

Learning Ruby on Rails any good for Grails?

Asked 16 years, 4 months ago

Modified 5 years ago

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21



My company is in the process of starting down the **Grails** path. The reason for that is that the current developers are heavy on **Java** but felt the need for a **MVC-style language** for some future web development projects.

Personally, I'm coming from the design/usability world, but as I take more "front-end" responsibilities I'm starting to feel the need for learning a language more intensively so I can code some logic but especially the front-end code for my UIs and stuff.

I've been trying to get into **Python/Django** personally, but just never invested too much time on it. Now that my company is "jumping" into Grails I bought the "*Agile Web Development with Rails (3rd Ed - Beta)*" and I'm starting to get into **RoR**. I'd still like to learn **Python** in the future or on the side, but my biggest question is:

- Should I be learning RoR, and have a more versatile language in my "portfolio", knowing that my RoR knowledge will be useful for my Grails needs as well??

-OR-

- Should I just skip RoR and focus on learning Grails that I'll be needing for work soon, and work on learning RoR/Django (Ruby/Python) later?

Basically the question revolves around the usefulness of Grails in a non-corporate setting and the similarities between Rails and Grails. (and this, while trying to avoid the centennial discussion of Python vs Ruby (on Rails) :))

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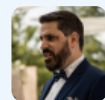
edited Jan 17, 2015 at 10:21



[Sourav Ghosh](#)

134k ● 16 ● 188 ● 266

asked Aug 7, 2008 at 18:17



[levifig](#)

510 ● 6 ● 11

-
- 4 Okay: there has been development. I started down the Rails path for our external webapps, while the other (Java) coder went ahead with Grails for intranet stuff. My view is that, in the future, those two sides of our apps will merge and Rails will take lead. The main reason he's using Grails is because he's a Java and knows his way around Hibernate. :) So far, I'm quite happy with dropping the Grails bandwagon and learning ahead Rails. It'll be much more useful to me, personally, and to our company in the long run. Thank you for your answers so far! Love this community! :D – [levifig](#) Jul 26, 2009 at 9:03
-

- 1 Can somebody update this? I want to make sure people can get at least on up to date opinion on this. – [David West](#) May 16, 2014 at 20:28
-

15 Answers

Sorted by:

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Mmh, I don't know how to say this. Some people might bash me over this.

16



Language (Groovy and Ruby)



As a language I reckon Ruby is more funky compared to Groovy. Groovy only exists to ease Java programmer as you don't need to learn too much new syntax. But overall I reckon is not as funky as Ruby. Groovy wouldn't be the JVM language that is worth to learn based on attender's vote in this year's JavaOne but instead Scala is the one to go. Besides that, [the original creator of Groovy himself does not have faith in the language he created himself](#) in the first place.

Community and Job openings

As for the community, Grails community is not as big as Rails, though since the acquirement by Spring more and more people are using it in serious application. Rails has more job openings in the market compared to Grails (that is if you want to invest in looking a new job).

The framework (Grails and Rails)

But, as a framework, if you really care about maintainability and need access to Java framework and legacy Java system, Grails is the way to go as it provides cleaner access to Java. Grails itself is built upon several popular Java framework (Spring & Hibernate). Rails itself IMHO is funky like Ruby itself, but it's funkyness costs you maintainability. [Matz himself prefers Merb over Rails 2](#) because Rails create a DSL on top of Ruby which is really against the Ruby philosophy. And I reckon because Rails itself is opiniated, which in turn if you don't have the same opinion as the creator, it might not fit your needs.

Conclusion

So in your case, learn Grails as that is the company's consensus (you need to respect the consensus) and if you still want to secure your job. But, invest some time learning Rails and Ruby too if you want to open a chance getting a new job in the future.

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edited Jul 21, 2009 at 11:24

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answered Jul 21, 2009 at 10:52



Joshua Partogi

16.4k ● 14 ● 55 ● 75

Good points! I have been keeping an eye on Scala and might use it in the future. For now, Rails is plenty! :) Also, the whole Groovy/Grails concept never struck me as long-term. I didn't

know about those comments from the Groovy creator, but they come to prove my initial thoughts. Grails is not consensual. It was a "way out" by our Java guy when he was faced with the inevitable for our new stuff: Rails! :) So far, I'm loving Ruby/Rails and can't wait for 3.0! Learned my way around Rails and now, slowly, learning more advanced Ruby! Quite happy with the path I/we took. ;) – [levifig](#) Jul 26, 2009 at 9:09

- 1 It's quite terrifying using a technology of which the creator himself has lost faith in it. – [Joshua Partogi](#) Jul 26, 2009 at 10:24
-

Great answer! Have you compare the plugin community(Gems vs Plugins)? Rails seems to be a winner in this area.. – [Alexander Suraphel](#) Dec 9, 2014 at 15:57



9

Just a bit of a question, is the reason they are choosing Grails because Groovy is closer in syntax to Java than Ruby, or because they want access to Java?



If it is the former, then I would say try to focus on Grails since that is what you will be using. If it is the latter, you might want to see if the development team is open to using JRuby.



I have never used Grails or Rails before, but I have used Groovy and Ruby before, and as a language I think Ruby is much cleaner and more consistent, and the team might enjoy production more. As a platform, Rails has been out longer and has a lot of attention, so I would imagine it is a more stable platform to use with more fleshed out features.

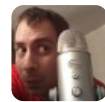
JRuby has full access to classes written in Java, so this is why I would say consider trying Rails. If it is too late in the decision time to consider it then I guess you can just ignore this post.

Basically, if you just want to hook in with Java, then JRuby is an option you should consider, but if the team is afraid of non-Java like syntax, maybe continue as is.

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answered Aug 7, 2008 at 18:44

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[Mike Stone](#)

44.6k ● 30 ● 114 ● 140



4

I would learn both. They are both up and coming technologies. Learning RESTful coding is a real benefit in any language.



I use GAILS at work and RoR for side projects. I can say that the RoR community is much larger (I'm talking about RoR vs Grails not RoR vs Java) and very helpful.

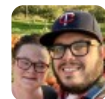


Short Answer: They are similar.... what could it hurt?

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answered Sep 2, 2008 at 3:35

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[Kevin Kaske](#)

1,139 ● 2 ● 12 ● 18



3

Just skip RoR. There are really not a lot of similar things(besides the name)



I certainly believe that being enough familiar with Java, plus some experience programming with a dynamic language is more than enough if you plan to do serious development with Grails.

Comparing just only views(taglibs in Grails, RHTML in RoR) and the persistence stuff(GORM vs ActiveRecord) is just too different in the core, to invest time learning the nitty gritty details of RoR. Just dive into Grails, you won't regret.

Edit: corrected typo.

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edited Aug 7, 2008 at 18:41

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answered Aug 7, 2008 at 18:38



Camilo Díaz Repka

4,815 ● 6 ● 44 ● 69



3



I've been learning RoR and Grails and the latter is far easier to learn.

Both frameworks share the same principles (agile, kiss, dry, duck typing and so..) but Groovy syntax is...well is simply great, something you can learn and use in a blink of an eye.

I truly feel that Grails has brighter future than RoR.

PD: Just in case you find it useful, a colleague of mine is working full time with Grails and has a blog with some tips:

<http://dahernan.net/search/label/grails>

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 16:36

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Ivan Arrizabalaga

685 ● 1 ● 7 ● 23



You should just skip RoR and focus on learning Grails that you'll be needing for work.

1



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answered Aug 7, 2008 at 18:20

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CodingWithoutComments

36k ● 21 ● 75 ● 87



@Levi Figueira

1



For one thing, Grails is far more flexible than Rails. Rails is difficult to use with a legacy DB because ActiveRecord has too many design constraints that many legacy DBs didn't follow. Grails, oth, can use standard Hibernate mappings, which can accommodate a much broader range of DB designs.



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answered Sep 2, 2008 at 19:20

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Hank Gay

71.8k ● 36 ● 161 ● 222



1



The Rails community has been very vocal in evangelising RoR, with the result that high expectations have been set and not always met (programmer productivity is good, but ensuring good performance once deployed isn't so easy).

Grails has been designed as the scripted successor to Java, whereas the Ruby-Java integration used in JRuby on Rails, for example, has had to be retrofitted.

I would suggest that you stick with Grails; it may not have the same glitz as RoR, but it's a pragmatic choice; you get improved productivity and the re-use of existing Java libraries.

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answered Sep 6, 2008 at 19:21



Andrew Whitehouse

2,754 ● 3 ● 31 ● 35



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Jump straight into Grails. I'm sure Ruby/Rails is good but so in Groovy/Grails. I recommend this book.

<http://beginninggroovyandgrails.com>

Remember the errata is online. There are a couple of mistakes in the book.

<http://beginninggroovyandgrails.com/site/content/errata>

Also, check out the 3 minute and 30 second demo of creating your first Grails app.

<http://grails.org/Grails+Screencasts>

This tutorial will show you the basics.

<http://grails.org/Quick+Start>

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answered Sep 8, 2008 at 3:05

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anon



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Yes Grails is the way to go. RoR is good but it ties you in to the Ruby ecosystem. Part of the effort of learning a new framework or language is learning the class libraries as well as the language syntax. If your co-workers are all Java types you will be much better placed to receive help and support as they will all be speaking the same language as you.

The other advantage to learning a bit of Groovy and Java is that web frameworks like GWT will open up to you. Grails has a GWT plugin and as a front end developer you will appreciate the ease of use and cross browser compatibility.

Also there is at least one hosting company offering free Grails application hosting (<http://www.mor.ph/>) which means that you can prototype sites at small data volumes before having to pay.

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edited Sep 18, 2008 at 5:20

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answered Sep 18, 2008 at 4:57



Peter Kelley

2,360 ● 8 ● 26 ● 47



1

I favor Grails over Rails, but learning Rails will give you a more balanced perspective and actually open your eyes to overlooked things that are possible in Grails.



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answered Sep 18, 2008 at 20:44

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mbrevoort

5,165 ● 6 ● 41 ● 48



0

At a first glance you would think they are completely different stories, since they are based on extremely different languages (Ruby and Groovy).



Then, after reading a couple of tutorials, you'll realize they share the same principles, scaffolding, duck typing, .. and finally the same goal: **making agile programming feasible.**



If you already feel comfortable with terms like IoC and MVC, you'll find any of these options easy and exciting to learn.

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 9:30



Ivan Arrizabalaga

685 ● 1 ● 7 ● 23



0



I would say no, I'm learning Grails as well, and I've considered this as well, but just learning Grails is pretty big, plus learning Groovy (which granted is easy, but still gotta learn it right?) and all that... so learning Rails would have been just too much.



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answered Nov 13, 2008 at 22:34



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hendrixski

1,154 ● 1 ● 12 ● 20



0



Yes if we compare grails and rails I would choose grails (I developed some intranet applications in grails).

But Django is superior to both - as python is well hmm a perfect choice.



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answered Jul 16, 2009 at 9:27



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dunsun



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You might also want to take a look at [Clojure](#), a JVM language that's just starting to get popular. It may be a good choice for a Java-based company since it's compatible with your old codebase, and has a lot of modern innovations going for it. There are some good web frameworks emerging, including [Compojure](#).



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answered Sep 28, 2010 at 4:09



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yayitswei

4,677 ● 5 ● 28 ● 34
