

## Insiders' Corner

August 2009

### What's New and Cool from the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference



Eric Stoll and Chris Spears, owners of Arke Systems in Atlanta, recently attended the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference this July in New Orleans. The conference is a gathering of Microsoft's top partners to learn about what is new, what is changing and how that is going to affect Microsoft's clients and partners. **The biggest change we are going to see this year is from Windows 7.** Everything about Windows 7 is significantly improved, speed, reliability, toolset, etc.

Eric and Chris also had an opportunity to meet with Microsoft executives in several key groups. The Dynamics group, The Online Services group, Azure (Cloud Computing), Microsoft Embedded Group, and a number of other Microsoft partners. Across the board everyone is excited about how business is moving forward and benefits that new technologies will provide.



Eric Stoll and Chris Spears with the Microsoft team at the President's Reception during the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference. New Orleans, July 2009.

Studies around employee productivity improvement, operational improvements and improved financial understanding abound when it comes to the implementation of Microsoft Software. Over the course of the conference one theme rose above the others, **partnering & co-opetition, businesses that build strong lasting relationships with vendors and competitors will continue to grow above expectations**

A laundry list of new technologies were also promoted at this year's conference. Key among them is Azure, Microsoft's just released cloud computing offering. **It is now possible to build applications without having to worry about hosting or maintenance. The Azure platform gives you a scalable .net environment, bandwidth and access to SQL server, no longer tying you to a limited amount of hardware or complex hardware planning.** The online services group told us about upcoming changes to their services, SharePoint, Exchange, CRM, Communication, Live... all of these services are continuously getting updated, soon to include the ability for customization, on par with what you would get from an on premise install.

Eric and Chris also attended meetings with CRM and SharePoint ISV's to learn about new products on the market that address current clients' and prospects' needs. We learned about the new Marketing Suite module for **SiteCore 6. It allows marketers a level of website analytics unlike anything on the market.** Marketers can build intelligent user profiles based on all kinds of inputs such as browsing behavior, search keywords, online forms, etc. And you can cross reference these profiles with your CRM marketing lists to write highly targeted content and optimize the flow of your website. In some real world testing of these techniques, one case study they presented showed a 600% increase in converting anonymous visitors into trial customers.

They also found an ISV for SharePoint that offers a fantastic hardcopy document repository solution for scanning, OCR'ing, and archiving documents. And another SharePoint ISV demoed a nicely polished workflow authoring toolset that allows SharePoint admins to build workflows through the SharePoint UI. The workflow activities were far better and more capable than anything built into SharePoint Designer.

Eric and Chris will continue to attend these conferences and aggressively seek out great new technologies that they can recommend to you to improve every aspect of your business. **Our success truly comes from your success.**