

Data Driver

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Will Entity Framework 2 Appease Early Adopters of LINQ to SQL?

With the [release last week](#) of the Visual Studio 2010 beta and the .NET Framework 4, developers are getting their first peek at Microsoft's next generation IDE. [As reported yesterday](#) in RDN Express, many are delving into the new WPF editor. But it also gives developers a first peek at the ADO.NET Entity Framework version 2, which is Microsoft's preferred model for building applications that access databases.

Given much of the [backlash about the first release](#), the update has been eagerly awaited. EFv2 adds support for n-tier APIs and templates, increases Plain Old CLR Objects (POCO) coverage and improves Persistence Ignorance, in addition to other improvements, according to Microsoft.

"The Entity Framework itself has pretty much undergone a radical transformation," said Stephen Forte, chief strategy officer at Telerik, who has tested the new IDE. "It really addressed some of the concerns of the community in that respect."

Ultimately, the question is, will it win over LINQ to SQL developers, who were up in arms last year when Microsoft made clear that [it was putting all its eggs in one basket](#) -- that is, with the Entity Framework. "As far as I am aware, we haven't seen any votes of no confidence," Forte, said, referring to [last summer's petition](#) to Microsoft by those who had issues with the architecture.

When it comes to ADO.NET Entity Framework, Nagarro Inc., a San Jose, Calif. provider of outsourced software development services, decided to not use the first version of the Entity Framework in any of its projects. "We were pretty happy with LINQ to SQL," said Vaibhav Gadodia, a .NET architect at Nagarro, in an e-mail. "We had invested a lot of training effort as well, since it was (and is) such a shoe-in for that ORM layer."

Of course, many who invested in LINQ to SQL felt jilted last fall when Microsoft shifted its focus to the EF. With the v2 release of the EF, Gadodia said a lot of the features of LINQ to SQL are now available within Entity Framework. "It almost feels as if Microsoft copied some of these into EF from L2S (as a result of developer feedback)," he noted. "We will continue to use L2S in the short term (our current projects); for the simple reason that most of our developers are trained in the technology."

Among other features he likes in the updated EF are things like the modeling support (which now generates DDL based on the model). "There are other changes which are useful (for instance POCO support). We are developing a new internal application framework to use across projects, and changes in the EF have put it in the front-running for using it in our framework," he noted.

Still Nagarro won't migrate to the EF until there is a "well supported migration path from L2S to EF, as well as complete compatibility between the two," he said. "Until then we are going to be limited to trying EF out in new initiatives, but not offer it to all customers until we have clarity on where it is going to stabilize."

What's your take on the Entity Framework v2? Drop me a line at jschwartz@1105media.com.