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sharepoint 2010 interview questions and answers for experienced developer

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SharePoint 2010 Interview Questions and Answers for Experienced Developers

In today's competitive job market, a deep understanding of Microsoft SharePoint 2010 is essential for developers who aspire to secure senior or specialized roles. SharePoint 2010, released in 2010, introduced many architectural changes and new features that differentiate it from earlier versions. Because of its complexity and widespread use in enterprise environments, interviewers often probe candidates with a blend of conceptual, practical, and scenario based questions.

This guide compiles a comprehensive list of **sharepoint 2010 interview questions and answers for experienced developers**. It covers core topics such as architecture, security, web parts, custom solutions, and performance tuning. By studying these questions and practicing the answers, you'll be well prepared to demonstrate your expertise and confidence during technical interviews.

1. SharePoint 2010 Architecture Overview

1.1 What are the main components of the SharePoint 2010 farm?

SharePoint 2010 is built around a multi tier architecture. The key components are:

- Web Front End (WFE) – Handles HTTP requests, rendering pages, and serving web part content.
- Application Servers – Run background services such as Search, Managed Metadata, and User Profile synchronization.
- Database Servers – Store content databases, configuration databases, and search indexes in SQL Server.
- Central Administration – Web based management console for farm configuration and monitoring.
- Service Applications – Modular services (e.g., Search, User Profile, Managed Metadata) that can be deployed independently.

1.2 Explain the concept of Service Applications and how they differ from Web Applications.

Service Applications are reusable components that provide specific functionality across the farm. They are deployed as separate service processes and can be shared among multiple Web Applications. Web Applications, on the other hand, are HTTP endpoints that host sites and define the IIS configuration (e.g., authentication, SSL). While Web Applications are tied to a particular site collection, Service Applications are farm wide and can be enabled or disabled per Web Application.

1.3 What is the role of the Content Database in SharePoint 2010?

The Content Database stores all site data: lists, libraries, pages, web parts, and metadata. Each site collection has its own content database. The database is version controlled, and SharePoint uses the dbo.spGetContentDatabase stored procedure to map a site URL to its database. Proper sizing, backup, and maintenance of content databases are critical for performance and reliability.

2. Security and Permissions

2.1 How does SharePoint 2010 implement role based security?

SharePoint uses a hierarchical permission model:

- Permissions – Individual actions such as Create Items, Delete Items, or Manage Lists.
- Roles (Permission Levels) – Collections of permissions (e.g., Full Control, Contribute, Read).
- Users/Groups – Assigned to roles at the site, library, or item level.

When a user requests access, SharePoint evaluates the user's membership in groups and roles, then checks the permissions of the object. Inheritance can be broken to provide granular control.

2.2 What are the differences between NTFS and SharePoint permissions?

NTFS permissions apply to files and folders on the file system, controlling physical access to the SharePoint content database files. SharePoint permissions are logical, controlling access to objects within the platform (sites, lists, items). NTFS permissions are typically set to allow the SharePoint service account full control, while SharePoint permissions are managed through the UI or code.

2.3 Describe how you would secure a custom web part.

To secure a custom web part:

1. Use the SPBasePermissions enumeration to check if the current user has the necessary permissions before rendering sensitive data.
2. Implement the SPBasePermissions check in the OnPreRender method to prevent unauthorized users from loading the web part at all.
3. Set the AllowAnonymous property to false if the web part should not be exposed to anonymous users.
4. Use SPWeb.AllowUnsafeUpdates only when necessary, and revert to false immediately after updates.
5. Validate input parameters to avoid injection attacks.

3. Custom Development Practices

3.1 What is a Feature in SharePoint 2010 and how do you deploy it?

A Feature is a modular package that bundles a set of artifacts (web parts, pages, lists, etc.) and can be activated or deactivated at the scope of a site, web, or farm. Features are defined in XML and can include event receivers.

Deployment steps:

1. Package the Feature into a .wsp file using SharePoint Designer or Visual Studio.
2. Upload the .wsp to the Solution Gallery via Central Administration or PowerShell.
3. Activate the Feature through the UI or using Enable-SPFeature PowerShell cmdlet.

3.2 Explain the difference between a Site Definition and a Site Template.

A Site Definition is a server side template that defines the structure of a site at deployment time, including master pages, web part zones, and default content. It is stored in the file system and can be updated by modifying the underlying files.

A Site Template (.stp or .wsp) is a copy of a site's structure and content that can be reused to create new sites. Site Templates are stored in the content database and are created using the "Save site as template" feature.

3.3 How do you handle versioning and upgrade of custom solutions?

SharePoint 2010 supports *upgrade actions*via the SPFeatureUpgradeAction interface. When a feature is upgraded, you can run custom code to migrate data, update schemas, or adjust configuration. It is best practice to:

- Use SPFeatureReceiver to manage activation, deactivation, and upgrade events.
- Maintain backward compatibility by checking the SPFeatureVersion during upgrade.
- Write idempotent upgrade scripts to avoid duplicate data.

4. Web Parts and Controls

4.1 What is the difference between a Web Part and a User Control?

A Web Part is a reusable component that can be added to a page via the Web Part Gallery. It inherits from System.Web.UI.WebControls.WebParts.WebPart and supports features like persistence, personalization, and permissions.

A User Control (.ascx) is a lightweight, reusable UI component that can be embedded in ASP.NET pages or web parts. User Controls lack the built in persistence and personalization features of Web Parts, but they are easier to develop and test.

4.2 How do you create a custom web part that displays a list of items from a SharePoint list?

Steps:

1. Create a new Visual Studio project of type “SharePoint 2010 Custom Web Part.”
2. Inherit from WebPart and override RenderContents.
3. Use SPSite and SPWeb objects to access the list.
4. Bind the list items to a GridView or Repeater.
5. Implement SPBasePermissions checks to ensure the user can read the list.
6. Deploy the web part via a .wsp package.

4.3 How can you customize the rendering of a web part without modifying its source code?

Use the WebPartManager and WebPartZone to add a WebPartPageTemplate that references a custom WebPart with a WebPartProperties override. Alternatively, use the ControlRenderer approach: create a custom control that inherits from WebPart and override OnPreRender or RenderContents to inject custom markup.

5. Search and Managed Metadata

5.1 What is the Search Service Application in SharePoint 2010?

The Search Service Application (SSA) is a modular component that crawls content, builds an index, and exposes search queries. It includes:

- Crawlers – Collect data from sources.
- Indexers – Store crawled data in a search index.
- Query Processor – Executes search queries.

5.2 How do you configure a custom search result source?

In Central Administration, navigate to **Manage Service Applications !’ Search Service Application !’ Result Sources !’ New Result Source**. Define a Query Transformation and set the Query Conditions to target specific content types or site collections. Then use the result source in a Search Results web part or a custom query.

5.3 Explain the Managed Metadata Service and how it is used in SharePoint 2010.

The Managed Metadata Service provides a central taxonomy of terms (Term Store). Users can tag content with terms from the term set, enabling consistent metadata across the farm. It supports:

- Term sets and hierarchical relationships.

- Term propagation to libraries and lists.
- Content query web parts that filter by terms.

6. Performance and Scalability

6.1 What are the best practices for optimizing SharePoint 2010 performance?

- Use Content Database Sharding – Distribute large site collections across multiple databases.
- Enable SQL Server Query Store and monitor execution plans.
- Turn on Page Cache for frequently accessed pages.
- Use Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) for static assets.
- Optimize List Views – Limit columns, use indexed columns, and avoid large view thresholds.
- Implement Background Job Scheduling for heavy tasks.

6.2 How do you troubleshoot a slow search query?

1. Check the Search Service Application health status.
2. Review the Search Logs in the Search Administration console.

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