The background of the slide is a grayscale image of a circuit board. It features a network of black lines representing traces, with several circular pads and vias. The layout is symmetrical and technical in appearance.

Building Your Team to Last: Successful Onboarding and Mentoring Practices

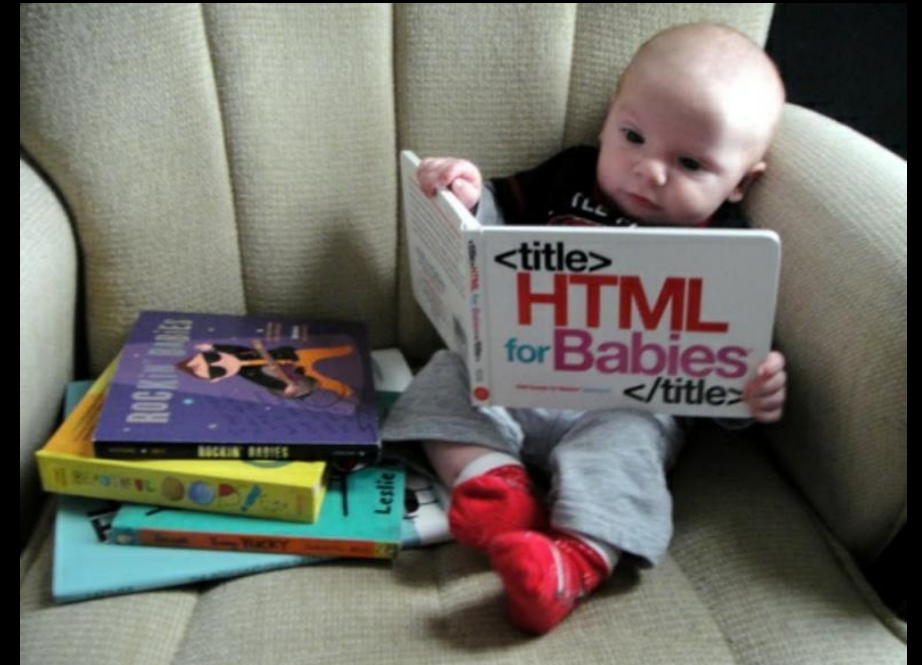
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Building Your Team to Last: Successful Onboarding and Mentoring Practices

- Introduction
- Misconceptions about junior devs
- Benefits for junior developers/interns
- Benefits for senior developers
- What does an effective (healthy) relationship look like?
- Ensuring you're ready for new juniors
- Conclusion

Intro

- Based on my own experiences, as well as conversations with a dozen other junior and senior developers or designers
- “juniors” – fresh graduates of universities, code schools, bootcamps, or self-taught devs with < 2 years experience
- “seniors” – people with many years of experience and often lead teams.
- For this talk, “mid” level people are seniors too
- This is written mostly from a developer perspective, but can work for any job position/team (designers, QA, tech writers, etc.)



My Background

- Loved programming as a kid on my Comodore 64
- Went to college, dropped out, went back to complete it (2011-2015)
- Started teaching C++ lab in 2012
- Internship 1 in 2013
- Internship 2 in 2014 (same company, different team)
- Started teaching C++ lecture in 2014
- “Real World Job” in 2015 after graduation
- Onboarding program with job was three-month internal project and 3 five-month rotations
- Total onboarding experiences: 8

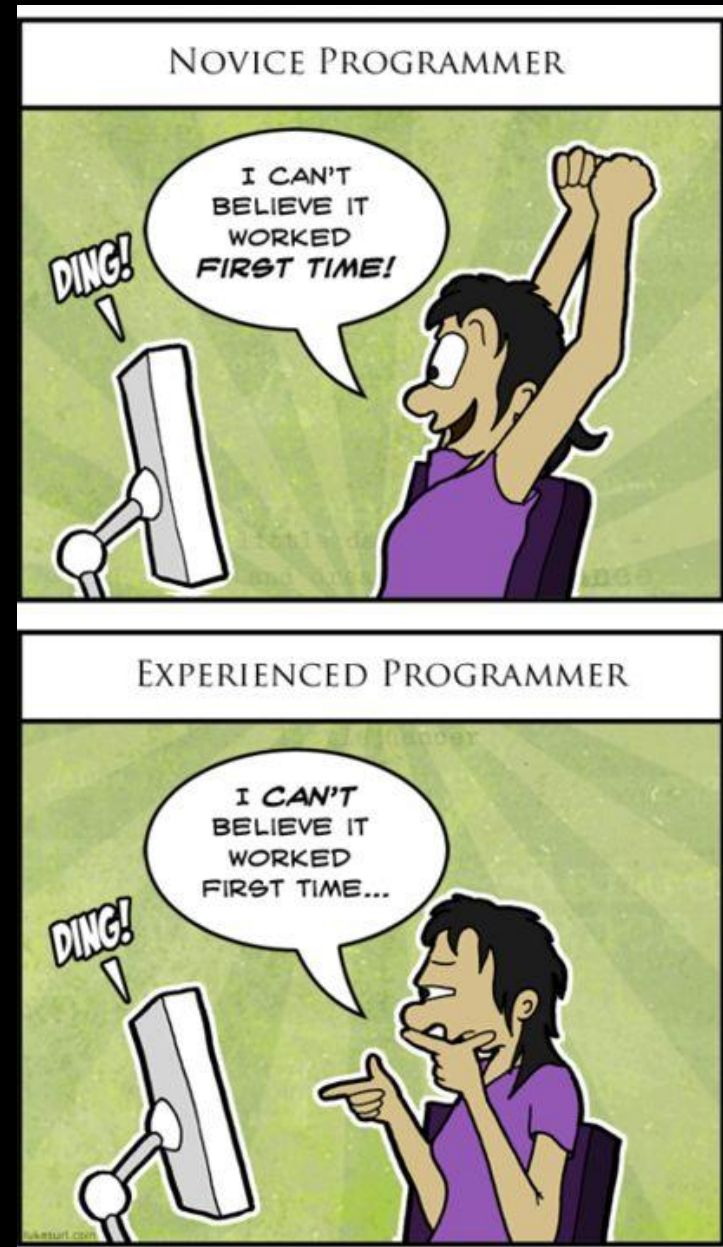
Misconceptions about junior devs

- Junior devs are effective mind-readers
- Junior devs understand exactly what's expected of their code as soon as they walk in the door
- Juniors understand the nature of working on production code in a team
- Juniors will get it right on the first try
- Juniors are 20-year-olds fresh out of college/internships
- Junior developers all have the same knowledge out of their education

Paraphrased

Lack of experience != Lack of ability

Being new != Being stupid



Benefits for junior developers/interns

- Growth
- Put energy to good use
- Discovering interests
- Build good relationships with seniors (or anyone with more experience)
- Cheaper/easier to hire
- Get involved in workplace and community

JUNIOR DEVELOPER?

**DO YOU THINK THEY'D TAKE A
DEVELOPED SENIOR?**



Benefits for senior developers

- Time away from regular work
- Reevaluating how you do things
- More time spent in the beginning saves you MORE time down the road
- See new ideas
- Break out of homogeneity
- Investing in the future of your team
- Get more side work done

What does an effective (healthy) relationship look like?

Process

- Good onboarding
- Consistent standards
- Not relying on junior to know what they need to know

Communication

- Schedule 1:1 meetings
 - “What’s going on?”
 - “What’s going well?”
 - “What’s not going well?”
 - “What can they use help on?”
 - “What can we help them on?”
- Reiterating that learning processes/procedures of the company takes time
- “Answers need a place to land.”

What does an effective (healthy) relationship look like?

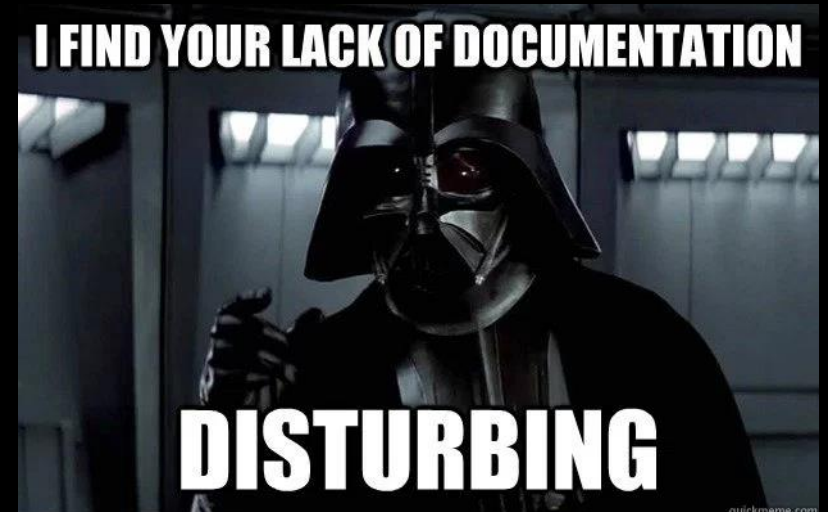
Guidance/visioning

- Pairing
- Guidance on how to solve problems
- Get juniors' advice
- Ensure junior understand what is going on and not just saying “I understand”



Ensuring You're Ready for New Juniors

- Do you have a senior dev that can spend time answering questions, and at least some time once a week to chat about how they're doing?
- Do you have adequate training resources? Will they be given time to learn from these?
- Will they be able to grow from these experiences, even if they don't stay at our company long? (How can they help us help them?)
- The 3 P's:
 - Planning
 - Projects
 - Pairing



Conclusion

- Juniors and interns are GREAT people to have on teams
- They come with a cost of extra time and energy from the team
- They provide work, energy, enthusiasm and new ideas
- They get great experience
- Everyone benefits by working together to onboard and mentor the new teammate

Conclusion

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I love feedback and hearing stories if this was helpful. Please share your company's onboarding experiences!

Please ask any questions you may have too!