Jon Ericson

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Complicated systems fascinate me. Perhaps that's why I was drawn to programming. In college I studied non-deterministic atmospheric models. I operated a supercomputer cluster before computation became a commodity. But since nothing compares in complexity to humans interacting with each other, I now plan, build and manage online communities.

Civitas

Founder | June 2021–Present

I help companies understand their communities in order to achieve their goals. While working at EnterpriseDB, I created a part-time community consulting company so that my community management skills wouldn't get rusty.

College Confidential

Head of Community | June 2022–November 2023

I returned to College Confidential in order to unlock the potential of the community for a new owner. The theme for this stretch was *stabilization*. With several changes in ownership, College Confidential felt the effects of changes in strategy. My work was both social and technical.

- Community analysis such as How does mandatory registration impact participation? I also wrote SQL queries to keep track of metrics and updated our reporting to GA4.
- Managed a major database update for the forum software.
- Set up College Confidential's first moderator elections.
- Created a private forum for politics.
- Hosted and produced episodes of the Admitted podcast.
- Brought on Sorin Istrate to replace me as Head of Community at College Confidential.

EnterpriseDB

Developer Advocate | April 2021–June 2022

I worked with the documentation team to help them produce excellent documentation in order to give people confidence they will be successful. For many developers deciding on which software to recommend for purchase, online documentation is the first place they check. Too many companies ignore the value of documentation for marketing and lead generation.

- Documented a strategy for community contributions to EDB documentation

- Moved binary files to LFS to speed up Git operations.
- Built a process to allow the documentation team do daily builds.
- Automated integration of documentation from other projects' repositories.
- Oracle compatibility demo.
- BigAnimal quickstart guide.
- Installation guide template system.

College Confidential

Community & Site Operations Manager | January 2020–March 2021

I evaluated a mature community, proposed next steps (including migrating to Discourse) and worked with the entire company to revive the CC community. I became the community dynamics and software expert for the company. Product managers, developers and designers consulted with me about how to manage the forum software. In addition, I managed a small team of community specialists.

Among my accomplishments:

- Organized community testing of the beta Discourse site and answering community questions about this major change.
- Edited updated forum rules.
- Formed student groups so that our primary audience had their own space on the forums.
- Introduced CC's refreshed brand.

Stack Overflow/Stack Exchange

Community Product Manager | July 2013–January 2020

I learned how to cultivate diverse communities and mentor community leaders. With 176 Q&A sites, Stack Exchange was a perfect laboratory for understanding how online communities thrive or decay. Even though I had "manager" in my title, the work was more like planning and tending a garden. It required both strategic vision for the entire network and tactical execution for mentoring, mediation, and communicating change.

I worked on several major projects, including:

- Streamlined our user support system.
- Winter Bash 2014.
- The 2017 Developer Survey.
- Stack Overflow Documentation.
- Represented the community on the Developer Affinity & Growth team.
- Wrote starter questions on Stack Overflow for Teams.

JPL/Raytheon

Technical Lead | June 2001–August 2013

I was part of a team that designed and implemented the Science Investigator-led Processing System to process Tropospheric Emission Spectrometer algorithms. From launch in the summer of 2004 through its end of life in 2018, the ground data system received a constant stream of data that needed to be stored on tape, converted into interferograms, spectra, vertical profiles and, finally, global maps for a variety of atmospheric properties. As a result, I managed a high-performance computer system that produced more than a terabyte of data each month.

Systems Engineer | June 1999–April 2001

During the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission, I was part of the ground support team. Both before and after the mission, I helped design and test the software that formatted the radar data to produce 3-dimensional maps of the Earth's surface. During the mission, I monitored communication with the astronauts and waited for downloaded samples of instrument data, which was quickly processed in order to provide images for the press. I was responsible for the demux step. I also designed a simple report to help my colleagues anticipate the next downlink slot.

National Weather Service/Hughes

Programmer | Summers 1994–1997

As a summer intern, I was asked to code an algorithm that converted one-minute sensor output into hourly reports of cloud heights and coverage for the Automated Surface Observing System. Over the course of the next three summers I took on algorithm development, design and coding for serial devices, configuration management, weather observation, and database management.

UCLA

Atmospherics Sciences | May 1999

One of my favorite classes required me to learn FORTRAN in order to build atmospheric models. A math class introduced me to Mathematica. I learned the SPSS statistics software from a cultural anthropology class. As much as possible, I took history and philosophy electives. This is also when I entered the world of online communities via Usenet.