

# Developer Partner Case Study: Microsoft Popfly



## Microsoft Popfly Lets Facebook Users Develop New Content of Their Own

### The Company

Founded in 1975, Microsoft is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

### The Application

Popfly, a web development tool for nondevelopers.

### Microsoft Application

Microsoft's Popfly application aims to democratize development. It's a web-based tool that gives Facebook users the power to create interactive Facebook applications which use Silverlight, Microsoft's new cross-browser, cross-platform browser plug-in, all with no programming.

For instance, users can create and embed mashups of websites directly in their profiles. Here's how it works. Popfly contains a number of preprogrammed blocks. One block might contain all your Facebook data, including contacts, groups and photos. A second block might hold 3D maps from Virtual Earth. Another block might chart any address in latitude and longitude. Put them together and...

"Connect these blocks and you create a dynamic map that shows you where your friends are located across the globe," says Popfly lead product manager Dan Fernandez. "Instead of just showing their names, you get this worldwide view of your friends with their profile photos and data, right on the map."

"Facebook users are quite sophisticated at modifying their profiles but they typically don't want to be developers. We're giving them the tools to create cool, interactive content--and they don't have to write a single line of code."

—Dan Fernandez,  
Lead Product Manager,  
Microsoft Non-Professional  
Tools Team



Screen capture of Microsoft Popfly

## Facebook Developer Resources

The Facebook Platform makes it easy for Popfly to tap into information and events related to users. And this makes it easy for Facebook users to create cool, community-based applications with Popfly. “The APIs that are provided in Facebook Platform are perfect for developers,” Fernandez says. “Facebook is arguably the leader in exposing APIs and offering deep integration into its data sets.”

He also likes the Facebook Query Language (FQL), which is optimized for building applications on the network. “We want to make sure the applications that people create using Popfly don’t stall as they query the Facebook network. Facebook Query Language gives users the flexibility to build programs the way they want without having to worry about performance issues.”

## For the Users

Popfly can help Facebook users find and foster new relationships, adding to the sense of community on the site. Using Popfly, people can connect with other users on Facebook, add their favorite content creators as friends and keep track of their friends’ latest projects.

Additionally, Popfly lets one user “rip” another user’s project. It makes the underlying code available and shows how a particular application was built. That means users can easily modify an application and add it to their own profiles. A Popfly application that rates the best online videos, for example, could be customized to rank restaurants or podcasts.

“We think the most popular applications will rise to the top and be shared by the whole community,” Fernandez says. “The great thing is that it’s not Facebook or Microsoft telling people what’s cool but users deciding for themselves and passing these applications on to friends.”

## Why Microsoft Built on Facebook Platform

Why did the world’s largest software company team up with Facebook? “Because Facebook Platform is incredibly powerful,” Fernandez says. “There are currently over 500 Microsoft groups on Facebook. This is where our customers are, so we want to provide a great tool for them to enhance their experience and have fun.”



Screen capture of Windows application using Facebook data