



# Pager Rotation Duties

Web-420



# What are Pager Rotation Duties?

- Putting an on-call rotation in place for operations engineers, or architects or development managers to fix issues for software services as they arise
- On-Call engineer or developer gets paged
  - Expectation is to fix the issue right away, OR
  - escalate the issue if they are not able to fix it
- Engineer must perform troubleshooting during the on-call shift



# Traditional Pager Rotation Challenges

- Developers give the code...and leave operation and maintenance of the code to an Operations team
- Many times developers do not have experience in handling production workloads; difficult to deliver non-performant code
- The 'operations' developers would take longer to fix broken code that was written by someone else
- Often times the code would have to be escalated to the developer



# Problems with Pager Rotations

1. Disruptive!
  - a. Regular work doesn't get done
  - b. During the night - wakes people up
  - c. Work-Life Balance
  - d. Nighttime....alert fatigue
  - e. Alerts do not necessarily require immediate action
  - f. People are unable to make personal plans since they are on-call and could be contacted



# Examples of Solutions

- When coding or architectural decisions are made - everyone in the value stream is aware
- Rotate pager rotation duties
- Find a balance between fixing production defects & developing new functionality
- Find understanding that business goals are not achieved only by marking features as completed
- Make sure 'Operations' do not feel isolated with production issues related to code



# Best Practices for Pager Rotations

- Use software for automation
  - Removes steps in getting the information communicated
  - Saves time & minimizes overhead
  - Routes notifications to on-call persons
- Define escalation policies & decide what actions must take place during an incident
- Define 'Tiers'
  - 1st Tier: person who wrote code
  - 2nd Tier: person who understands network and hardware



## More Best Practices

- Enable easy overrides
- Establish time limits
  - If the person doesn't respond on time - automatically forward the issue to another person
- Ensure 24 hour/7 days a week coverage
  - Allow for shift flexibility for staff and allow trades
- Provide coverage considering time zones



## Setting Up Teams

- Set up service and server-level monitoring and dashboards for teams to understand system performance & health
- Issues should be routed to the on-call person
  - Teammates are recruited as needed to resolve issues
- Issues should be routed to the on-call person
- Use collaboration tool with a team
- Decide which teams are assigned on-call responsibilities per service





# Transparency & Communication

- Do not communicate changes at the last minute
- Keep everyone up to speed about changes in the schedule
- Be aware of on-call hours
- Create an on-call timeline - so people are aware of the schedule
  - People can plan activities around the schedule



## On-Call Conclusion

- Team-wide rotations create camaraderie
- Helps diagnose and resolve incidents more effectively
- Improves availability and reliability for customers
- On-call personnel are the first line to defense against customer-impacting outages
- Ensures issues are resolved quickly



# References

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