

Send Push Notifications to an iPhone from ColdFusion

Posted At : June 21, 2010 9:41 AM | Posted By : Bob Silverberg

Related Categories: ColdFusion, Notifo

Notifo is a relatively new service which allows you to send push notifications to mobile clients via a REST interface. Currently notifications can only be sent to the iPhone, but they plan to add support for Android and Blackberry in the future. Because it is based on a **REST API**, it's very easy to interact with from a ColdFusion application, and I wanted to give it a try, so I whipped up a quick **API wrapper** for it. It all seems to work extraordinarily well, and is quite cool.

CFNotifo is Born

I found out about Notifo from the **GitHub blog**, which describes a **Notifo service hook** that was just added. This service hook allows you to receive push notifications on your iPhone any time someone commits to your Git repo. Of course I had to try this right away, and was duly impressed. The next step was to write some CFML that interacts with the API, so, as I mentioned above, I decided to create a simple API wrapper to make it even easier for others to do the same. In a matter of minutes I was able to create a single cfc which implements all of the current API. This wasn't that challenging as there are only two API methods right now, *subscribe_usand send_notification*, but as Notifo adds more, I will follow suit.

How Does Notifo Work

Paul Stamatiou, co-founder of Notifo, wrote up a **detailed post about Notifo** on his blog, which is well worth reading. If you don't feel like following the link, here are the highlights:

- Allows you to send push notifications to a mobile client from a server.
- Currently iPhone is supported, via an **app** available in the app store. Android is up next, with other smartphones to be added in the future.
- To subscribe to services you need a Notifo account, which can be set up via the **Notifo site**, or via the iPhone app.
- To receive notifications you need to have the iPhone app installed.
- Once you've subscribed to a service you can set various options for it via a web interface, including what type of notifications you want to receive (normal, silent and stealth), and you can unsubscribe, block and report spam on a service.
- You can also set some global options for notifications, such as *silent hours*, during which notifications will be sent silently.

How to Use CFNotifo

The API wrapper that I wrote is extremely simple to use. You just instantiate an object, passing in the credentials for your service, and then call the *subscribe* and/or *send* methods on that object. Here are a couple of examples:

```
// Subscribe a user to a service

CFNotifo = createObject("component","CFNotifo").init(username="serviceNotifoUsername",apiSecret="serviceAPISecret");

response = CFNotifo.subscribe(username="userToSubscribe");

if (response.success)
{
    // It worked!
} else
{
    // Something went wrong

    writeDump(var=response.notifoResponse, label="Notifo's Response");
}

// Send a notification

CFNotifo = createObject("component","CFNotifo").init(username="serviceNotifoUsername",apiSecret="serviceAPISecret");

response = CFNotifo.send(to="subscribedUser", msg="Message to send");

if (response.success)
{
    // It worked!
} else
{
    // Something went wrong

    writeDump(var=response.notifoResponse, label="Notifo's Response");
}
```

A Working Demo

If you want to see CFNotifo in action, you can visit my **CFNotifo demo page**. This will allow you to subscribe to a service that I created using CFNotifo. As mentioned above, you'll need a Notifo account to be able to subscribe, and the iPhone app to receive mobile notifications (you can also see all of your notifications via Notifo's web interface if you don't have an iPhone or don't want to install the app). Once everything is in place, you'll receive a push notification whenever I add a new post to my blog.

As I was writing up this post I realized that the demo I just described isn't that useful as a demo as you won't see any actual notifications until I post a new article, so I've added a new demo service that you can use to force a notification to be sent. Simply use demo 2 to subscribe to the *Test Service*, and then use the next form to send yourself a notification.

What's Next?

The complete Notifo API has been implemented in CFNotifo, but Notifo also offers **Webhooks**, which allow you to configure a URL to be hit whenever a notification is sent to your account. I plan to add support for creating your own webhooks to the next version of CFNotifo.

CFNotifo is hosted on **GitHub** and **RIAForge**, from whence you can download the code. I'm also very pleased that CFNotifo has been included in the **official repo for Notifo APIs on GitHub**. If you have any questions or suggestions you can comment on this post, and any issues you encounter can be added to the **issue tracker** at GitHub.