“You Code Like A Sysadmin”

Confessions of An Accidental Developer

H. Wade Minter
CTO, AdWerx
minter@lunenburg.org
@minter

Pssst…AdWerx is hiring DevOps in beautiful Durham, NC

Back To The Old School

- Originally from Kenbridge, VA.
- 2,000 people, three stoplights, lots of tobacco.



- First Computer: IBM PCjr (256k RAM, baby).
- Tiny bit of BASIC programming, no networks.
- Only experience with a modem was when a friend prank-dialed my house with one.

A Tribe Called Quest

- Attended William & Mary (liberal arts school in Virginia).
- Did a lot of writing for the school newspaper.
- Majored in Computer Science.
- Language progression: Pascal, C++, C
- Knew I was never going to be a programmer.

Digital Underground

- Discovered the weird professor who lived in the basement and managed the systems.
- Started hacking on Linux in the dorm room.
- Picked up Perl and shell scripting.
- Early accomplishment: Blowing away the password file for NASA's Earth-Observing Satellite project.

Let Me Clear My Throat

- First real public software project: **Mr. Voice**.
- Perl/Tk desktop app.



- 6,500 lines of Perl hell . . . but it worked.
- Still in use 14 years later (though in bad need of a rewrite).
- Made life easier for ComedySportz troupes.

C’mon Ride The Train

- Discovered Ruby on Rails, attended the first RailsConf.
- Hacked on a couple of projects with a friend.
- **Disco Stu** - IRC link collector and associated web UI.



- **Fyg** - screen-scraped the XM website to let you find out what channel your game was on.
- No tests - we’ll do it live!

Ra(c)kim

- Went to work at Rackspace.
- Built **internal Rails apps** to make life easier for employees.
- Built the initial **Ruby API bindings** into the Rackspace Cloud products.
- Turned over maintenance/improvement to more capable programmers.

My Snap Attack

- Helped start **TeamSnap**.
- Original ops guy, later developer.



- Took it from pre-Rails 1.0 to Rails 2.3. Unfortunately, it stopped there.
- 8M users, 750,000 teams, 55 employees, ~$10M in investment, actual revenue.
- Undergoing significant rearchitecture here 8 years later.

I Missed The Bus

- **Tourney** - Rails app to manage ComedySportz improv festival registrations.
- **AppGrappler** - Email you Apple app store reviews daily.
- **YacketyLapse** - Real, real dumb.
- **BusDuty** - notify you when the school bus leaves in the afternoon.



Useless Use Of Cat

So What's The Scenario?

- Impostor Syndrome is real.
- Had my code openly mocked by Real Developers(tm).
- Some of my bad code now needs painful refactoring and/or rewrites. People say "Why did he write this crap?"
- Hell**, I say** "Why did I write this crap?
- So why keep on building?

I Got A Problem Solver

- Technology is a means, not an end.
- Sysadmins are problem solvers - it’s one of our greatest strengths.
- If your code is useful, you’ll have the luxury of fixing it at some point.
- If you prematurely optimize it, you’ll never ship it.
- The code you don’t write won’t change anything.

Here Come The Judge

- OMG WADE SAID PEOPLE SHOULD WRITE BAD SOFTWARE!
- If you have the ability and inclination, certainly write the best software you can.
- But don’t judge yourself before you try.
- Get the ball rolling, and other people can continue and improve what you started.

You Betta Recognize

- Read and understand code by better developers.
- Pair program and get code review.
- Try to understand automated testing frameworks.
- Push yourself to get better . . . but don’t get too down if it’s not happening.

I’m Not A Biter, I’m A Writer

- So embrace the fact that you’re writing embarrassing code!
- At least you’re writing something.
- Let’s get it off our minds now - share some of your worst code!
- *(some of mine lives at https://github.com/minter)*

Go Build Something!

(And Thanks For Listening)

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Come work with great people!
http://adwerx.theresumator.com/