



Age: 36
Location: Manchester, UK
Marital status: Married
Education: Bachelor degree
Job: Full-time software developer at Quixcon.

meet Clyde Channing...

Clyde (36) lives with his wife Amy (32) in the centre of Manchester. He has been working as a senior developer at Quixcon Software Solutions for almost 5 years now. Clyde is a very pragmatic person who likes to get things done. However, he feels a bit disappointed that, due to the fast pace of ICT-innovation, he

never really gets the chance to explore a topic in-depth. Also, the strict deadline policy of his company often forces him to hand over work that is only halfway completed. As long as his code gets through the basic unit tests, the company will release it. Bugs can always be fixed afterwards, they say. This leaves Clyde many times behind with the feeling that he can not really finish his 'baby'.

Toolkit

The toolkit with technologies and development tools, all mastered by Clyde, is quite impressive:

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| Eclipse | Windows (XP-7) | ASP .NET | |
| Visual Studio | Linux / Ubuntu | Java | Firebug |
| Bluefish | Gnome | Python | Inspect32 |
| Struts | Evolution | PHP | (accprobe) |
| Java2EE | Javascript | C++ | (adesigner) |
| PostgreSQL | Dreamweaver | HTML/CSS | |



When asked about possible improvements that could be made in developers' tools to help them develop accessible applications, Clyde can name a couple:

- Descriptive tools which provide advice on how to create an accessible application.
- Prompts, tips, guides and warnings as development progresses, e.g. built-in colour contrast and colour pickers with accessibility guidelines.
- Development tools able to analyse accessibility levels and provide recommendations, e.g. toolkits with the Accessible Rich Internet Application specification integrated.
- Project templates with built-in accessibility.
- Automatic systems to convert a Java web page in accessible format.
- Special kits for being able to develop assistive technology such as speech recognition or Braille print.
- Tools that are accessible themselves.

All these technological solutions would make a huge difference; however, Clyde remarks that a better understanding of what accessibility is and how it can help others might even be the most important 'solution' for all developers.



Open Source

Clyde has a big interest in everything that's open source; he is very keen on the whole philosophy behind the movement. Unfortunately he can experiment with open source software only during his leisure time, since his company works exclusively with licensed software. Some elements that Clyde likes in particular about open source are:

- Users' freedom to modify and improve
- Price tag (free)
- Huge community with lots of support and information exchange on user forums
- Versatility
- Software accessibility, especially Linux (Ubuntu) which is widespread in education in the UK

However, Clyde also believes open source has some less appealing aspects:

- Bugs resulting in software unpredictability
- Lack of information about software use, how to participate and documentation for users.
- Slight compatibility problems.
- Developments are slower.
- Complex installation.

General Thoughts

Clyde dreams about the possibility to easily create cross-platform accessible applications that act and behave identical in different environments. In this light, Clyde often mentions Java for its compatibility with Windows and Linux.

On another front, the evolution of Rich Internet Applications (RIA) is also looking promising for Clyde, as their online nature also makes them platform independent. Having the applications displayed on multiple browsers in a uniform way would be very useful. Clyde is worried though that these RIAs could mean a step back for the accessibility of different applications.

last month...

A while ago, Clyde was involved in a project that followed the principles of Extreme Programming, a development approach whereby the programming is done in couples instead of by oneself. Clyde got paired up with a visually impaired user and was surprised to see how fast he could manoeuvre around the development tool. However, Clyde was also surprised to see how many parts of the tool were inaccessible for his colleague, making him resort to all sorts of workarounds.

Since then, Clyde has had a growing interest for accessibility. The last project Clyde did was ready for release two days before the deadline. He decided to invest this time to do some accessibility tests; by the next day, he had discovered multiple flaws. His request for extra time to fix them was denied by the company due to budget restrictions.