

Cutting edge technologies for quality solutions: *Zend and Zero9* a successful partnership



Company: Zero9 Group—<http://www.zero9group.com/>

Geography: Italy

Industry: • Web and mobile contents and services

Challenges:

- Updating Portals
- Development of flexible and extensible solutions
- Expansion of international markets

Development Timeframe: 6 months

Solution: Zend Core, Zend Studio, Zend Platform

“We consider the partnership with Zend as much more than a typical customer-supplier relation, it’s really a technological partnership”.

Andrea Guzzon
Zero9 Technology Project Manager for the International Market

Project design and implementation in just 6 months

Overview

Zero9 Group works in a growing market segment where competitiveness is a key element: Web and mobile content and services providers in B2B and in B2C. The main business customer services offered are customized wireless applications and mobile marketing, whilst in the mass market Zero9 is one of the leading companies in chat, gaming and ring tones’ distribution via web or mobile phone. In order to be able to deal with these different operations they have to use all kinds of modern technologies.

Zero9 is based in Italy, in Milan and Rome, with subsidiaries in South Africa, USA, Brazil and Spain. They also work with more than forty mobile network operators.

The Challenge

Zero9 community is a solution that supports more than 2 million customers worldwide. Its brands, Kicè in Italy, Kdvc in Brazil, ClubM8 in America, are well known and they are central to the company’s success.

In order to maintain their great results and to face the new challenges of their dynamic market, Zero9 needed technological solutions and collaboration that could assure innovation, flexible localization and quick time to market.

This could only be achieved with cutting edge architectures and technologies.

This is why Zero9 decided to update their existing infrastructure and to focus on and invest in its value.

The solution

"Former community platform architecture was working well, but was developed in PHP4. Our need to have a more reliable and efficient product with flexible localization, in view of our goal to expand international markets, decided us to migrate to PHP5 and to entirely revise the product. We didn't hesitate to contact Zend, the PHP company. We wanted the best in the market" says Andea Guzzon, Zero9 Technology Project Manager -for the International Market. "The decision to use PHP meant better performance and lower costs" he adds.

"This project gives a complete and true image of PHP: not only in the front end web application, but also in back end solutions with complex architectural infrastructures. Zend is a leader in the PHP world. I can show my customers that I have the best technological partner and Zend can once again prove PHP's reliability and maturity".

Andea Guzzon

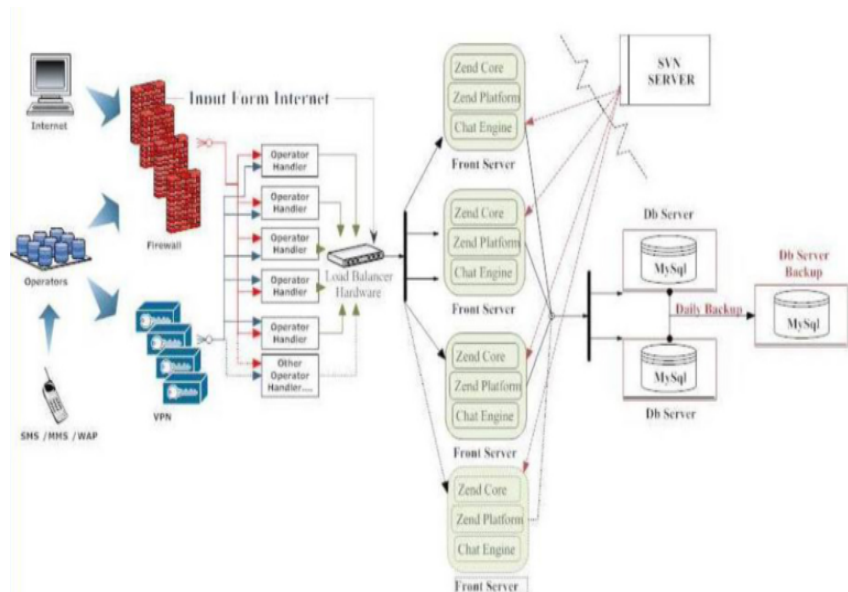
Zero9 Technology Project Manager for the International Market

"When we started working on the existing Zero9 application" says Elena Brambilla, Zend Italy's Project & Training Manager, "we realized that it was built based on an incremental approach that means adding features over features depending on user needs. This logic had compromised the application's reliability and scalability. Also, another very important aspect was the database - the infrastructure core - the volume of data being managed was rapidly exceeding the initial estimates on which the entire infrastructure was based."

During the reorganization process, Zero9 considered refactoring the entire application in Java, a language already used within the company in other applications. However, they chose to use PHP because it's an easy to learn but robust and flexible language that can totally support enterprise business critical applications.

"Many developers and other companies are involved in the project, and Zend too. We had a very positive collaboration with them, actually we consider the partnership with Zend as much more than a typical customer-supplier relation, it's really a technological partnership" says Andea Guzzon.

Zend's involvement was not simply in a technological consultancy capacity, but involved architectural design and infrastructural analysis too. Elena Brambilla adds: "The implemented solution was developed starting from a deep infrastructural analysis and then extended on to architecture and features. This allowed a complete evolution bearing in mind Zero9's key strategy: to expand markets in new countries. One of the main points was to maintain the same communication level which is essential to application



Zend-Zero9 architecture solution

The database, MySQL in the former and in the new version, was totally redesigned, standardised and optimized. The asynchronous processing, developed for messaging in the different communication channels (SMS, MMS, WAP, WEB, IVR), was managed with Zend Platform's Job Queue feature. This allowed centralised administration of all processes which meant optimised resources, better performance and easy management.

The described technicalities highlight the project's complexity; it was not a simple question of module or interface design or better responsiveness. Zero9's strategy is to be able to export the model to other countries and in each of them to provide the right localization and settings and, of course, to make it operational as quickly as possible. Zero9 were looking for a strong, serious and reliable technological partner to invest safely in foreign markets with their products, and Zend matched these requirements perfectly.

Andrea Guzzon also remarks that "this project gives a complete and true image of PHP: not only in the front end web application, but also in back end solutions with complex architectural infrastructures. Zend is a leader in the PHP world. I can show my customers that I have the best technological partner and Zend can once again prove PHP's reliability and maturity".

300.000 daily SMS and 2 million users worldwide, these two numbers illustrate the impressive amount of operations that have to be managed, combined with a high level of performance. To complete their architecture, Zero9 used Zend Platform on their PHP application server to monitor and improve performance -essential requirements for a business critical PHP environment -but Platform was also an optimal solution for rapid deployment.

The whole project was designed and implemented in record time, only 6 months: from December 2007 to June 2008.

The future

"At the moment, our business is growing and that means our products are welcome on the market, so we want sell and export our platform and gain new markets. Our goal is to become an international web company and our know-how combined with high level technological support is a winning strategy" says Andrea.

Zero9's future will be in international operations but with a new aim: to be a service provider for third parties.

"For example we are thinking of offering our proven solution to other telephone companies in different countries or to other international players who plan to invest in Italy." Andrea concludes.

This can all be achieved with a major technological partner such as Zend Technologies.



Corporate Headquarters: Zend Technologies, Inc. 19200 Stevens Creek Blvd. Cupertino, CA 95014, USA · **Tel** 1-888-PHP-ZEND, 1-888-747-9363 · **Fax** 1-408-253-8801
Central Europe: (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) Zend Technologies GmbH Bayerstrasse 83, 80335 Munich, Germany · **Tel** +49-89-516199-0 · **Fax** +49-89-516199-20
International: Zend Technologies Ltd. 12 Abba Hillel Street, Ramat Gan, Israel 52506 · **Tel** 972-3-753-9500 · **Fax** 972-3-753-9501
France: Zend Technologies SARL, 5 Rue de Rome, ZAC de Nanteuil, 93110 Rosny-sous-Bois, France · **Tel** +33 1 4855 0200 · **Fax** +33 1 4812 3132
Italy: Zend Technologies, Largo Richini 6, 20122 Milano, Italy · **Tel** +39 02 5821 5832 · **Fax** +39 02 5821 5400

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0220 -M-MOC-0808-R1-EN-Zero9