

Phil Whelan, Software Developer : CV

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Programming Skills

Test Driven Development

Whilst at Livedoor.com in Japan I began using test driven development methods in my own projects. At the BBC we have been using full test driven development. I can no longer see any other safe way to develop robust software.

Perl / mod_perl / CGI / Catalyst / Memcached

7 years commercial experience playing a key role in the success of Jungle.com and working on major projects for Talis Information Systems, and more recently working on some major projects at Livedoor.com. I always check CPAN before writing any code, and I am familiar with many CPAN modules such as Catalyst, Test::More, Class::DBI, DBIx::Class, Memcached, Template-Toolkit, LWP::UserAgent, CGI::Application and Encode. I can work effectively programming for the Japanese market.

C / C++ / Borland C++ Builder / Win32 API / Graphics and Video programming

2+ years self-employed building, selling and supporting own video editing application through a complete product life-cycle. See <http://www.thoughtman.com>

XML / HTML / JavaScript / DHTML / CSS / AJAX

5 years+ commercial experience

MySQL / Oracle DB / Sybase SQL / Class::DBI / DBIx::Class

5 years Sybase experience, working to create large scale online systems from the ground up. More recently, for the past few years I have used MySQL with Perl using Class::DBI or DBIx::Class. I am a Oracle Certified Professional (OCP) Developer PL/SQL Program Units (aquired 7th July 2004) Exam 1Z0-101

UNIX / Linux / Cygwin / Apache / Tomcat

Have installed and used Linux, Apache, MySQL and Tomcat and am familiar with common Unix commands. I have been using Cygwin on Windows for several years now. I am relatively new to Macs, but am now running a Mac-Mini and love it.

Java

Setup a search engine using the open-source Lucene search API. This ran on Tomcat. Sun Certified Programmer for the Java 2 Platform 1.4 (aquired 18th May 2004) Exam CX-310-035

Ruby On Rails

I have built my own website philw.co.uk in RoR and am using it for personal projects.

Pascal / Delphi

Used for many artificial intelligence and 3D graphics programming whilst at University.

Work Experience

Overview

I have a strong background in writing software from concept through to sales and marketing, whether it be a web-based environment or a Windows application. My approach to team work is pro-active, encouraging the development of others and striving to work and design in the structured way. Working for fast-paced dot-com companies taught me how to write quality software which works first time. I can professionally manage my time, give presentations, delegate work, identify best approaches, quickly solve problems and prioritise tasks. I use my experience to understand the safe-guards and design strategies needed to ensure success, writing software where any problems are quickly identified and resolved. I try to keep up with the constant flow of new technologies and new ideas, whilst strengthening my knowledge of more mature technologies.

Writing my own software and selling it for profit taught me how to work on my own and covered a complete software life-cycle. This included research, design, coding, testing, software maintenance, maintaining a website, online sales, help files, anti-piracy, registration, upgrades, error handling, marketing, customer relations, aesthetics, multi-language support, and making sure my software appears high up on google.com. I have worked on many large scale web applications in both small and large teams, and have learnt a great deal from both things we did right and things we did wrong.

My own software, written in C++ for Windows, has been included in magazines that have reached every corner of the world, has appeared on the cover of a magazine in Poland and has received several million internet downloads.

I also have a strong background in data manipulation using Perl data structures and regular expressions, which has always proved an essential tool for quickly parsing large amounts of data and automating complex tasks. Robust freely available open-source software can save companies millions of dollars and I understand how and when to use its bolt-on components to provide quick results.

I have a wide experience with many programming languages, file formats and programming styles.

Therefore, I can pick up new technologies quickly and apply them appropriately.

I believe in good design strategies, good interface design, using open standards and keeping things simple.

BBC (July 2006 – Dec 2006)

I am currently coming to the end of a 6 month contract in London on project to bring BBC television to the Internet, with streaming and "on-demand" time-restricted downloads. I have been working on the central data XML API. This API is queried by all the other components of the overall project, and stores all program, service and broadcasting information.

Since it was a agile environment we made it a priority to all share a broad knowledge of all areas of the code, and any procedures we performed. We did this by always pair-programming on any area that we did not have knowledge on with somebody who did. Also, we maintained a Wiki for all pertinent procedures and information. This Wiki was also used by our clients, who required details on accessing our API.

On occasion, I had to stand in for responsibilities such as Tech Lead and Integration, but generally the management structure was very flat.

I've really enjoyed working in an agile test-driven development environment. Integrating our Subversion repository with our "smoke server" (server / client test-running framework) to run automated tests has really made it easy to quickly track down small mistakes. This left us to push forward with development, having the confidence that our unit tests would keep our code robust.

We regularly branched the code base in Subversion, ran parallel test runs on these branches and then merged them back when it was appropriate. This gave us a lot of flexibility during our release cycle, since we could release new versions, continue development, and still maintain older deployments of the code.

Within the deployment process we used DBIx::Migration to allow us to migrate the state of the database up and down between the migration levels, each of which related to a version of the code.

We developed primarily with Perl, Apache, mod_perl, the Catalyst Framework, DBIx::Class, MySQL, Subversion and Trac. Also, we used XML tools such as Xerces and xmllint, and technologies such as Xpath, Relax NG schema and XSD schema. Testing was done with standard Perl Test::* modules and a great in-house YAML based framework, which we may release to CPAN.

Livedoor.com (Sep 2004 – Dec 2005)

Just as I arrived in Japan to work for Livedoor.com, we hit the headlines and our CEO, Takafumi Horie, managed to skillfully keep us there to make "Livedoor" and "Horie" two of the most used words in Japan during my stay. The livedoor.com web-portal grew quickly, trying to replicate every major website such as Yahoo, Ebay, GoogleAds, GoogleSearch and Amazon. I constructed a prototype of Googles Adsense (Livedoor Adselect) to place Livedoor Ads on external webpages relative to the content of that page. I also worked on our book selling website, administration for the top page of livedoor.com, and recently I have been in charge of the search engines for the livedoors books and department store, which search on around 3 million products in a multitude of ways.

Major hurdles with the job were language barriers, since I arrived in this Japanese company with no Japanese knowledge. I've learnt a great deal about the many Japanese programming issues usually involving encodings, and problems surrounding them. I saw how the Japanese market differs from the Western world. I've worked on server setup and maintenance, installing various software, apache configuration using a proxy / modperl configuration, and also configuring for SSL. I have identified and resolved various software, networking, and server configuration issues, even though I do not believe I have strong networking skills.

AVI Video Editor (Oct 1999 - Jan 2000, Sep 2001 – Jan 2002, part-time Feb 2002 – Oct 2003)

FadeToBlack is a video editing application I have developed from concept through to sales, support and online marketing. Starting as a pastime project, it has become a major part time venture and a source of income. With between 300 and 1000 trial downloads per day and featuring in magazines worldwide, support has sometimes been challenging. With a complex application like a video editor, my time is limited when shared between research, design, coding, testing, maintenance, multi-language support, aesthetics, maintaining a website, online sales, help files, anti-piracy, registration, upgrades, error handling, marketing, customer relations and making sure FadeToBlack appears high up on google.com. Therefore, good design philosophies and error handling strategies were essential to ensure that things should work first time, problems are spotted quickly, and errors are always caught informatively and reported back to the website so an upgrade can be quickly released.

Skills used include C, C++, Borland C++ Builder, Windows architecture, AVI files formats, Win32 API, Windows GUI and Windows Multimedia API and 3rd party CoDecs. I have developed a robust framework into which AVI files (video files) or single frame images (e.g. bitmaps or jpegs) can be loaded, manipulated and saved.

More information can be found at <http://www.thoughtman.com>

Talis Information Systems Ltd (part-time Feb 2002 – Oct 2003)

I returned to [Talis](#) on a part-time contract basis several years after leaving (see below). I quickly became the key developer on two major web application projects. I was responsible for the underlying architecture of the software, but I also did a lot of work with the analysts on how it should look and feel. I created programming guidelines, discussed design and error handling strategies. Also, I produced a code template generator. These all ensured consistency, quality, good practices and resulted in robust products.

Skills used include Perl, Sybase SQL, Javascript, HTML, Netscape Enterprise Server and SunONE Enterprise Server.

Jungle.com Online Retailer (Feb 2000 – Aug 2001)

I was headhunted by Jungle.com after being recommended by my manager from Talis, Eamonn Sorohan. Skills used include Perl, modperl, Sybase SQL, Javascript, ImageMagick, XML, HTML, DHTML, Linux. Other skills were giving presentations, dealing with PR associates, good time-management, coaching other team members and working with focus groups.

- "Poll Management System"

System for quickly generating questionnaires and competitions for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website. Included various analysis and administration tools. In the first 6 months in excess of 500,000 UK entries were received in response to competitions and questionnaires. Questionnaires can be constructed, distributed within newsletter and business needs answered within hours of the business need arising.

- Offer Manager

Product managers administration of all jungle.com products, using product image, description, and ability to pool groups of products for use on different areas of the site.

- Price Override Manager

A tool allowing product managers to control special pricing strategies and time triggered price overrides.

- Customer Personalisation Details

Allowed customers to edit their personal details (name, address...) and also details regarding their personalisation options ("I like pop music, but not heavy metal"...). This was used to customise newsletters.

- "Product Advisor Wizard"

We pioneered an interactive wizard that asked the customer questions to determine which computer was most suitable for them. Questions included price range, uses, and specifications (for more knowledgeable buyers). We worked closely with one of the UK's leading entrepreneurs, Steve Bennett, who conceived the idea. This was a great piece of work, and although quickly cloned by other leading e-commerce websites, it turned out unsuccessful in the real world after thorough examination through focus groups.

- Gif image generator

Automated image generation for graphical product titles on the website pulled straight from the database.

- Documentation Generator

I created an in-house online documentation engine, to parse perl files to generate an overview of each file, in order to speed up our departments development.

Talis Information Systems Ltd (Aug 1998 - Aug 1999)

Talis is the largest computerised library system producer in the UK. This was the first job I had after leaving University.

As a junior programmer I spent my first 5 months involved in performance testing, productisation and installation of various projects. For the last seven months of my time at Talis I worked on the administration side of a web-based public information system.

Skills used include Perl, Sybase SQL, Javascript, HTML and Netscape Enterprise Server.

Education

Reading University (Oct 1995 - July 1998)

Computer Science and Cybernetics BSc (2:2)

- Computer Graphics
- Computer Vision and Image Processing
- Artificial Intelligence, Reasoning & Neural Networks
- Robotics theory
- Circuitry, Logic and Interfacing
- Databases
- Software Engineering

Final Year Project (1st)

I received a 1st for my final year project in which I replicated Picasso's art of drawing an image in a single fluid line. This involved image analysis, image processing, vectorisation of a raster image, manipulation of data-structures, converting the data structures into a fluid line and outputting a final raster image. I used Borland's object oriented language Delphi for this project.

Solihull Sixth Form College (Aug 1993 - June 1995)

A-levels

- A - Mathematics
- B - Computing
- B - Physics

Langley Secondary School (Aug 1988 - June 1993)

GCSEs

- A - Science
- A - Science (double)
- A - Mathematics
- A - Art and Design
- A - IT
- B - Geography
- B - English
- Language
- B - English Literature
- C - German

Language Skills

Japanese

I have lived in Japan for 14 months working for a Japanese company. I now have basic Japanese communication skills.

Interests and Experiences

I enjoy travelling, digital photography, snowboarding and studying Japanese. Whilst travelling I experienced surfing, snowboarding, sea kayaking, jungle surfing, canoeing, sailing, para-gliding, scuba-diving, snorkelling, fishing, and had previously done a parachute jump.

References

Mr. Tim Brown (Line Manager)

Mr. Richard Jolly (Tech Lead)

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