

A Developer without A Community is A Ship without A Rudder

"There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals."

— **Idowu Koyenikan**

Most of us find it easy to live in our comfort zone when it comes to our careers. We generally go to our workplace, interact with members of our team, collaborate when needed, then come back home. There's nothing wrong with this approach, we can certainly get the job done - but we should do more when it comes to expanding our career. It is noticeable that expanding outside your daily routine can benefit your career and professional development.

Over the last two decades, as developers have become essential across industries, more places for developers to connect have started to spring up. Both online and in-person forums have risen to solve problems, create learning opportunities, and encourage networking. You will be able to find a user group or community for about every major, modern programming language, or technological topic. The word "Community" does not necessarily mean your co-workers, it can be your friends, your mentors, your teammates, classmates, the people you follow on social media, or the people who follow you in or even your family members. Community is the place from where we get motivation, inspiration, ideas from our future projects. And it is the place where we showcase our projects and achievements and at the end of the day get appreciation. It plays a major role in the development of a developer, in whatever technology they are working on, a supportive community can still be your key to success. In a community, developers generally meet in their off-hours to discuss what's new in their language of choice, challenges they've encountered, and different ways of doing things. If you've never been to one of these groups, it might be easy to brush them off as an unimportant outlet where people talk in way too much detail about a geeky interest. Instead, most of the attendees are professionals who are looking to build skills and find new ways to solve problems.

Why do we sacrifice our personal time to discuss the things we do all day at work? Simply put, it makes us better programmers today than we were in yesterday. When I attend a meetup or talk, even on topics that only have a small overlap with the code, I always learn something new. Online developer communities like Stack Overflow, social networks, blogs, and open-source resources have become a place for developers to meet, improve, and share code without being in the same office. Again, in-person offline events including meet-ups, contests, and conferences provide more personal relationship building, learning, career development, and networking opportunities. These various communities allow developers to expand their horizon of knowledge regardless of their level of

experience and join conversations that wouldn't be possible inside their existing role at their workplaces.

The best way to get involved is by seeking out opportunities to learn. Every platform within the developer community offers unique openings for education. If you have a problem you need to solve, a project that you are working on, or a new programming language you want to learn, there's a good chance you'll find assistance through others in your field. Most of the developers in these communities are very helpful. Dive into a topic you're interested in and go from there. Once you get involved, you'll find an automatic expansion of your network and opportunities. Online platforms not only help you gain a better understanding of your skills but also allow you to help others solve their problem. You might have a broad idea of how something works, but teaching allows you to break it down and truly understand it from the foundation. Again, when people try to teach a particular topic to someone, they always think about how they can explain the topic in an easier way so that the learner can understand it better. Searching for an easier explanation not only helps the learners but also helps the instructor as the instructor learns the old topic from a new perspective. Some popular online communities are:

Stack Overflow

[Stack Overflow](#) is a great place to enter the developer community and an excellent online resource. The platform is committed to helping others in similar roles. Huge amounts of knowledge have been shared through Stack Overflow.

Twitter

[Twitter](#) is created as a microblogging social platform where you can share your ideas and info in 140 characters. But recently, it has become one of the most active developer communities on the internet. On Twitter, you will find amazing developers sharing their ideas, codes, projects, tips and also helping others by publishing eBooks, blog posts, long threads, video contents, and even you can find job opportunities and invitations to lots of amazing events via Twitter. I think each developer on Twitter is a bundle of motivation. They really inspire and motivate beginners to do better in their careers.

freeCodeCamp

Without any hesitation, I can say that [freeCodeCamp](#) is the world's biggest online community for developers and programmers. Here you can find almost all kinds of opportunities related to programming. freeCodeCamp has a library that is full of programming tutorials and courses. You can complete the courses, work on projects, and finally get certified. It also has a [forum](#) in which you can communicate with other developers and share your experience and ideas and help each other to grow.

Major League Hacking (MLH)

[Major League Hacking](#), officially abbreviated as MLH, is an online platform that operates a league for student hackathons. It was founded in 2013 by former developer evangelists Mike Swift and Jonathan Gottfried. More than 10,000 hackers are part of this popular community. MLH works independently to run university hackathons and provide them with various benefits such as the MLH Hardware Lab, Code of Conduct, eligibility for Season Rankings, and Event Support. At the end of every season, it formulates a winner of the League based on participation and prizes. It also organizes an award ceremony at the school where the MLH Hacker Cup is provided. Nowadays it has become very popular for offering [MLH Fellowship](#) programs and organizing amazing events like [MLH Local Hack Day](#).

Bash Woman Community

Compared to other communities, [Bash Woman Community](#) is a brand-new online community that provides guidelines for coding newbies and also organizes different kinds of events. The aim of this community is to help 10k people in 2021. Many students are not aware of the tech and need some mentorship, this community helps them to be established in their tracks. Recently, it has organized a blogging contest named “[Blogging Ninja](#)” which became very popular among bloggers and many people got the opportunity to write their first blog and thus started their blogging journey through this contest. Surely this community will grow faster as it has a large number of enthusiastic mentors who are working hard to spread their knowledge through this community.

These kinds of online communities organize several events. These events play a vital role in the development of a developer. Here are a few types of events in which you can participate.

Blogging

Great for answering those questions that aren't coming up through Google search, and if you're running into a problem, others likely are too. Writing about it allows a story to be told behind the code, rather than just a question-answer forum like Stack Overflow. You may have to spend hours working on that problem, but ultimately you look like an expert when you provide the solution. So, you can write a blog post about that particular problem and its solution and help others who are facing the same problem. There are so many platforms where you can publish your blog post like [HashNode](#), [Dev.to](#), [Google Blogger](#), etc. Most developers want to start blogging, but they don't know where to start. I think If you want to learn how to swim, you have to dive into the water. Likewise, if you want to learn how to blog, you need to just start writing some blogs.

Here are some quick tips to start your blogging journey:

0. First learn the principles or basic structure of blogs and how you can write an attractive one.
1. Always try to write on that topic in which you are comfortable.
2. Cultivate a habit of reading blogs regularly.
3. Before writing a blog on a specific topic, do research on that topic on the internet and read at least 3 blogs on that topic.
4. First write a basic draft and then edit it several times.
5. Don't forget to mention the sources.
6. Publish your blog and don't forget to promote it.
7. Write more blogs.
8. Participate in different blogging contests “Blogging Ninja” to test your blogging skills.

Open Source

Open source allows you to contribute to existing repositories, potentially meet the people who wrote them and discuss them at in-person events. There are many platforms that provide the opportunity of contributing to open-source like [GitHub](#) and [GitLab](#). Contributing to or creating repositories is also a great way to get visibility for your company's brand or your personal brand as a developer. If you maintain a repository, others will likely point out bugs and bring elements of the code to your attention that you didn't previously realize were awkward or clunky. In this process, you will learn how to write effective code and also know some best practices. Open-Source is great because it helps you to get yourself out of your comfort zone and gives you multiple chances to meet more developers where you can find opportunities to learn while building relationships.

Meet-ups

For networking in smaller groups, meet-ups can often bring together people who do similar work but for different companies. These events build a real sense of community and can be found for free online. You can often enjoy great conversation, free swags, and informative talks with people who have similar interests. After going to a few events, you'll probably notice that many people are attending these meetups who have attended before other meetups. Over time you will build relationships with these people and continue to have discussions, like getting a fresh perspective on solving your latest problem or discovering which companies are hiring.

Conferences

Another way to join the developer community is through conferences. They are particularly helpful if you're new to the industry. Now in the pandemic period, there are many virtual conferences and webinars you can be a part of. You can even work as a volunteer to get involved with the event from the beginning, seeing how it comes together from the ground up. When you attend, you'll have the opportunity to meet developers

from different cities or countries and be exposed to a vast amount of new knowledge from speakers. Chat with vendors, attend networking events, and hear keynotes on subjects related to your field all while expanding your network. You never know how a relationship can pay off in the future if it's maintained after the event.

Speaking Engagements

After attending conferences for a number of years, you may start to have a good grasp of some of the topics. If you have a depth of knowledge on a subject, you can start speaking. If speaking is something you enjoy, start at smaller local meet-ups and work your way up to larger conferences, and eventually be paid to attend. This can be a great way to establish yourself as an authority in your field, travel, and attend events specifically for speakers.

Contests & Hackathons

Contests and Hackathons are great to test your skills and work on a real-world project. Participating in contests and hackathons helps developers to improve their problem-solving, critical thinking, and team-working skills and also gives them opportunities to meet with other developers around the world. There are many platforms where you can solve coding problems like [CodeForces](#), [CodeChef](#), [Hackerrank](#), [Project Euler](#), etc. These platforms also organize coding contests every month. Again, there are few platforms like MLH which organize many hackathon-related events throughout the year. There are some special competitive programming events which are held once a year. Some of them are Google's [CodeJam](#), [HashCode](#), [KickStart](#), [Facebook's Hacker Cup](#), International Olympiad of Informatics (IOI), etc. Different online communities, coding clubs, and colleges also organize contests and hackathons throughout the year.

Share Your Passion

Ultimately, the best way to get involved with the developer community is to find something that interests you, work on it, and share it with others. If you like helping people solve problems, find forums and communities that allow you to do so. Or if you want to share the backstory on a piece of code, write a blog. It's often as simple as finding something that you think could be better and trying to solve it. By creating and contributing to the developer community you are sharing our knowledge and that always pays off. The developer community becomes stronger through collaboration. The more involved you are, the more people you connect with. Those relationships ultimately return that support in the future through problem-solving, knowledge sharing, or job opportunities.