there was a project file.

**Carl Franklin:** Were the events being taken away by design or is that just a feature they hadn't gotten to you yet in beta 2?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** No, by design, by design.



**Carl Franklin:** And no explanation.

**Richard Campbell:** No alternative.

**Carl Franklin:** No alternative?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well, I really haven't heard all the arguments for it. Maybe this show will prompt some discussion around it but in our work group running into this we are actually leaning towards not using web projects in 2.0 as well and using a class library. Now don't get me wrong, if you are attached to the IDE and you need all those IDE and designer features then you will have to use the web project set up. But if you are not shackled to the designer, then for me the class library project in Whidbey for a web site is I think a better option.

**Carl Franklin:** Jeffrey, tell me about Pluck.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Pluck is a software company in Austin. And they have several products. One is RSS reader, it's an add-in for Internet Explorer and also have an add-in for Firefox. It's a web-based reader that's enhanced by the browser add-in. It kind of competes with blog line you have to be connected with the Internet to read your feeds. It also has something called FeedFinder, which is an RSS feed search engine. And the other main product is Shadows. Though it is really too prompt, the RSS reader and Shadows. And Shadows also has a tool bar for Internet Explorer and a tool bar for Firefox that allows you to do tag pages as you are browsing. The company has about 26 people. The entire company has deprecated .NET 1.1, we are .NET 2.0 shop now.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay.

**Richard Campbell:** Wow, brave.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah, we are experiencing the pain, but I will be able to take those lessons learned and tell my user group and hopefully save them some time.

**Richard Campbell:** Well, you are first out the door on a lot of this stuff. Now you have got the 'go live' license and stuff.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yeah, we do. And we are in production with everything on beta 2.

**Carl Franklin:** Cool. Hey Jeffrey, we are coming to the end of the show now. If you have been listening lately I have been asking my guest what's the coolest thing you have downloaded lately?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** The coolest thing I have downloaded lately, I should have been prepared for that question, probably, the coolest thing that I have downloaded lately is the latest version of Tortoise SVN client, source of version source control.

**Carl Franklin:** Tortoise and do you have a web URL for that.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** [tortoisesvn.tigris.org](http://tortoisesvn.tigris.org)

**Carl Franklin:** T-O-R-T-O-I-S-E

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yes, [svn.tigris.org](http://svn.tigris.org). And it's one of the many clients for subversion. And probably many of the listeners might be using Visual Source Safe and I think the version is a superior source code control system.

**Carl Franklin:** Okay.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** One other thing that I have discovered, this is actually on the web and it works with us Tortoise client, its something called OpenSVN and this is a public free the version repository that's hosted. Its opensvn.csie.org and so I have a personal source code account and for personal projects I now have a versioned backup of whatever I am working on.

**Carl Franklin:** Cool.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** And it doesn't cost a dime. So there is a lot of source code like CVS and sub version that you can pay for but this one is free. So that's very cool.

**Carl Franklin:** What's the URL for that again?

**Jeffrey Palermo:** [opensvn.csie.org](http://opensvn.csie.org). So now everything I am working on basically has a version backup that is not at my physical location.

**Carl Franklin:** That's cool. Well we are just about out of time so Richard you got any last minute questions for Jeffrey?

**Richard Campbell:** No, he has answered all my questions and more.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah that was great man and it's just such a pleasure to have you on the show as a guest I know we have been e-mailing all these times and it was really a -- you lifted our spirits as much as I am sure we did yours. So with the contacting us from Iraq that really tickled us.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Well it really helped me to keep up-to-date on what's going on in the industry while I was gone.



**Carl Franklin:** And by the way thank you for your service I appreciate, our listeners appreciate it I am sure.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Thank you.

**Carl Franklin:** And well and thanks to you again for being on .NET Rocks!

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Oh it's all my pleasure, thanks for having me.

**Carl Franklin:** Absolutely. And we will see you in Austin on the .NET Rocks! Visual Studio 2005 Road Trip.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Yes, October 28.

**Carl Franklin:** Yeah, in Austin Texas.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Right, that will be a blast.

**Carl Franklin:** Alright man, take it easy have a great day.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** You too. Okay take care.

**Carl Franklin:** Bye-bye.

**Jeffrey Palermo:** Bye.

**Geoff Maciolek:** .NET Rocks! can be found online at [www.dotnetrocks.com](http://www.dotnetrocks.com) and at [msdn.microsoft.com/dotnetrocks](http://msdn.microsoft.com/dotnetrocks). .NET Rocks! is edited each week by Geoff Maciolek, that's me and Carl Franklin, who is also Executive Producer. All music heard on .NET Rocks! including Toyboy, the theme song is created and produced by Carl Franklin and Franklin Brothers Band. Carl never sleeps. .NET Rocks! is produced for franklins.net by PWOP productions, "Providing professional audio and podcasting services," online at [www.pwop.com](http://www.pwop.com), 'Pwop- it's time to get your impact back'.

(Music)