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On AIR Tour Europe Leg 1 Recap

April 13th 2008 Posted to AIR, Conferences

Monday, March 31st – Madrid, Spain
We kicked off the first leg of the On AIR Tour Europe in Madrid, Spain on Monday the 31st of March. The crew consisted of myself, Mike Chambers, Danny Dura, Kevin Hoyt, Ryan Stewart, Enrique Duvos, Serge Jespers, Ted Patrick, Andre Charland, and Chris Britchford. Most everyone arrived a day or two early to check out the sites but I arrived at around midnight on Sunday night due to the well-publicized troubles at Heathrow's new Terminal 5. But I did get to spend most of Sunday in the first class British Airways lounge so don't feel too bad for me.

We arrived at the venue around 8:30 and began setting up for the day. After dealing with some issues with the video game setups and not having the right power adapters, we settled into the "evangelist corner" which is where most of us put finishing touches on our slides and demos during the day. The crowd starting flowing in around 9:00 am and began munching on the breakfast goodies we had laid out for them.

Enrique gave the keynote in Spanish but he definitely kept the attention of the crowd. The public alpha of AIR on Linux had just went live this morning and he showed a really cool demo that involved dragging AIR applications between Linux and Mac using VMWare. Throughout the day I poked my head in to watch Danny, Kevin, and Mike laying the foundation of AIR out for the crowd. Despite some minor language barriers, the crowd seemed really into the presentations and consistently had great questions for us. There were many people from Portugal there and I met a few gotoAndLearn() fans which was nice. They re-iterated their desire for Adobe to come to their country for a future event.

My presentation was the last of the day. It is 1/3 design, 1/3 development, and 1/3 comedy. I wasn't sure whether my jokes would go over well because of the language barrier but I have once again proved that all cultures find humor in the sound of farts and burps. At the end of my session I demonstrated how you could decompile AIR applications with tools like Sothink. The audience really appreciated it, but I got word from the powers that be that it might not be a good demo for me to do be doing, so I replaced it with a static slide in the other tour stops. I got a lot of really good questions after my session and the attendees were treated with more food and free beer. All in all it was a great way to kick off the tour. I went directly to my room and passed out, as I was severely sleep deprived.

Tuesday, April 1st – Train to Paris
Today consisted of a long train journey from Madrid to Paris. I pick pocketed Ryan's Flip camera in the train station as an April fools joke. He would get it back a couple of days later and would end up losing it again. The journey was split into two segments. The first was from Madrid to the border of France and was overall a

nice journey. No power or Internet meant that we got to spend quality time discussing the economic policies of the G8 and the effect that it has on global trade proliferation agreements. What?

At the train station just outside the French border some of us upgraded to first class so that we could have power for the rest of the trip. Apparently the ticket agent lied to us, as there was no power anywhere on the train. We even had Andre talk to the lady in French thinking that it would help us. But apparently she wasn't impressed with his Canadian dialect. The remaining 5-hour trip was nice overall and Mike even resorted to plugging his MacBook into a power outlet he found in the bathroom just to get a little more juice. If you haven't already noticed, we are somewhat obsessed with working on the computer. Kevin, Ryan, Andre, and some of the other guys drank beer in the dining cart to pass the time.

After arriving in Paris most of the crew went out for a bite but I missed them, so I ended up getting some pretty decent room service. My bed consisted of two single beds pushed together, which sucked as I promptly rolled into the middle sending each half in opposite directions.

Wednesday, April 2nd – Paris, France
The taxi ride from the hotel to the venue was interesting to say the least. The valet said he would get a van for us so we could all take on vehicle. Upon arrival the driver stated that it would cost 100 Euros, also known as $200 to us Americans. Mike was having none of it, so we were herded to the regular taxi stand. The driver said that he could not take me, Kevin, and Serge because we were too heavy. Huh? Are you kidding me? Apparently French taxi drivers are very concerned about gas consumption.

The venue was amazing as it was the current or former stock exchange building. The presentation area was huge and looked like a giant lecture hall. I felt like a professor while delivering my session. All I needed was a pipe and a tweed jacket to complete the effect. All of the sessions went great and we were bombarded with questions in the "evangelist corner" all day long. We also saw an awesome demo of a Surface-like multi-touch AIR application that blew our minds.

The one event that I was the most concerned about there being a language issue was Paris but I was delighted to have several people come up afterwards letting me know that it was very understandable. This event stands out as one of my favorites on the tour.

We attended a little blogger dinner after the event and although there were only a couple of bloggers there, the food was outstanding. After dinner I went back to the hotel to relax while Chris, Ryan, and Andre went up the Eiffel Tower to do the tourist thing. As is normally the case when Ryan and Andre are involved, it eventually ended up in a bar with interesting stories to be told the following day.

Thursday, April 3rd – Train to Amsterdam
This day consisted of a leisurely train journey to Europe's answer to Las Vegas, Amsterdam. We finally had power for this journey and most of us worked on building new demos and adjusting our slide decks. Belgium Flex hero, Peter Elst, also joined us in Amsterdam to add some local talent to the roster. The hotel was mediocre at best and had a lot of local charm, aka old and small. Andre seemed to have gotten the crime scene special as it smelled like a rotting corpse in his room. Overall it was an uneventful day.

Friday, April 4th – Amsterdam, Netherlands
We secured another amazing venue for this event. It was the former stock exchange building and it was probably the largest of all the venues. The presenters were on a stage overlooking the crowd as if it were a rock concert. Ryan delivered the keynote to get the day underway. Peter gave a great session on using the AIR SQLite database. I went out and got McDonalds for lunch to get a little taste from home but it was very unsatisfying to say the least. We were slammed all day with great questions and I think the crowd was the liveliest of any city on the tour. My session went really well and the crowd definitely got my sense of humor.

Mike, Danny, and Ryan began a Guitar Hero battle that would go on for the rest of the leg. *My Name is Jonas* will be permanently ingrained in my head for the rest of my life.

Having Chris on the tour was great as we could direct specific API and feature request questions to him.

Saturday and Sunday, April 5th and 6th – Amsterdam, Netherlands
We had the weekend off in Amsterdam. The weather was kind of crummy but we made the best of it. We went to have pancakes one morning. It turned out that what people call pancakes in Amsterdam are actually crepes to us Americans. I had pancakes with cherries, chocolate, and vanilla ice cream. Very tasty!

At one point Mike, Chris, Danny, and I took over a desk in the lobby to do some coding. We had to just to live up to the tour's tagline, "Cross-continent coding."

On Sunday we boarded another train headed for Brussels. This was only a 2 hour or so journey and was a very nice train with power and meal service. After arrival in Brussels we walked to the hotel, which was the nicest of the trip. I finally managed to get a workout in which felt great.

Monday, April 7th – Brussels, Belgium
We took cabs to the venue, which was a very cool setup. They had eight projectors on the walls, which contained the three game consoles, various tour graphics, and even a Flickr tour photo slideshow. The food was really good at this event and included Belgium waffles, macaroons, and other unhealthy fare.

Oliver Goldman, an engineer on the AIR team, joined the crew to fill the position of the now departed Chris Britchford. Nicolas Lierman also joined the tour and gave a great presentation on Google Analytics application. He even showed some screenshots of the next version of the application, which looked very slick.

Enrique headed back to Spain so we had UK-based evangelist Andrew Shorten come aboard the tour. Andrew gave a nice session on Livecycle DS and discussed AIR from more of a data-centric viewpoint. This was a nice offset to some of the more visual stuff that was shown.

Again I was pleasantly surprised by how well the crowd reacted to my session. Slowly as the tour rolled on, my session became more of a humorous, end-of-the-day type of thing with of course a little AIR knowledge thrown in. The Ryan Stewart drag and drop application was a classic that was loved in all the cities.

Tuesday, April 8th – Train to London
This was a mellow day, which consisted of a leisurely train trip to London. We arrived in London around mid-afternoon and it was nice to be in an English-speaking country again. I took a much-needed nap after we arrived and then headed out to get Starbucks, which provided a much-needed taste of home.

There is nothing much else to report on this day. Most of us were ready to head home at this point.

Wednesday, April 9th – London, England
I was really looking forward to the London event. The venue was a cool brewery with a large break area and an even larger presentation area upstairs. They had Krispy Kreme donuts for breakfast, which we all really enjoyed. Ryan had at least 5 by my count.

I had a great time meeting various UK-based Flashers like Aral Balkan and Seb Lee-Delisle. I was also really happy to meet a lot of gotoAndLearn() fans at the event as well. I have been corresponding with Renaldo Lawrence for a couple of years and it was great finally meeting in person. Lawrence Job and Simon Shand are two guys who have been very active in the GTAL forums since its inception so it was great meeting them as well. If only I had gotten into Flash when I was their age. There were ton of other cool people who I

chatted with in London as well.

As for sessions, we had a couple of local UK speakers talking about the apps that they are working on. Howard Baines presented his application called AlertThingy, which is a social network aggregator that gives you alerts about all of your feeds. This is a very well designed application that I think will be really popular. Some people from the BBC were there demoing something they built, but unfortunately I missed it.

Thursday, April 9th – Fly home
Home, sweet home! I really enjoyed the two weeks on the tour but I was definitely ready for some California sunshine. In about 6 weeks we will be heading back to Europe for leg 2 which promises to be another wacky adventure.

Lee

Comments

1. Gertjan
   April 14th, 2008 | 1:03 am

   Nice read. Great presentation in Amsterdam, thanks!

2. Frederik Heyninck
   April 14th, 2008 | 1:32 am

   Nice recap

3. Joao Goncalves
   April 14th, 2008 | 10:46 am

   well, lee, very kind of you to remember our portuguese comunity, it was for me really nice to meet the guys behind the code, already said something about our talk, in the other post, but can´t resist to write something more when i saw this post and the reference to our comunity http://www.riapt.org, wich we kindly invite to post if you have time for it, and reforce our invitation to come to Portugal in the future.

   see you,

   Joao Goncalves
   twitter/joaopapin

4. AIR Bus Tour : Weblog
   April 14th, 2008 | 2:03 pm

   […] Lee Brimelow (who happens to have the most interesting and entertaining session of the tour) has written up an overview of leg 1 of the on AIR Tour in Europe. […]

5. Ryan Stewart - Rich Internet Application Mountaineer » Leg One of the on AIR Tour
   April 14th, 2008 | 2:15 pm

   […] the trip. Kevin actually did a highly in-depth technical blog post for every stop on the tour. Lee wrote up a great report. Mike did the best job of keeping track of the blog posts from the event. I had two favorite parts. […]

6. LiamR
   April 14th, 2008 | 3:02 pm

   Wish I'd got to see the tour down in London, but sadly no dough-no show… ah well, when you motley crew coming to Glasgow! I for one have a bed settee you could kip on;)

   Keep up the insanely awesome and generous work

7. Me and Lawrence are mentioned on the Flash Blog - Simon Shand
   April 15th, 2008 | 1:45 am

   […] was mentioned on the Flash Blog which is really cool, and he talks about me and Lawrence Job in his overview of the tour which is also pretty cool :D. If you'd like to check out the interview here it […]

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About the Author

Lee Brimelow is a Platform Evangelist at Adobe focusing on the Flash, Flex, and AIR developer communities.

Upcoming Conferences

- European AIR Tour
  Apr 1-9, 2008 - All over
- FITC Toronto
  Apr 19-22, 2008 - Toronto

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Platform Evangelists

- Danny Dura
- Kevin Hoyt
- Ryan Stewart
- Duane Nickull
- Mike Downey
- Ben Forta
- Serge Jespers
- Enrique Duvos

Flash Blogs

- Big Spaceship
- Grant Skinner
- Justin Everett-Church
- Keith Peters
- Mike Chambers
- Mike Downey
- Ryan Stewart
- Stephan Richter
- John Grden
- Stephen "Tink" Downs
- Guy Watson

Conferences

- Flash Forward
- FITC
- Flash on the Beach
- FlashBelt
- FFK08

External APIs

- APE Physics Engine
- Away3D
- Papervision3D
- Tweener

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