

Trip Report: World Wide Public Sector (WWPS) Tech Builder Conference



Event details

Date: 25th May, 27th May

Location: Arlington, VA, USA

Attendees: 80+ | | SAs, SA Managers, CSMs, SDEs | | from intern to L7

Delivered By: Rochelle Casey, Danielle Greshock and many others

Supported By: Rochelle Casey

Event overview

It was the first global WWPS Tech Builder Conference to bring together our women and non-binary technologists within SOLARC and SDE families to build, showcase their innovation, and empower the next generation of women/non-binary technologists. With technical and leadership breakout sessions, attendees have learned how to #breakthebias and #empower this builder community. The women and non-binary people who have attended the WWPS Tech Builder were of all seniority.

Highlights and results

- **Leading the way: Promoting Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity in tech**

Nicole Murray introduced the difference between diversity and inclusion. Diversity is inviting someone different from us to a party and inclusion is having that person choose the music and dance with the rest of the group. The same should be true in the workplace. During this presentation, many stories were shared from conference attendees. Some expressed how AWS made them feel included, others shared the challenges they faced at AWS and the actions that were taken as a result by the company. I think this presentation showed how important it is to have safe spaces to speak up and it also showed the importance of having allies in the workplace that help women and non-binary people feel included.

Nicole shared resources to help promote more inclusion. Below are details on how to become an Inclusion Ambassador and the e-mail distribution list you can join if you want visibility to the team before you join.

1. Inclusion Ambassador Program wiki

https://w.amazon.com/bin/view/AWS_Ambassador_InclusionandDiversity/

2. Watch this video to hear from Amazonians on why they signed up for the program

<https://broadcast.amazon.com/videos/214126>

3. Email list to sign up here:

<https://email-list.amazon.com/email-list/expand-list/aws-inclusion-ambassadors>

- **Builder Challenge**

We had to create a solution that would meet the challenges of sustainable development. Each team was made of 7 to 9 people, and had to choose a problematic to solve. We had 6 hours to come up with a PoC and a presentation of our solution. My teammates and I, The Brabissimas, decided to work on a new AWS service designed for Solutions Architect. This tool is meant to help SAs create more Sustainable architectures so as to meet the sustainability goals of the Well-Architected Pillars. This tool takes as input an architecture and gives recommendations that decrease the carbon footprint of the architecture. As an intern, it was very interesting to see how full time Solutions Architect transform an idea of a solution into an architecture. Other very interesting projects were presented and each team is given the opportunity to pursue the work on this project, even if the conference is over.



The Brabissimas

- **Innovation Showcase & Break the Bias Session**

We had the opportunity to attend several presentations. Here are examples of some of the presentation.

1. A SA team in Brazil had to deal with a breach of security in their client's account that resulted in deleted files from the client's S3 bucket. Two SAs explained how they managed thanks to versioning, to retrieve the files. They also presented the AWS Backup solution for S3, which unfortunately was not yet available at that time. They have shared the good practices and gave their feedback, which was very insightful.
2. Ana Chevasco, a UK-based SA, introduced the Sagemaker Canvas service which allows to build machine learning models without coding. This tool can be used by clients with no Data Science expertise, as it is very intuitive and requires no coding. It can also be used by data scientists to accelerate the development of machine learning models.
3. Four Early Career Amazonians shared their experience as new joiners. They gave tips on how to be successful and confident in one's work. This session allowed several people in the audience to share their experience and point of view and made me realise that even though we come from diverse background, we often have the same issues and questions. The most important advice given, in my opinion, was: document everything and make it easy for your manager to see your weekly achievements, and find a mentor within the company that inspires you.

Feedback – What went well? What did I learn?

- I have discovered some good practices in the cloud, AWS services and the solutions to solve certain use-cases
- I was able to connect with people that have the same interest, that work on ML projects
- I was able to learn more about Amazon's culture and discovered the role of Bar Raisers
- I have met inspiring people, that gave tips on how to be confident, trust yourself, and thrive in your work. The advice came from early career SA, to senior SA and SA managers.
- Having role models and people you can identify to is essential to help define your goals, where you want to go, what your ambitions are. This conference fulfilled this purpose for me, it showed me inspiring women who are working and thriving in tech. I also realised that there are women who face the same problematics and that it is important to express them to realise that they are valid and shared by others which ultimately allows to see how others have faced and overcome these problematics.

Acknowledgements

I would like to warmly thank Guillaume Neau, my manager for giving me the opportunity to attend this event. I would also like to thank Holly Ellis and Norm Driskell for allowing me to go to the conference, which was truly a bar raiser event, full of wonderful and inspiring women and non-binary people.

