What App Developers Really Think

Written by Bob Snyder
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Appcelerator and IDC made their Q1 joint survey of 2,173 app developers around the world. Three key points stand out:

1. Facebook may boast 900 million users, but developers view Google and its broad range of assets (i.e., Google+, search, Gmail, Android, Android Market, etc.) as the key to implementing their social strategies in 2012.
2. Android (once neck-and-neck with iOS) sees a waning interest from developers (due to continued fragmentation of the platform).
3. HTML5 will play a bigger role in the mobile app development space this year.

Developers, concludes the survey, who once were "exploring" mobile strategies, now adopt mature strategies based on *Acceleration* and *Innovation*. Most respondents believe they are clearly in the Acceleration phase now, building multiple applications for multiple operating systems.

Throughout the survey, you see **the portrait of a gradually maturing marke**t:

- Growth in the number of developers building mobile applications
- Growth in the number of operation systems and applications supported
- Growth in the size of companies that are building mobile applications as well as increasing numbers of hybrid teams (both internal application development teams combined with external application development teams) .

This quarter's survey underscores that 2012 will mark key shifts in platform strategies, how social will be leveraged, and how fast these changes will emerge in the marketplace.

Let's focus on the rise of HTML5 and Windows 7 amid iOS dominance and Android erosion.

The mobile app space to date has been dominated by native apps. However in 2012, **HTML5 will move to center stage**
with both pure mobile browser apps and "hybrid apps," which integrate both native code and substantial amounts of HTML5.

This approach will help developers innovate across a crowded mobile landscape that has seen iOS, Android, and Windows 7 claim the top 3 spots, while RIM and others have experienced significant declines.

While Android has seen a big growth in shipments it remains a solid #2 as fragmentation take its toll.

- **HTML5 becomes important** to many mobile developer strategies. A resounding 78% of mobile developers report that they will integrate HTML5 in their apps in 2012. This is much higher than many industry observers had anticipated as late as Q4 2011.

- Mobile app development continues to Accelerate in 2012. More than half (53.5%) of respondents report that they are   **now focused on Accelerating their mobile strategies** compared to 27.4% in 2010, and 16.9% of respondents report will focuson Innovating their

mobile apps in 2012 compared to 9.2% in 2010

- **Windows Phone 7 interest remains high.** WP7 is the clear "number three" OS in terms of priorities, after Apple's iOS and Google's Android. The huge jump in interest in Q4 2011 is holding steady-- despite WP7's disappointing device sales to-date.

- Against negative news around RIM's challenges, this quarter saw **another sharp drop in developer interest in BlackBerry OS**
, declining from 20.7% in Q4 2011 to 15.5% in Q1 2012.

- **iOS continues to reign at number one** in developer interest levels. 89% say they are very interested in developing for the iPhone, followed by the iPad at 88%.

- **Android phones and tablets are showing slow erosion** of interest levels. This quarter, interest in Android phones dropped 4.7% points to 78.6%, and Android tablets dropped 2.2% points to 65.9% from the previous survey. Although close to or within the margins of error, these drops are consistent with the trend of small but steady erosion in Android interest over the last four quarters, even as enormous growth in Android unit shipments continues.

- In contrast with the Q4 2011, **developer interest in the flagship Nokia/Microsoft partnership device has dwindled**   to only 17% of developers "very interested" in building apps for this device. Nokia Lumia disappointed developers with its regional-specific launch and lowered sales expectations.

- **Location and notification are the top two cloud services**. Interest in cloud services soared with over 58% of developers either using or considering the use of cloud services in their mobile applications, with location and notifications the top two services that developers want to integrate into their applications.

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