Google Proposes Some Design Principals for Web Applications

Thomas Claburn, InformationWeek

At its developer conference in May, Google revealed that it plans to launch a Chrome Web Store to sell Web apps later this year.

But selling a Web app is an odd concept. There's no software to download and install in the traditional sense. There's no transference of data noticeable enough to justify a transaction. Installing a Web app involves downloading a .crx file containing configuration data, but it's not like downloading Linux, Mac, or Windows software.

Buying a Web app amounts to buying a URL. And that seems strange, like buying a phone number. You're buying software as a service, but the store model makes it seem like a tangible product. There's a perceived disconnect between what's paid and what's gained.

For Google, the idea of selling Web apps continues to be source of confusion. In the Chromium developer forum, Michael Mahemoff, a member of Google's Chrome developer relations team, notes that the most common question his group confronts is: "What's the difference between a Chrome app and a Web site?"

To clarify this, Mahemoff and Paul Kinlan, a fellow member of the Chrome developer relations team, have published a set of design principals for Chrome apps. Think of them as Google's summary of Apple's Human Interface Guidelines.

"Apps are very popular on mobile devices and mobile marketplaces, but they've had a hard time breaking out on the Web," explain Mahemoff and Kinlan. "User expectations are changing, and people are beginning to demand rich functionality, beautiful presentation, and tightly delivered features from Web sites."

The pair state that Web apps should incorporate these design principals: tight focus, use of the full screen, a rich-engaging experience akin to native desktop apps, visual beauty, and speed.

But defining how Web apps should act goes beyond the apps themselves. Browsers play a part in the Web app user experience too. Google is laying the groundwork for a redefinition of Web apps through the Web app installation mechanism that has been exposed in the developer version of Chrome.

By the end of the year, if Google's message reaches developers, Web apps will begin to look and feel different than mere Web sites. The difference between a Chrome app and a Web site will be obvious. At the moment, however, there's still a lot of work to be done.

Featured Online Event July 8, 3pm EDT Panel Discussion -- Cloud Computing Join an all-star line-up of EnterpriseEfficiency.com bloggers as we tackle the promise - and the problems of cloud computing in enterprise IT. No hype, no spin, no excuses! Tune in July 8, 3pm EDT See Image Galleries Get InformationWeek in Print APPLY FOR A FREE 1-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO INFORMATIONWEEK (A $199 VALUE) Top of Form First Name: Company Name: Business Address: State: Email Address: Last Name: Title: City: Zip: Bottom of Form NOTE: Offer valid for U.S., U.S. possessions, & Canada only. Enabling People and Organizations to Harness the Transformative Power of Technology CIOs & IT Professionals * Black Hat * Cloud Connect * Dark Reading * Enterprise 2.0 * Enterprise Connect * Enterprise Efficiency * HDI * InformationWeek * InformationWeek 500 * InformationWeek 500 Conference * InformationWeek Analytics * InformationWeek Events * InformationWeek Global CIO * InformationWeek Healthcare * InformationWeek India * InformationWeek SMB * Intelligent Enterprise * Interop * Network Computing * No Jitter * Plug into the Cloud * TechWeb.com Software Developers * Dr. Dobbs * Dr. Dobbs M-Dev * Dr. Dobbs Digest * Dr. Dobb's Update * TechWeb.com Web & Digital Professionals * Internet Evolution * Web 2.0 Expo * Web 2.0 Summit * TechWeb.com Government Officials * Gov 2.0 Expo * Gov 2.0 Summit * GTEC * InformationWeek Government * TechWeb.com Vertical Markets * Advanced Trading * Bank Systems & Technology * InformationWeek Government * InformationWeek Healthcare * Insurance & Technology * Light Reading / Telecom * Wall Street & Technology Game Industry Professionals * Gamasutra * Game Developers Conference (GDC) * Independent Games Festival * Game Developer Magazine * GDC Europe * GDC China * Game Career Guide * Game Advertising Online Global Communications Service Providers * Heavy Reading * Heavy Reading Insiders * Pyramid Research * Light Reading * Light Reading Mobile * Light Reading Cable * Light Reading Europe * Light Reading Asia * Ethernet Expo * TelcoTV * Tower Summit * Light Reading Live & Virtual Events * Webinars Most Popular * ANTenna * Bob Evan's Global CIO * Cable Catchup * David Berlind's Tech Radar * Digital Life * Evil Bytes * InformationWeek Analytics * My Interop * Jon Erickson's Blog * Microsoft/Windows Blog * Monkey Bidness * Over the Air * The Philter * Valley Wonk * Wolfe's Den UBM TechWeb Reader Services * About UBM TechWeb * Advertising Contacts * Technology Marketing Solutions * Contact Us * Feedback * Reprints * TechWeb Digital Library / White Papers * TechWeb Events Calendar * TechWeb.com * Terms of Service * | * Privacy Statement * | * Copyright © 2010 UBM TechWeb, All rights reserved. * InformationWeek Home * News * Blogs * Software * Security * Hardware * Mobility * Windows * Internet * Global CIO * Government * Healthcare * Financial * About Us * Contact Us * Current Issue * Back Issues * Site Map * Reprints * Briefing Centers * Editorial Calendar

Source URL (retrieved on *09/18/2014 - 8:33am*):
http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com/news/2010/07/google-proposes-some-design-principals-web-applications?qt-digital_editions=0&qt-blogs=0