

Switching from Rails to Sinatra

Rushi Shah

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So recently I created this little Ruby on Rails app that lets you embed your Github Contribution calendar into any HTML (or Markdown) as an image. I would show you a great example, but one of the downsides to PDFs generated with LaTeX is that you have to save the image locally (and in doing so, the magic of the app would be lost). However, if you want to see an awesome example, totally check out the [github](#) repo or just get your own [on the site](#).

It is simple, straightforward, but still pretty neat, if I do say so myself. But soon I decided to rewrite the application in Sinatra, and here's why.

1 Starting with Rails

When I started this project, I dove in with rails because I had used it before on apps like [a CNN article generator](#) and a [bookshelf](#). After I had my basic functionality down, the file structure looked like a typical rails app. For reference, here is the [file structure at that point](#) (created using [tree](#)).

```
.
Gemfile
Gemfile.lock
README.rdoc
Rakefile
app
  assets
    images
    javascripts
    application.js
    chart.coffee
  stylesheets
    application.css
    chart.scss
    scaffolds.scss
  controllers
    application_controller.rb
    chart_controller.rb
```

- concerns
- helpers
 - application_helper.rb
 - chart_helper.rb
- mailers
- models
 - concerns
- views
 - layouts
 - application.html.erb
- bin
- bundle
- rails
- rake
- setup
- spring
- config
 - application.rb
 - boot.rb
 - database.yml
 - environment.rb
 - environments
 - development.rb
 - production.rb
 - test.rb
- initializers
 - assets.rb
 - backtrace_silencers.rb
 - cookies_serializer.rb
 - filter_parameter_logging.rb
 - inflections.rb
 - mime_types.rb
 - session_store.rb
 - wrap_parameters.rb
- locales
 - en.yml
- routes.rb
- secrets.yml
- config.ru
- db
 - schema.rb
 - seeds.rb
- lib
 - assets
 - tasks

```

log
public
  404.html
  422.html
  500.html
  favicon.ico
  robots.txt
test
  controllers
    chart_controller_test.rb
  fixtures
  helpers
  integration
  mailers
  models
  test_helper.rb
vendor
  assets
    javascripts
    stylesheets

```

35 directories, 47 files

What a pain, right? Especially for the fact that the entirety of my code could be boiled down to a few lines:

```

#config/routes.rb
get "/:username" => "chart#generate", format: :svg

```

```

#config/initializers/mime_types.rb
Mime::Type.register "image/svg+xml", :svg

```

```

#app/controllers/chart_controller.rb
class ChartController < ApplicationController
  def generate
    svg = GithubChart.new(user: params["username"]).svg
    respond_to do |format|
      format.svg { render inline: svg}
    end
  end
end

```

2 Enter Sinatra

I wasn't happy with how heavy everything felt, so I asked my friends over at [HH Ruby](#) for a lightweight alternative to Rails. Basically, they showed me a whole new world (namely, [Sinatra](#)).

After spending about an hour and a half learning* Sinatra and refactoring, I emerged victorious!

```
.
Gemfile
Gemfile.lock
README.md
app.rb
config.ru
public
  index.css
  index.html
```

1 directory, 7 files

Now, the entirety of my `app.rb` can be contained more or less to 20 lines with whitespace:

```
#app.rb
require 'sinatra'
require 'githubchart'

get '/' do
  send_file File.join(settings.public_folder, 'index.html')
end

get('/:username' do
  headers 'Content-Type' => "image/svg+xml"

  username = params[:username].chomp('.svg') #Chomp off the .svg extension

  svg = GithubChart.new(user: username).svg

  stream do |out|
    out << svg
  end
end

Fancy, huh?
```

3 Conclusion

Look, I'm not saying you should use Sinatra for every enterprise application you and your team are going to be scaling up for the next five years. I'm just saying that if you have a small hobby application and you just want some routes and their corresponding Ruby code, look into Sinatra. If you want to skip the whole MVC shizam and don't need a database, Sinatra might be for you.

Also, if you're interested in the application or want your chart, you can find more information [on the github page](#) or [on the site](#).

Footnotes *Not really learning, because it was essentially the same as Express+Node.js and everything basically just worked.