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zembly – An open platform for iPhone/social applications

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- ▶ **A new world:** Software development is already changing, away from traditional models involving mostly software engineers, to new models that involve everyone.
- ▶ **A new opportunity:** Identify new opportunities for software engineering experts to reach many times more users by enlisting the masses to build on your work.

Question

- ▶ How many people here build applications?

What is an Application?

- ▶ **An application is a piece of software that helps a user solve a specific task.**

What is an Application?

- ▶ Applications come in all sizes and shapes
 - ▶ Large: SAP, Amazon.com
 - ▶ Small: UNIX shell scripts, widgets
- ▶ In short, anything can be considered an application as long as it helps a user with a task
- ▶ But, why do we need to tinker with the definition of application?
 - ▶ Because the common definition of applications is changing
 - ▶ Better to say that the scope of applications is changing

What is an Application?

- ▶ Let's talk about Web applications specifically
- ▶ Size and effort are no longer reliable criteria for judging what is an application
- ▶ Different metrics for determining value of an application
 - ▶ ~~Size and feature scope~~
 - ▶ How much usage it gets
- ▶ Applications, especially small applications, are built on platforms

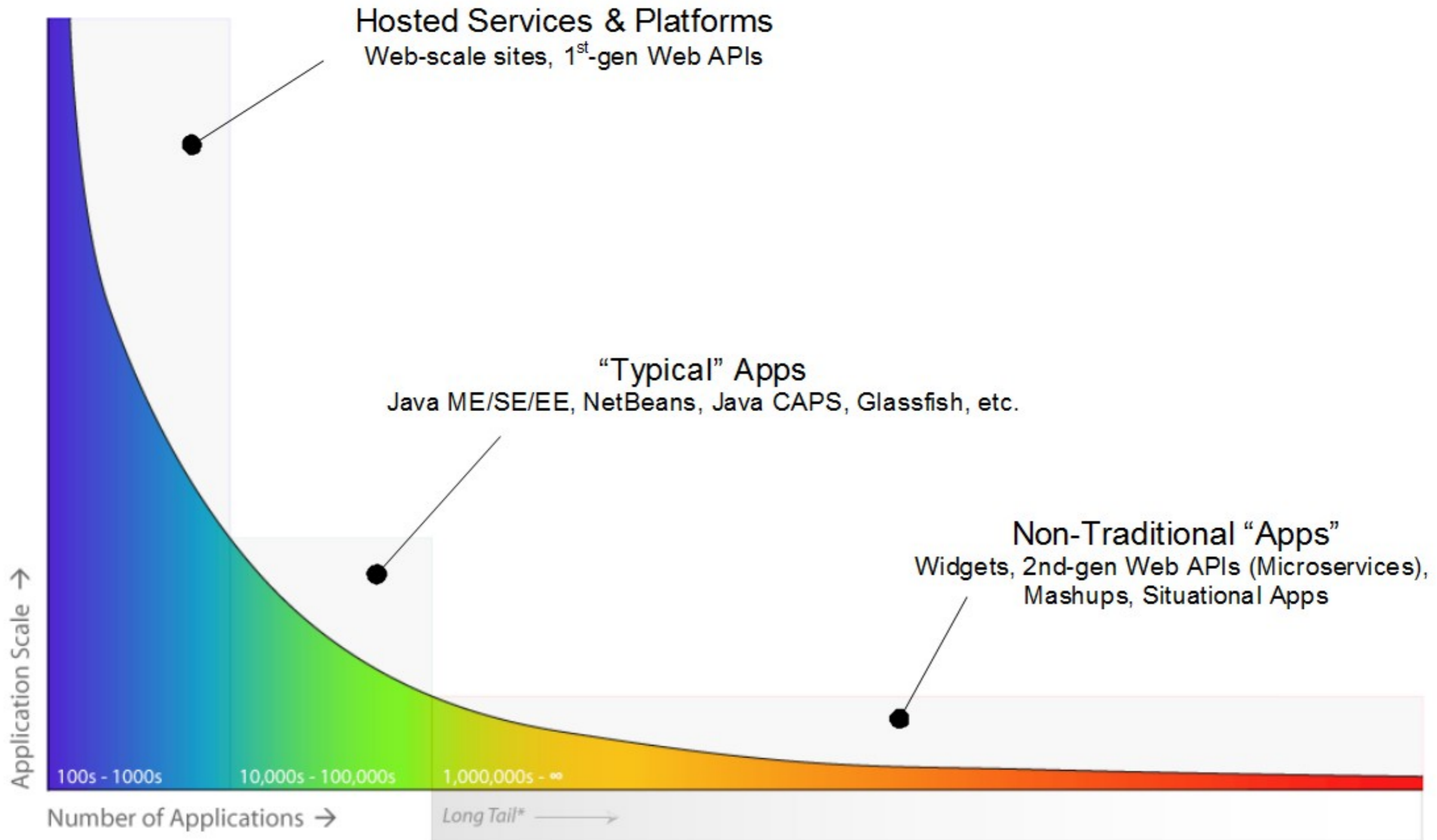
What is a Platform?

- ▶ **A platform is a piece of software that enables applications.**

What is a Platform?

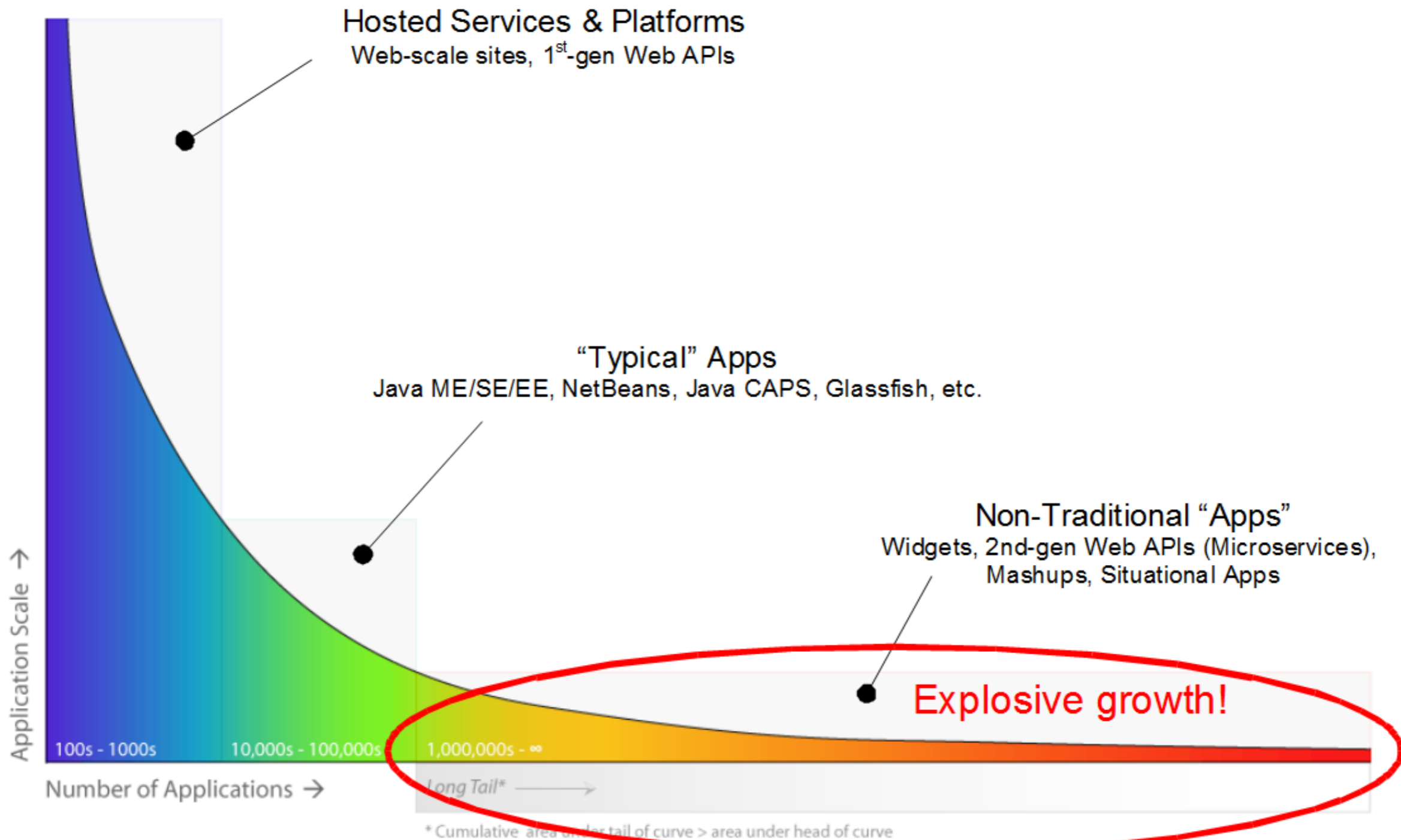
- ▶ Solve common problems so that applications don't have to
- ▶ Expose facilities (e.g. APIs) that make writing applications easier
- ▶ Are the fertilizer for ecosystems of applications built upon them
- ▶ As a rule, applications enrich the platforms they run on
 - ▶ Platforms need applications, and applications need platforms
- ▶ Platforms are more than the sum of their parts
 - ▶ Crowdsourcing enrich platforms in ways that the original developers didn't imagine, much less have time to do
 - ▶ Hmm. Looks a lot like the open source model!

The Application Spectrum



* Cumulative area under tail of curve > area under head of curve

The Application Spectrum



Addressing explosive growth

- ▶ Explosive growth in non-traditional Web applications
 - ▶ Widgets, social apps, iPhone apps, mashups, situational apps
- ▶ What lit the fuse?
 - ▶ Availability of platforms that make these apps possible
 - ▶ e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Ning, Meebo
 - ▶ Mature technologies and standards for delivering these apps
 - ▶ Higher levels of abstraction in application models
- ▶ Non-traditional apps are usually small
 - ▶ Not developed using traditional software tools or processes
 - ▶ Developed by casual developers
 - ▶ Quick to build, easy to deploy

- ▶ **What is it?**
 - ▶ A place to collaboratively build:
 - ▶ Services
 - ▶ Widgets
 - ▶ Social Applications
 - ▶ And more ...

- ▶ **Who is it for?**
 - ▶ Facebook Developers
 - ▶ MySpace Developers
 - ▶ iPhone Developers
 - ▶ And more ...

- ▶ **A Place to easily ...**
 - ▶ Author social applications in the browser
 - ▶ Host your applications for free
 - ▶ Publish to platforms like Facebook, Meebo, iPhone, etc.
 - ▶ Collaborate with others around live, editable code
 - ▶ Discover and combine popular Web APIs to create new applications

zembly is a ...

Platform for
Building the
Web

- ▶ **Community**
 - ▶ Participatory Ecosystem of Contributors and Consumers
 - ▶ Social Network for Developers
- ▶ **“Always Live” Development Environment** for authoring ...
 - ▶ Open Services
 - ▶ Widgets & Mashups
 - ▶ Social Network Applications
- ▶ **Wikipedia for Live Code**
 - ▶ Freely **create**, **edit**, **publish**, & **find** *public* services, widgets, and mashups

...

A Place to
Build the
Web

- ▶ **Open Services**
 - ▶ Create your own custom logic
 - ▶ Expose as a RESTful service
- ▶ **Widgets**
 - ▶ Style and develop UI components
 - ▶ Create service containers for distributing data
- ▶ **Mashups**
 - ▶ Remix data and widgets into situational mashups
- ▶ **Social Network Applications**
 - ▶ Configurable for popular social networks (Facebook)

The screenshot shows the Zembly website interface. At the top left is the Zembly logo. In the top right, it says "Signed in as kittyhawk" with a "Sign Out" link and a "Create something!" button. Below the navigation bar are links for "you", "docs", "samples", "search", "blog", and "forum". The main content area displays "iphonePreview" with the subtitle "You are looking at version 1". To the right of this, it shows a "score 10.0" and two icons (thumbs up and thumbs down) with a "0" next to each. A yellow "Open" button is centered below the screenshot.

Description

This is a widget that can be embedded in webpages, on Facebook, and many other places. The widget is hosted on our server and can be edited right here in your browser, if you have edit permission.

There is no description.

Widget Preview

Click here to preview this widget

The screenshot shows a "Widget Preview" window. It has a title bar with a close button. Below the title bar is a navigation bar with "Back" and "Featured Content". The main content area is a list of widgets, each with a right-pointing arrow:

- Widgets Browser
- iFlickr
- Hello world

Who Owns This Thing?



kittyhawk

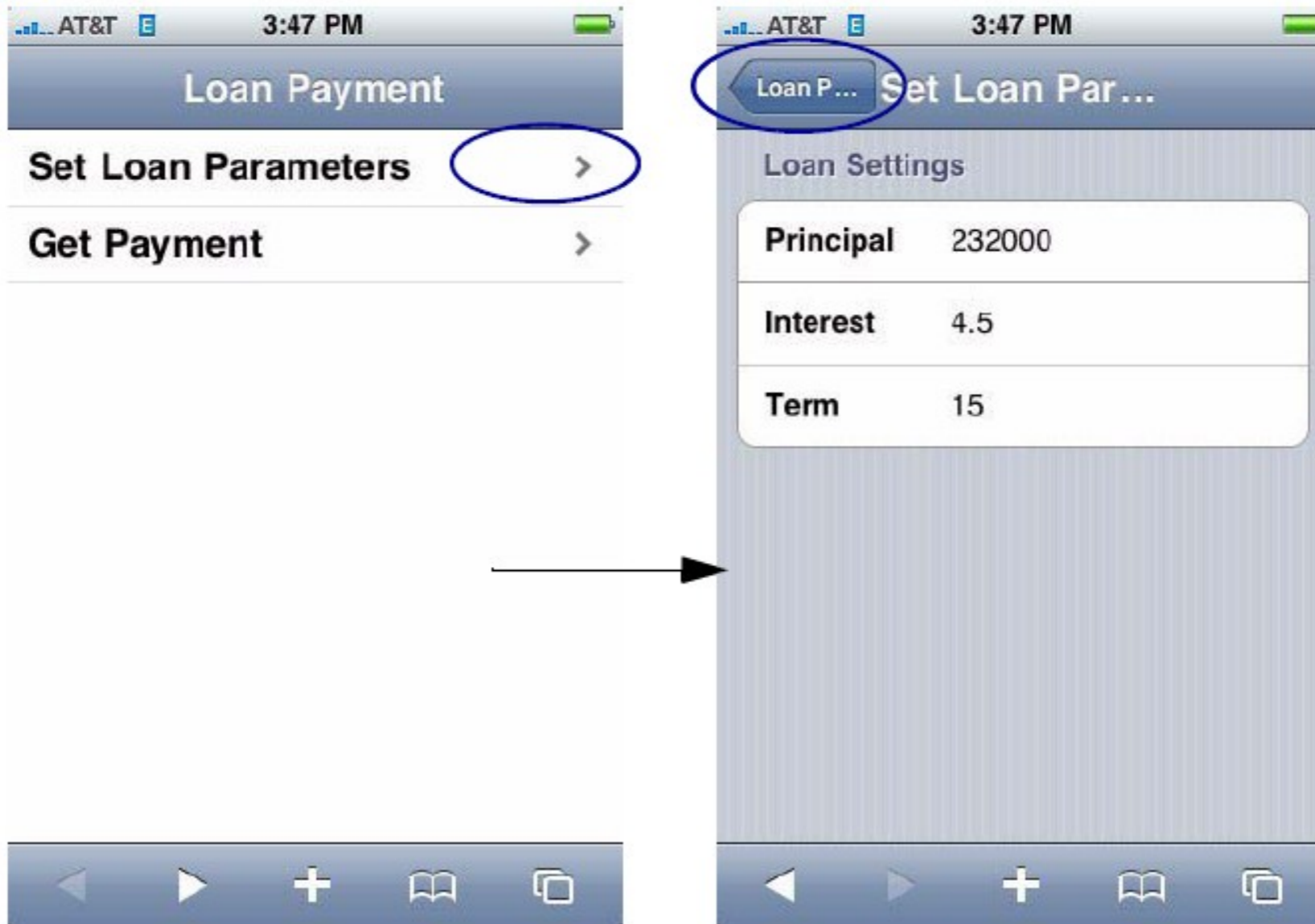
People Helping Out

You are working on this by yourself.
[Invite people!](#)

Actions

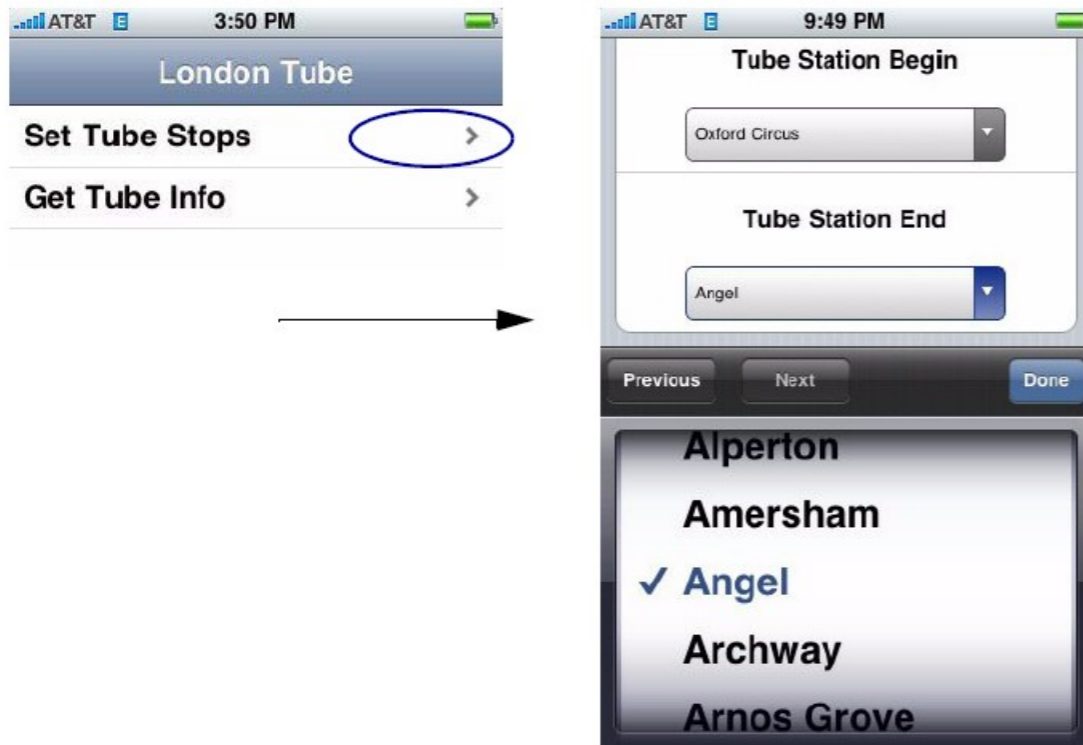
- Add to favorites
- Clone this widget
- Report this widget
- Delete this widget

Demo (contd.)

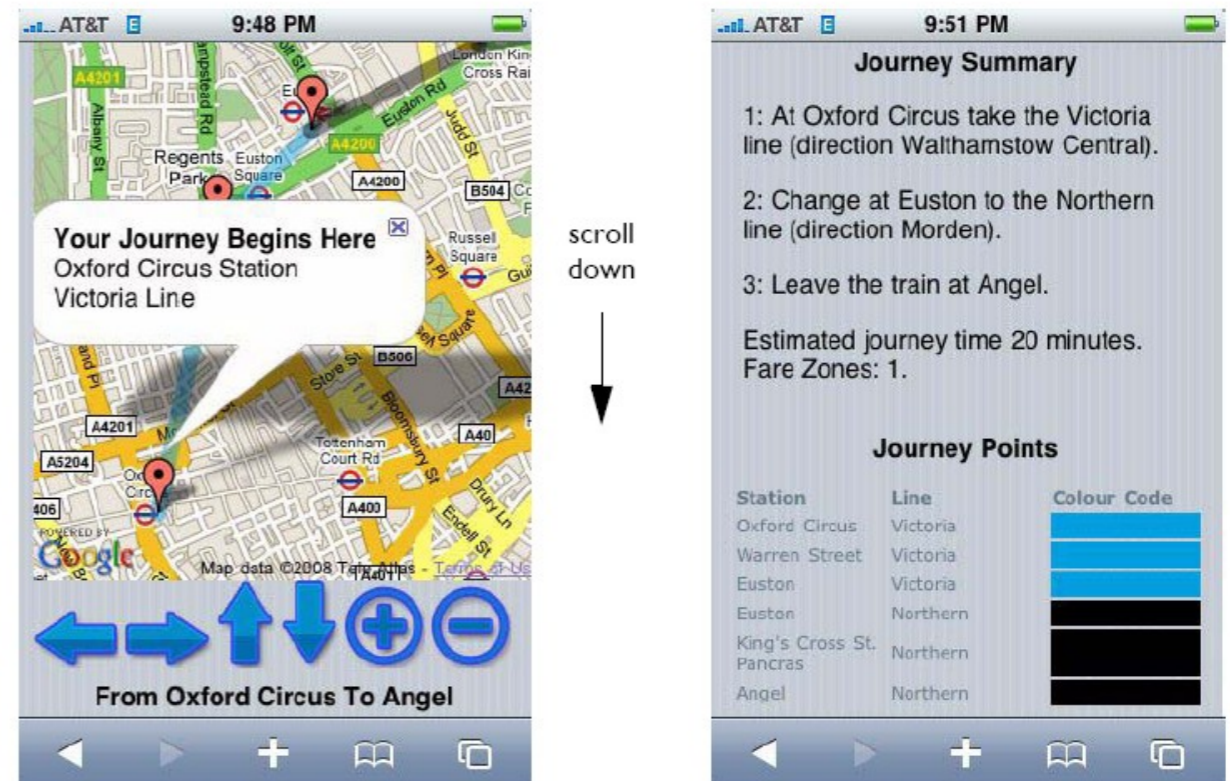


Loan Payment widget (iLoanPayment) for the iPhone

Demo (contd.)



London Tube widget for the iPhone: setting the tube stops



London Tube widget with custom Google Maps control buttons

What they are saying ...

- ▶ “zembly attempts to lower the barrier of entry to writing applications for social platforms such as Facebook, Meebo, OpenSocial and the iPhone by sharing services and widgets. I came away impressed with its focus on ease-of-use and belief in a new development process,” **Jesper Andersen, O'Reilly Radar**
- ▶ “zembly is truly disruptive. It has the potential to fundamentally change the way developers create portable web applications and widgets. It's collaborative approach, emphasis on reuse of common code, and web-based interface dramatically reduce the barrier for developers to implement and realize their creative ideas,” **Jon Aizen, Co-Founder and CTO, dapper.net**
- ▶ "Meebo is excited to work with zembly to foster the development of synchronous applications inside the Meebo Platform," **Seth Sternberg, Founder and CEO, Meebo**

Summary

- ▶ The Application development model is changing
 - ▶ Opening up to a much broader audience
 - ▶ Exponentially more apps will be built
 - ▶ Extending the long tail
 - ▶ Using technologies that raise the level of abstraction so that novices can accomplish useful tasks
 - ▶ Traditional software development processes will not be able to keep up with application demand
- ▶ At zembly, you easily create and host social applications of all shapes and sizes, targeting the most popular social platforms on the web. And, you do it along with other people. Using just your browser and your creativity, and working collaboratively with others, you create and publish Facebook apps, Meebo apps, OpenSocial apps, iPhone apps, Google Gadgets, embeddable widgets, and other social applications.