

INDEX

13 Vol.1

Discussion with Yukihiro Matsumoto
Ruby, Ruby biz Grand Prix
and Shimane Prefecture

15 Vol.2

From among 30 nominations,
the Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 Grand Prize is
awarded to Treasure Data Inc. and Ubiregi Inc.

Grand Prize

Treasure Data Inc.
Ubiregi Inc.

18 Vol.3

A diverse range of winners:
from start-ups with a handful of brilliant staff
to firms belonging to major corporate groups
"Ruby biz Grand prix 2015"

Special Prize

GMO Pepabo, Inc.
Money Forward, Inc.
HipByte SPRL

Enterprise Pioneer Prize

Benic Solution Corp.
Techno Project Japan Co.



Discussion with Yukihiro Matsumoto

Ruby, Ruby biz Grand Prix and Shimane Prefecture

The Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 award ceremony was held at the Imperial Hotel Tokyo on the 17th of December, 2015. This was the first year these awards were presented, and 7 awards were given from a total of 30 nominations. All of the nominations were for innovative services that created new value in the business realm. In this ITPro Special article series, we will introduce the Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 itself and each of the award-winning services. In the first of this series, we speak to Yukihiro Matsumoto, the judging committee chairman and creator of Ruby.

Seven companies awarded for using Ruby for business creativity and innovation

The Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 was hosted by Shimane Prefecture where Yukihiro Matsumoto lives, and as the name suggests, it recognizes not just technical development and innovation, but innovative services and products that use Ruby to create new value in the business arena. Mr. Matsumoto stated that the difference between this award and other existing Ruby awards is the exclusive focus on business, as well as on the fact that services or products based on Ruby have been actually used in business and sparked innovation.

Even though it is in its first year, there were 30 examples nominated for the awards. Two nominations were awarded the Grand Prize, three were awarded the

Special Prize, and another two nominations were awarded the Enterprise Pioneer Prize. The seven companies that came out on top after the rigorous selection process are identified below.

Readers of ITPro will most likely have heard of some of the companies listed, even if they didn't know these companies were using Ruby. It is an impressive list of companies that have successfully forged a pathway to new businesses, and the award reinforces the impression that Ruby is making steady strides in the business world.

Wide-ranging use: from venture start-ups to major enterprises

The judging committee consists of six people, with Mr. Matsumoto as committee chairman, and the other members are as follows: Yuichi Terada, head of Open Source Innovation Labs Ltd.; Kensuke



Yukihiro Matsumoto

Nakamura, editor-in-chief of Nikkei Computer at Nikkei Business Publications; Tsutomu Shomura, Executive Officer of Japan Post Holdings; Masaya Mori, trustee of the Ruby Association and director of Rakuten; and Koichi Sasada, director of the Ruby Association. Mr. Matsumoto told us that while people thought there was a large Ruby community, it was in fact quite small and interconnected. "For this reason," he said, "individual members of the judging committee were not allowed to cast votes for companies that presented conflicts of interest, to ensure that the selection was fair and transparent."

Only five awards were planned for at the start: two Grand Prizes and three Special Prizes. In the middle of their deliberations, however, the committee members unanimously decided to add the two Enterprise Pioneer Prizes. Mr. Matsumoto explains the reasons why: "We were really impressed with how determined some companies were to try to use Ruby in a conventional contract software development business model." In other words, Ruby is not just for



venture start-ups any more. It is showing significant benefits in large enterprise settings as well.

Concerning this year's results, Mr. Matsumoto said, "All of the seven winners were fantastic services that were worthy of the award. The companies that missed out weren't deficient in any way, and if the discussion on the committee had gone slightly differently, or if the lineup of its members had been different, any of the nominees could easily have come out winners. All of them were unique and exceptional services, which made the decision of the committee very difficult."

The services that won the awards will be introduced in volumes 2 and 3 of this series.

Making the world a better place through fun programming

Ruby started off as a programming language developed by Mr. Matsumoto in 1993. Being able to enjoy programming was important to Mr. Matsumoto during its development, and Ruby was highly acclaimed not only in Japan but also overseas and went on to be the first programming language developed in Japan to be certified by international standards.

Mr. Matsumoto explains why enjoying programming was so important: "Most people think that software development is something you do silently sitting in



front of a computer. That is not true. It is a very human profession. Almost all software is used by humans, and the developer is looking beyond the computer to the human user on the other side. The developer looks at how the software will actually be used and puts it into a procedure that the computer will understand. These are very human activities, and the quality and efficiency of this work is hugely influenced by the state of mind of the person making the software. Ruby allows people to program without thinking too much about non-essential things, and so the developer can work at his or her computer in a better state of mind. This makes the work easier and more enjoyable. There is a positive feedback loop as this creates better results, which helps to make the world a better place. I think this is what gets people to support Ruby."

Mr. Matsumoto released Ruby to the world on December 21st, 1995. This awards ceremony was held four days prior to the 20th anniversary of that release. Mr. Matsumoto said, "At the time I wanted to have a go at making my own programming language and I also wanted to make something new, so I came up with Ruby. To be honest though, a lot of people who make these kinds of releases soon fade away, so I thought that it would all be over in a couple of years. I did not dream that I'd be at an event at the Imperial Hotel 20 years later!"

Shimane Prefecture using Ruby as the nucleus for regional revitalization

One other aspect of Ruby is that it is making enormous contributions to regional revitalization. Mr. Matsumoto lives in Matsue city in Shimane Prefecture, which is located in southwest Honshu (Japan's largest island), and he is working with the prefectural and municipal governments to help people grow and to create better communities. For example, the certificates handed over to the winners at the award ceremony were made from sekishu washi (handmade Japanese paper), a local craft with over 1300 years of history. The awards ceremony was used in this way to promote local products.

The Shimane prefectural and Matsue municipal governments are bodies on the executive committee for the Ruby World



Conference. This conference, held in Matsue each year since 2011, is the biggest Ruby business conference held in Japan, and each year it attracts a large number of researchers and engineers to Matsue from both Japan and overseas. The prefecture has also established the Software Business Park Shimane, a research and development area near the center of Matsue, in an attempt to attract IT companies to Shimane. The establishment of the Shimane IT Open-Innovation Center, a software-related IT R&D center, is another example of how Ruby is at the core of efforts to revitalize the region.

As a result of these efforts, Matsue has become known as the sacred home of Ruby, and according to Mr. Matsumoto, the number of IT companies in Matsue has increased by 30 to 40 companies in the last seven or eight years, showing that Ruby has been a very effective promotion tool for the local government. The municipal government is also proactively working to help develop the next generation of software engineers by holding training classes for local junior high-school students in the city, as well as conducting other related activities.

The prefectural government wants to keep building up the use of Ruby in business, and has therefore decided to continue the Ruby biz Grand prix, with plans to hold the second such event next year. Concerning next year's awards, Mr. Matsumoto said, "It will make it harder work for the judging committee, but I want more companies to apply for the awards next year. And while most of the applicants this year were Japanese companies, I also want to see more overseas companies join in future years."

Grand Prize
Treasure Data Inc.
Ubiregi Inc.

Special Prize

GMO Pepabo, Inc.
Money Forward, Inc.
HipByte SPRL

Enterprise Pioneer Prize

Benic Solution Corp.
Techno Project Japan Co.



From among 30 nominations, the Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 Grand Prize is awarded to Treasure Data Inc. and Ubiregi Inc.

The Ruby biz Grand prix 2015 awards ceremony was held on December 17th, 2015 at the Imperial Hotel Tokyo. Treasure Data Inc. and Ubiregi Inc. were selected for the Grand Prize from the 30 entrants. Both of the winners provide BtoB services, but that is where the similarities end. Treasure Data Inc. provides tools and services tailored for engineers, while Ubiregi Inc. provides POS register systems for retail stores. These winners show the diverse range of fields in which Ruby is used. In this second volume of the series, we will introduce the two companies that managed to win the Grand Prize, provide an overview of the services and their features, explain the benefits gained by the companies from Ruby-based development, and see what they are planning for the future.

Grand Prize Treasure Data Inc.

Providing a low-cost and
easy-to-use data processing service

Treasure Data Inc. is a company set up by Japanese people in Silicon Valley. There are development centers in Silicon Valley and Tokyo, with a sales office in South Korea. The company had three entries for this award: Treasure Data Service, a cloud-based big-data infrastructure service; Fluentd, a data log collection tool; and Embulk, a parallel data transfer tool.

Fluentd and Embulk are popular forms of open source software. There are probably readers of this article who use these services without knowing they were developed by engineers of Treasure Data. Satoshi Tagomori, a software engineer at Treasure Data, explains that there are staff members at Treasure Data whose only job is to develop OSS. The company is a hard-core supporter of the OSS community. "I think one of the reasons we did so well at the Grand prix is because of the good balance we have between OSS development and business," he said.

Treasure Data Service is a cloud-based service. Users upload data on which they want to conduct analytical processing to the cloud, where it is analyzed as required, and the results are presented in an easy-to-use format. It can easily be used in collaboration with other cloud services.

Conventional data analysis systems required a significant upfront investment in time and money, but this makes data analysis low in cost and easy to implement.

According to Mr. Tagomori, a number of innovations have been incorporated into Treasure Data's service to make it easier to use. As one example, whereas large-scale data processing services often tend to lack flexibility, Treasure Data's service has a number of distributed systems outside of the core system, so that processing will automatically retry even if there is a failure in one part of the overall system.

Choosing Ruby because of its superior flexibility and vibrant community

The company chose Ruby because of the superior flexibility of the plug-in system, which makes it easy to develop highly extensible software, and because of the vibrant developer community in Japan. There are currently 45 regional Ruby communities around Japan, with the major annual RubyKaigi event held nationally, and also smaller RubyKaigi events held in a number of regions. One would expect a vibrant online community, but there is also an energetic real world community.

Mr. Tagomori explains: "Fluentd and Embulk are both data I/O tools, so the software has value due to its connections to a large number of systems. But our company cannot create everything that is needed. This makes it important for users to be able to easily create plug-ins to con-

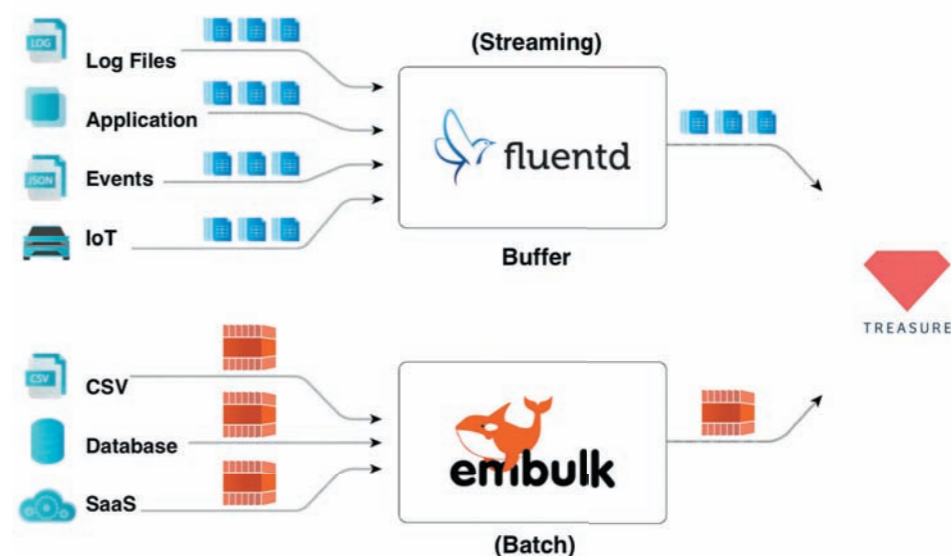


Yukihiro Matsumoto, judging committee chairman (left), presenting the award certificate to Sadayuki Furuhashi, Treasure Data software architect (right).

nect the software to any system they need. There are many engineers who can do this with Ruby in Japan. This is something we cannot ignore." Treasure Data also makes a significant contribution to the Ruby community, with two Ruby committers working at the company, and two others also joined this year's RubyKaigi event to conduct a presentation.

Mr. Tagomori also talks about what Treasure Data Service has planned for the future: "Up until now, our users have generally been internet-related companies, but we have recently had an increase in manufacturers and major corporations using our services, and this is something we want to accelerate. Embulk is still undergoing development, but it is suited to batch processing, making it really suitable for use in large enterprises. We want to have a

Treasure Data Inc., a winner of the Grand Prize
for their cloud-based big data architecture service, "Treasure Data Service"



Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman

You hear the phrase "big data" a lot at the moment, but there aren't many companies that have exactly the right solution for how to collect and analyze data. Treasure Data has an integrated OSS and cloud service, which the judging committee rated very highly.

great deal of feedback about different use cases and get the service ready for as many types of users as possible."

Fluentd, on the other hand, was already rated very highly, but companies balked at using it due to the lack of traditional kinds of support. Taking this on board, the company started providing support services from October 2015 (with service provided by SRA OSS, Inc.). There are high hopes this will lead to an increase in users.

Mr. Tagomori also has some advice for companies thinking of entering into next year's competition: "There is a preconcep-



Satoshi Tagomori
Software Engineer
Treasure Data Inc.

tion that Ruby is difficult to use in an enterprise setting, but there are services out there like ours. We really want to see more companies getting involved in BtoB services so that Ruby can be used in an even wider range of areas."

Grand Prize Ubiregi Inc.

A POS system needing
just an iPad and the cloud

Ubiregi won the Grand Prize for its cloud-based POS system. Since the system is accessed through an iPad, no expensive, single-purpose equipment is required, making the service affordable and easy to use. It is a cloud-based service, so the software is constantly updated, making the latest functionality accessible to users. Input data is stored and aggregated on the cloud, which enables a clear, real-time understanding of business status.

Keita Kido, president and representative director of Ubiregi Inc., talks about how much growth they've seen in the five years since the service was released: "Our first clients were private shop owners who wanted to introduce a POS system but weren't able to because of the costs

involved. These kinds of shops used our service, and we were able to improve the service through their feedback. Now users of our service include chain stores with dozens of branches and new types of large-scale chain enterprises."

Many of the people actually using Ubiregi terminals are part-time workers, working students, and other temporary workers. The company put a great deal of work into service usability so that anyone would be able to use it. Mr. Kido explains that almost everyone has a smart phone these days, but POS registers are often legacy systems. For that reason, the latest iPads are used, and a great deal of energy has been put into making the service intuitive to use for everyone, even people without high levels of IT literacy.

Ubiregi is a POS system, but it also has customer management functionality that allows users to access individual customer history, such as which stores they visit and what they buy. Mr. Kido also explained the surprisingly popular function that allows users to track individual branch status in real time: "Shop owners and managers often have to be out of the store, but they are always concerned about how things are going. What they used to do was call

Ubiregi Inc., a winner of the Grand Prize for its POS register system

POINT 1

World's first iPad POS register system

Able to introduce a POS register at a low cost using iPads. Expensive special-purpose terminal devices no longer required.



POINT 2

Data can be collected in real time simply through cashier operations.

It is a cloud-based system so menu changes and sales data can be reflected in real time. Shop owners can see how any product is selling in any one of their stores in real time.



Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman
 This is truly a groundbreaking service that has enabled people who hadn't ever thought about POS data to easily use a POS system. We rated it highly because this was achieved using Ruby.



Keita Kido
 President and representative director
 Ubiregi Inc.

up the store and ask the staff how things were. One of the popular features of Ubiregi is that shop owners and managers can easily see the store status in real time."

Expanding overseas and enhancing collaborative functionality

Ubiregi chose Ruby for development due to the flexibility of the language, the simplicity of development due to the Ruby on the Rails framework, and the robust Ruby support for the service infrastructure it was using. Mr. Kido says that Ruby's flexibility really helps make development happen faster, and the fact that the language was

developed in Japan makes it easier for our developers to use and also allows an established environment for learning available to users.

Mr. Kido goes on to talk about his thoughts on winning this year's Grand Prize: "There were some very impressive companies amongst the 30 nominees, so I never dreamed we would win the Grand Prize. I think some things the judging committee liked about our service was that it uses Ruby, the cloud, and iPads to support infrastructure in ways that involve not only our developers but also the customers that do their shopping with our service. So, I think they liked that we have helped expand the range of uses for Ruby."

Ubiregi is used in over 20 countries around the world, mainly in Asia. Most of the users are Japanese people who have set up shops overseas, but there are hopes that the success will spread out. Mr. Kido, who wants to further expand his company's presence overseas, says: "We use iPads as our terminals so product registration and currency settings are all performed in a language and with currencies that work on iPads. What we want to do first is set up a scheme for local companies in Asia to be able to use our product."

Ubiregi also works together with

accounting services such as Free and Money Forward, as well as sales support services like Salesforce, which lets people use the POS data for store management and marketing support. "We will be enhancing this collaborative functionality to incorporate such things as advance order ledgers and the like," says Mr. Kido.

Finally, Mr. Kido has some words of encouragement for others thinking of using Ruby for the products or services: "Treasure Data is competing on its technical excellence whereas Ubiregi is looking to develop a broad, underlying social infrastructure. This shows the wide range of ways Ruby can be used. I really encourage people out there to create a whole range of new services with Ruby."



Vol.3

A diverse range of winners:

from start-ups with a handful of brilliant staff to firms belonging to major corporate groups
"Ruby biz Grand prix 2015"

This is the last in the series of articles about the Ruby biz Grand prix 2015. In this final article, we will introduce the three companies that won the Special Prize and the two companies that won the Enterprise Pioneer Prize that was brought in at the last minute as part of the judging committee deliberations. We will give an overview of the services, its features, and the merits of developing software using Ruby, and we will see what the prize winners are planning for the future. One thing that all of the winners had to say was that "Ruby is fun to work with." If Ruby's programming language gets the engineers excited, then that might lead to them providing services that will get the users excited too.

Special Prize
GMO Pepabo, Inc.

A market service with a 400% increase in the value of goods traded in one year

The service that GMO Pepabo entered into 2015 competition is called "Minne," which can be described as a handmade goods market. It is an online service that allows people to easily trade their own handmade craft goods, such as accessories, clothes, fashion items, and more. The service was released in January 2012, and it has seen a steady and consistent growth of users. The company began advertising on TV in 2015, and also modified the way the service functions to make it easier to

use. These two factors led to an explosion of users, with the number of the application downloads jumping to 5 million (as of February 16th, 2016). The value of goods traded through the service jumped from 1.06 billion yen in 2014 to 4.4 billion yen in 2015; an amazing growth rate of over 400%. Masayuki Abe, an evangelist for GMO Pepabo, explains the reasons they won the award this year: "We had a huge increase in users since 2014, and the handmade craft market itself grew significantly. I think we were selected because of this potential of the service."

In terms of the strengths of the Minne

service, he says: "The creators who use our service like it because it has a simple design and is easy to register and manage sales. Customers like the service because they can find one-of-a-kind products not available in stores and they can deal directly with the creators."

Rated for the robust ecosystem and future potential

GMO Pepabo had previously developed their programs mainly in PHP. They then realized the merits and possibilities that were available with Ruby on Rails compared with other programming languages

"Minne" from GMO Pepabo, Inc.

Flow of sales/purchase



Masayuki Abe
 Evangelist, Minne Operations
 GMO Pepabo, Inc.

Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman
 We have high regard for the influence of Minne, which provides an excellent Ruby-based service to a wider range of users by using Ruby for a service whose users probably have no interest in Ruby itself.



GMO Pepabo Representative Director and CEO Kentaro Sato (right) shows the award certificate with Shimane Prefecture governor Zenbee Mizoguchi (left).

because of the quality of the ecosystem that had been built up around it, including its associated libraries. They then made a decision to develop all new services with Ruby from 2011 onwards. The second of those new services was Minne.

"The thing that I noticed about engineers working with Ruby is that they all seemed to be enjoying themselves", says Mr. Abe about what makes Ruby so desirable. The company has a Ruby committer working for them, and Mr. Abe goes on to explain that this helps inspire the other members of the development team. Having a star engineer like the committer helps the company respond quickly to changes in the ecosystem whilst also making contributions to the community.

Mr. Abe also talks about how Ruby has

helped with finding good engineers. "As Minne is a growth service in which we are proactively investing, I think it looks appealing in the eyes of the growing number of Ruby engineers. This makes it easier for us to find the kind of employees we are looking for," he said.

There are plans to expand Minne into food and other sectors in the future. Mr. Abe continues: "We want to continue to improve the app and make it possible for users to enjoy a more enjoyable and convenient shopping experience."

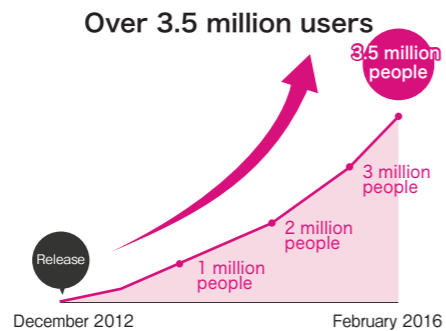
Mr. Abe also had a comment for people thinking of entering into next year's competition: "I think these awards are great because they are focused on the business side. These kinds of activities will help expand the number of Ruby services, which will drive the evolution of the ecosystem. We really want to see many companies take on the challenge of entering the competition."

Special Prize
Money Forward, Inc.

A popular household bookkeeping service and rapidly growing BtoB service

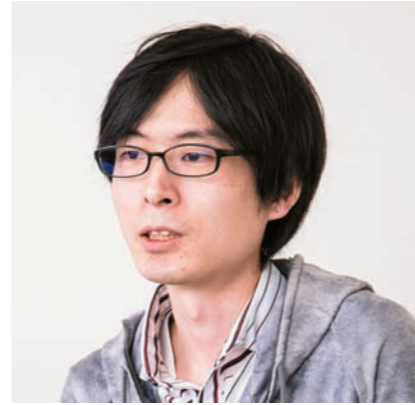
Money Forward, Inc. submitted two services for this year's awards: a personal household bookkeeping and asset management service called Money Forward, and a

Money Forward's Automated Household Bookkeeping and Asset Management Service



Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman

There is a great deal of focus on FinTech services at the moment. These services deal with very difficult challenges such as PIN numbers for banks, and we were deeply impressed that Money Forward was determined to take on these challenges using Ruby. In addition, the degree of its contribution to the community is high.



Shintaro Suzuki
Engineer
Money Forward, Inc.

business-oriented service called the MF Cloud Series that includes accounting, tax reports, invoicing, social security and tax number ("My Number") management as well as expense calculations.

Money Forward's 3.5 million-plus users can easily input expenses as well as get automated payment/receipts information about bank accounts, credit cards, and securities from over 2580 financial institutions. Shintaro Suzuki, an engineer at Money Forward, has this to say about the company: "A lot of our users are business-people in the 30-to-40-year-old age range, and they are looking for automation. This is why we decided to focus on this area."

There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of business cloud service users. For example, there are over 400,000 users of their MF Cloud Accounting service in over 1900 accounting offices around Japan. "Our service has been on the market for two years now, and we've been working recently to improve our functionality



Yosuke Tsuji, CEO and representative director of Money Forward, holding the trophy in pleasure during his speech.

and develop industry-specific software options, as well as collaborating with other companies," said Mr. Suzuki.

Mr. Suzuki is also passionate about Money Forward's future. "We want to add life-design features to the service in the future. We will also develop new MF Cloud services," he said.

Using Ruby for large-scale complex FinTech services

Money Forward also has been actively engaged in the Ruby community by having Akira Matsuda, a Ruby and Ruby on Rails committer, as a technical consultant, as well as hiring full time Ruby committers. The company believes that improvements in Ruby will indirectly lead to acceleration of their product development, so the committers would not be dedicated to Money Forward projects but could devote themselves to development of Ruby itself.

According to Mr. Suzuki, who used to develop in PHP, "Ruby functions as an open ecosystem centered around Ruby on Rails. The community is really vibrant. Above all, Ruby engineers have a very strong desire to create something on their own and to contribute to their community. As a result of this, Ruby users have access to an enriched set of tools." One could say the Ruby language is experiencing a positive feedback loop whereby this vibrant

community leads to better programs, which in turn leads to a more vibrant community.

Talking about winning this year's award, Mr. Suzuki notes: "There hasn't been a Ruby-based system this big and complex developed in Japan before. I think the judging committee rated this point and our future potential highly."

He also had a message of encouragement for companies thinking about applying for next year's awards. "There are going to be a lot of new Ruby services coming out. I hope to see companies with exciting new services applying for the awards."

Special Prize
HipByte SPRL

Developing iOS and Android applications in the same environment

HipByte SPRL was founded by Laurent Sansonetti, the person responsible for developing MacRuby at Apple. He currently lives in Belgium. The three other main members of the team live in Japan, Spain and Belgium, making it a next-generation company connected to and working over networks.

The service they entered for this competition is their RubyMotion tool chain, which allows users to develop applications for iOS, OS X and Android in the same Ruby environment. The RubyMotion tool chain

includes a compiler that converts Ruby-written source codes into platform specific machine language, and a builds system that puts together the compiled binary files, images, sounds and other resource files. According to Mr. Sansonetti, "this means that applications developed with RubyMotion are going to be the equal of any application developed in environments provided by Apple or Google, and with full access to all device functionality."

RubyMotion enables developers to create iOS or Android applications just as you would create web applications in Ruby. There is no need for different versions for each device or environment. As Mr. Sansonetti mentions, "you can use the same language for iOS and Android apps, so development of both is a lot smoother."

The merits of Ruby in mobile apps development

HipByte makes development tools for Ruby, and Mr. Sansonetti had this to say about Ruby's appeal: "Ruby is easy to learn, and since its language is dynamic, functionality can be easily abstracted. DSL is also easy to describe. It is really powerful. In addition, it is wonderful that its ecosystem is well developed."

RubyMotion was developed to deliver the beneficial qualities of Ruby to iOS and Android app development. Mr. Sansonetti

RubyMotion in a nutshell



Write real native apps

RubyMotion apps are statically compiled and call into the native platform APIs.

Thanks to its unified runtime approach you get to call into the entire set of public APIs at no cost. Apps are also compiled into optimized binaries using an ahead-of-time static compiler.



Cross-platform support

Write iOS and Android apps using the same language and development environment.

Don't switch programming languages and IDEs. Use Ruby as well as your favorite text editor. Isolate platform-specific code, share everything else, and benefit from cross-platform gems.



Use Ruby, be happy

Ruby is a high-level language designed to make humans productive and happy.

Ruby is easy to learn, and its dynamic nature makes it easy to write layered abstractions and domain-specific languages(DSL). You will be more productive and ship your app faster.

Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman

We were highly impressed that at a time when the number of services that sell development tools is dropping sharply, the company used this unique technology to provide services that are appealing to engineers. As an engineer, I was very happy.



Laurent Sansonetti, CEO of HipByte, giving his acceptance speech. Mr. Sansonetti currently lives in Belgium.

explains that "the compilers and runtime portions have been implemented to absorb environmental differences so that you can develop the same application to run on both iOS and Android with Ruby."

Mr. Sansonetti has a number of future aspirations. "We plan to add functionality to the tool chain, have the changed code automatically reflected in the applications on each device, and provide higher level cross platform APIs. We are going to support faster development of iOS and Android applications," he notes.

**Enterprise Pioneer Prize
Benic Solution Corp.**

**Building a production system
from Ruby**

One winner of the Enterprise Pioneer Prize was Benic Solution Corp., a specialized IT company that is part of the Kawasaki Heavy Industries group. Their entry for the

competition was a Ruby-based service that allows manufacturers to build core operations and engineering systems.

The company had done work on building systems that included process management, ordering, purchasing, and logistics for manufacturers, but for a certain time only worked with full packages. As a result, for some time it had not been able even to be involved in quoting for its group companies asking for other than full packages.

Benic Solution was working on a host system for Kawasaki Heavy Industries, but the parent company decided to cancel the project. There was also a request from the parent company to get involved in development of the engineering field, so Benic Solution started looking for a cost competitive development language. "Even if we started developing in Java from now, we wouldn't be competitive against companies that had a head start on us," says Atsushi Kuramoto, the director responsible for the Solutions department at Benic Solution.



**Benefits for core operations and engineering system services
for manufacturers made with Ruby**

- Rich manufacturing knowledge and experience from developing Kawasaki Heavy Industries Group systems
- Rich experience from developing in Ruby, and strong technical capability certified at the level of the Ruby Association Certified System Integrator Gold
- Action to enhance usability

Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman

It is quite difficult to utilize new technology in the contract software development field, so we highly rated the company's determination to use Ruby in core business system development.



Atsushi Kuramoto
Director
Benic Solution Corp.

"This is why we decided to work at agile software development using Ruby. All new developments from 2012 onwards have essentially been done in Ruby."

**Using Ruby to expand into new areas
and target external customers**

Ruby has significant business advantages, enabling Benic Solution to build a competitive system and do business for companies they had not previously worked with.

One reason the company decided to work with Ruby was that it represented a great difference from its then-current corporate culture. It had high expectations for the transformations that Ruby would bring, wanted to add enjoyable consumer-oriented functions to a rather stale and boring operations system, and satisfy users

who were used to that style of service.

Benic Solution now wants to start working on leading-edge systems, such as a group IoT and smart factories, using Ruby. "We won this year's award for our internal group system, but we are thinking of targeting external customers as well. Benic Solution is going to liven up the Ruby community in the Kansai region," says Mr. Kuramoto.

Finally, Mr. Kuramoto has this to say: "Ruby can even be used in the unglamorous manufacturing sector. We would very much like to see more people entering the competition with manufacturing system applications."

**Enterprise Pioneer Prize
Techno Project Japan Co.**

**Using Ruby to establish a
medical information network in Vietnam**

Techno Project Japan Co. is the other winner of the Enterprise Pioneer Prize. The company has over 30 years' experience in contract development of corporate systems. They traditionally worked on waterfall-style system development in COBOL or Java until they found out about the popular wave of support for Ruby in both the public and private sectors, coming from Matsue, the capital city of Shimane Prefecture and the center of the Ruby community. They made the decision to get on that wave and started system development in Ruby in 2007. They developed a Shimane-based medical information network called "Mame Net".



Hiroshi Yoshioka
President
Techno Project Japan Co.

Mame Net has grown to become an essential system for medical institutions in Shimane Prefecture, but Techno Project Japan still wanted to try and take it further. They localized the system and deployed it in Vietnam. Their entry for this competition was "Mame-NET," the system in use in Vietnam.

Hiroshi Yoshioka, President of Techno Project Japan, talks about his joy at winning this year's prize: "Most engineers work in the enterprise realm, so in that respect, Ruby needs to be used in this field for so that it becomes more widespread. We are very grateful to have been rated highly because of that."

**Improving both engineer
motivation and productivity**

What Mr. Yoshioka says when he talks about development in Ruby is how "enjoyable" it is. "Ruby is always evolving, so I need to check on U.S. websites and so on. It is really exciting and stimulating for engineers to work at the cutting edge as they struggle to create new services. Productivity is about 20% up on what it used to be," he says.

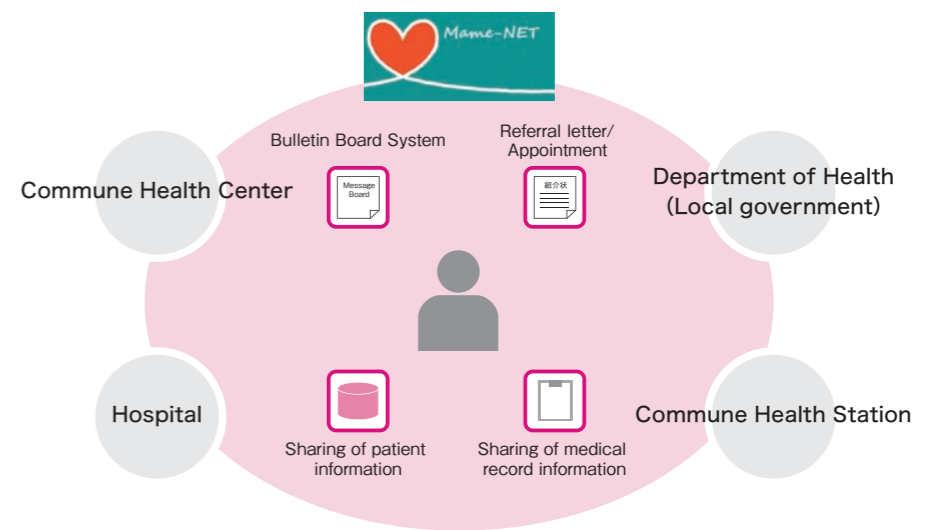
The Mame-NET building project in Vietnam started in 2011 and was put into



operation in August 2015. It is currently being used at 33 medical institutions in one administrative district, and is showing its benefits through information and notification sharing as well as the sharing of electronic health records. Traffic conditions in Vietnam are poor, so it is extremely convenient to be able to share information over a secure network, which is something that pleases local users.

Techno project Japan is aiming to expand Mame-NET to other ASEAN countries and is also focusing its resources in making Ruby a commonly used language in Vietnam. Mr. Yoshioka goes on to say that "local companies are also interested, and we want to help them improve their technical capabilities."

"Mame-NET" has been developed by Techno Project Japan Co.



Comments from the Judging Committee Chairman

We highly rated the fact that Ruby was used in a conventional contract software development application, and that a service started in Japan was then expanded to Vietnam.