

# Pressure to digitise fast makes cos use low-code devt platforms

## These Platforms Allow Developers To Simply Assemble Visual Code Blocks

Ashutosh.Desai@timesgroup.com

The pandemic accelerated digital transformation plans of many companies. And that in turn has led to a more rapid adoption of what are called low-code – and no-code – development platforms.

Low-code development lets users build enterprise applications with minimal coding. You can drag and drop visual blocks of existing code into a workflow to create applications. While low-code requires some programming skills, no-code platforms can be used by even those who know no programming language. The interfaces and visual blocks tend to be intuitive, making application development simpler and faster than the traditional ways.

"This trend (low-code development) was very active in automating the process of developing software before the pandemic. And it's only been accelerated since the pandemic started," says Mark Weaser, vice president - Asia Pacific at OutSystems. He says it provides value quickly and on a continuous basis. "And it's unlike the traditional projects that require time, a large team and can result in a high cost of failure in the future," he said.

Jai Ganesh, senior vice president & head of Mphasis Next Labs, says low-code platforms will do many things like develop scripts, code, regardless of the use cases and scenarios. No-code, he says, is a narrow low-code platform, which will do one thing, say,

### INDIA EXPECTED TO BE MAJOR ADOPTER OF LOW-CODE TECH

India will play a major role in adopting low-code technologies and changing the role of the developer from one that has to do monotonous tasks to one that is more of an architect who works on user experience and user interface.

**Mark Weaser** | VICE PRESIDENT ASIA PACIFIC, OUTSYSTEMS



As the market matures and once the learning curve gets over, you will see more people adding this (low-code) expertise in their resumes. This is already happening in North America.

**Divyesh Kharade** | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, DRONAHQ



It (low-code) is agnostic to the industry. But we do see certain industries – like financial services, banking, insurance, education – taking up the platform faster than others because they're undergoing change so quickly.

**Brian Metzger** | CMO AND DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MARKETING, CASPIO



Development environments are slowly evolving to become low-code platforms, but this will not replace the developer. I believe in the next four or five years, you won't have developers writing code. Instead, they will be assembling code.

**Jai Ganesh** | SENIOR VP & HEAD, MPHASIS NEXT LABS



workflow management or automation. "That said, a novice business user cannot straightaway start building stuff on it. There will be a learning curve to figure out all the controls. But instead of coding, users will need to learn a visual interface," he says.

Mphasis Next Labs has developed a no-code solution called Autocode.ai for fast prototyping. The platform takes wireframes (which are commonly used to lay out content and functionality on a page taking into account user needs and user journeys) and uses deep learning to convert them into full-fledged code for the user, in less than a minute.

The global low-code development platform market generated \$10.3 billion of revenue in 2019, according to market research firm P&S Intelligence. The report predicts a CAGR of 31% through 2020-2030, due to increasing demand for

digitisation, followed by the need to be less dependent on IT professionals while adhering to government regulations. Gartner estimates that by 2024, low-code application development will account for more than 65% of application development activity.

The adoption has been across industries. "It (low-code) is agnostic to industry. But we do see certain industries – like financial services, banking, insurance, education – taking up the platform faster than others because they are undergoing change so quickly," says Brian Metzger, CMO and director of product marketing at Caspio, a US-based low-code development platform provider that opened a datacentre in India in November 2020. The company is witnessing greater demand in India than countries in South East Asia.

Mphasis used the low-code development platform Microsoft Power-

Apps to build a solution called Employee Outreach that tracks the health of its employees, allows them to work from home, tracks their productivity, resolves IT issues, and more. The solution comprises six apps built by two Mphasis developers in four days flat.

Schneider Electric used OutSystems' low-code platform to roll out 60 apps in 20 months, some were completed in 10 weeks. "They created a digital factory in Bengaluru. Schneider Electric trained 50 of their traditional developers to learn low-code tools and they actually became three or four times more productive," says Weaser.

Divyesh Kharade, co-founder & CEO of DronaHQ, which has a low-code platform, says as the market matures and once the learning curve gets over, we will see more people adding this expertise in their resumes. "This is already happening in North America," he says.

This Mumbai-based company, which has recorded a 125% growth year-on-year despite the slow economy, has developed diverse apps within a very short time span too. It delivered an app for Wipro's employees, a gamified sales app container for Mondelez, and a customised sales tool for Kotak Securities that went live in just six weeks. Kharade says that companies in India are aware of low-code, but they need to evaluate options before opting for disparate solutions that may not, when the need arises, talk to each other. "Fragmentation is a major challenge. Which is why we also provide an evaluation tool to help companies make a decision based on their future expectations," he says.

Low-code hasn't evolved to a level where it can be used for more complex projects. You may not be able to use them easily when you need scalability, high quality, high performance, and other non-functional requirements.

Security too is a concern, since people are developing apps without proper supervision. But Ganesh says security is enforced in low-code platforms in a more efficient manner than by a human because policies are implemented as pre-built components into these platforms.

Even compliance is often built in, taking the complexity off the back of users. "We go through security assessments and audits to ensure that you know we check all the boxes for them, whether it is privacy regulations, HIPAA for healthcare customers, or GDPR," says Metzger.

If low-code requires less manpower and cuts down development cycles, what happens to the developer? "Development environments are slowly evolving to become low-code platforms, but this will not replace the developer. I believe in the next four or five years, you won't have developers writing code. Instead, they will be assembling code," says Ganesh.