

## Problem Statement

Imagine the following situations

- You are a FaceBook user and would like to list the songs you like, know where the concerts in your area are, and recommend the new releases according to your FaceBook music and friends.
- You are a Logistics Company and you want to provide a mechanism through which your corporate customers can get up to date information on the status of consignments with minimal effort.
- You are a personal investor and you want to track stock prices continuously without the pain of navigating to stock sites and searching for your stocks

All these problems would have needed complex technology solution if not for the development of a graphical user interface called widget back in 1981. Netscape pushed the widget along its journey in 1996 with the Navigator browser and Power Start. It wasn't until 2003 that Konfabulator (now Yahoo Widgets) hit the scene and popularized the widget technology.

## The Solution - Widgets

Widgets are a class of client-side application for displaying and/or updating local or remote data, packaged in a way to allow a single download and installation on a client machine or device. Examples include clocks, stock tickers, news casters, games and weather forecasters. This specification, when combined with other dependent specifications, defines a software solution for Widgets.

There are three big classes of widgets: the desktop widgets, the Web widgets and the generic widgets. The desktop widgets are small applications that run on your

desktop and usually (but not always) need that you download and install an engine in order to run them. The web widgets are sections of code that can be inserted in any Web page such as your personal blog, a My Space page, a FaceBook page or page of an eBay auction or the pages of an online store. Each class at its turn has several types of widgets. Generic widgets mostly do not possess any modality and are designed to be reused in other widgets say like text boxes, file input dialog boxes etc.



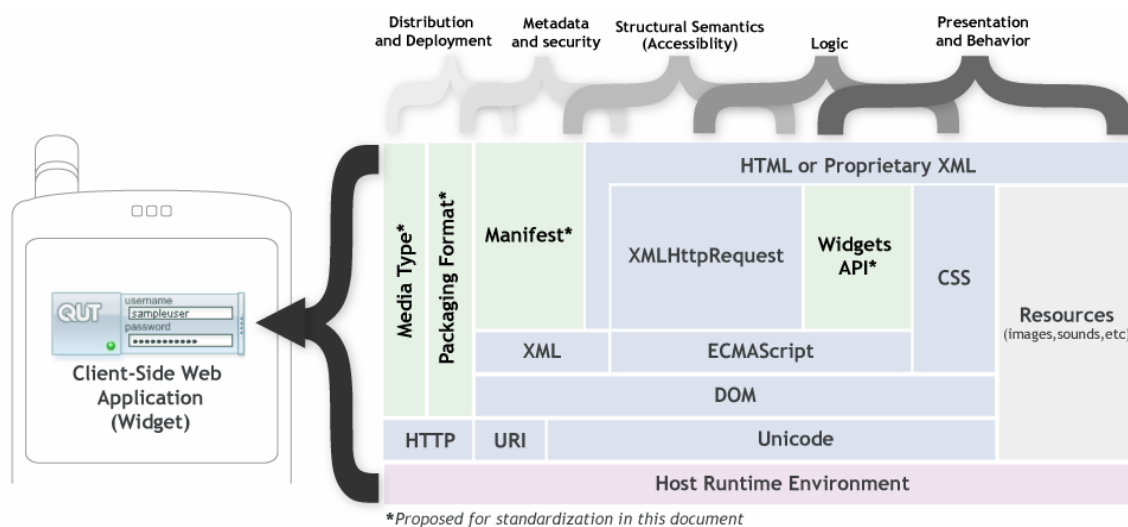
The above figure gives an overall view of the look and feel of few desktop widgets. Widgets are also classified based on their intended use into Accessory Widgets, Application Widgets and Information Widgets. Accessory Widgets are self-contained and don't require support from an application or Internet access. Clocks, timers, calculators, and note-takers fall into this category. Application Widgets are associated with a full-fledged application. This kind of Widget enhances the application by providing a less complicated and often read-only interface. The iTunes Controller and Address Book Widgets fall into this category. Information Widgets are designed to work with data from the Internet. These Widgets allow you to monitor external events such as the weather, flight status, or stock prices.

## How Widget Technology works?

As we had seen any product can be classified as widget if it conforms to certain standard specification. There are three classes of products that can claim conformance to this specification:

- A widget user agent.
- A widget resource.
- A configuration document.

A widget user agent is an implementation that attempts to support the specification. A widget user agent must support specifications like HTTP 1.1, XMLHttpRequest etc. A widget resource is a Zip archive that contains at least one start file. A widget resource may contain a configuration document as well as additional resources located either at the root of the archive or in sub-directories. In addition, a widget resource may also be digitally signed. A configuration document is an [XML] document that has the widget element at its root. Within the widget resource, the file name of a configuration document must be config.xml.



## How can widget technology help my business?

We would see how widget technology can help satisfy business needs by revisiting the examples we saw in the first section of the document. Let us see how the problems of the logistics company can be solved. The ideal solution to this problem would be a desktop widget which would allow us to pull consignment information by entering the tracking ids without the need to navigate to any webpage. An excellent example of this implementation would be the widget developed by DHL express to fulfill its customer needs. The widget is simple to install and is of great use to the customers of DHL.



To solve the problem of tracking stocks continuously with minimal effort there are many available widget solutions. We would look at a widget developed using yahoo widget technology which can track particular stocks and display the percentage appreciation or depreciation in value for the user to decide on the course of action.



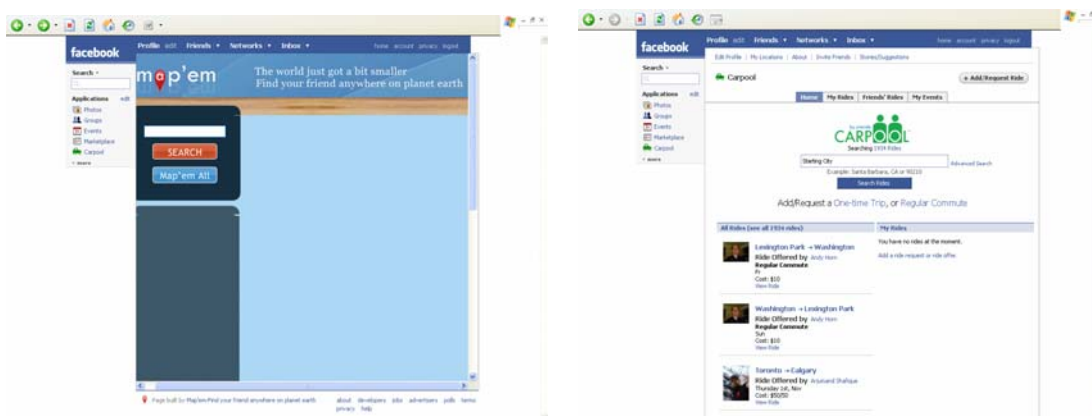
Powerful widgets can be developed for existing CRM and ERP packages which can provide the end users with real time information with advanced graphical user interfaces. For example a widget can be developed for the sales team to track revenues on their desktops and would feature gauges to give a more intuitive feel of the revenues flowing. Similarly widget technology can be used to track new opportunities arising from clients and the corresponding follow up by the sales force.

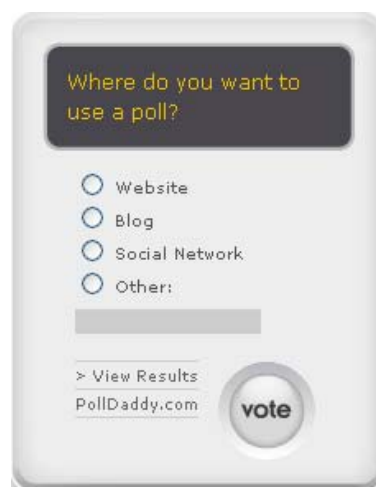


**Photon's expertise in widget technology**

Photon has extensive knowledge and experience in the area of widget technology. The combination of the technological edge possessed by photon and its commitment to solving business problems and not just technical problems make photon a valuable partner for any business. We will visit some of the widget projects executed by photon for various clients to understand photon's competency in widget technologies.

- Photon developed a desktop widget for our client Englishtown.com (world's second biggest site based on .net) to enable users to learn new English words with ease.
- Photon also developed a widget for facebook.com which will help users find friends anywhere on planet earth. This will show all friends and will be able to locate them in Google Map).
- Photon worked with slideshare.net to come up with a widget that provides the ability to share power point slideshows. Another exiting widget was developed by photon for polldaddy.com for web based polling system.





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