

 Drew
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The Sad State of Web Development

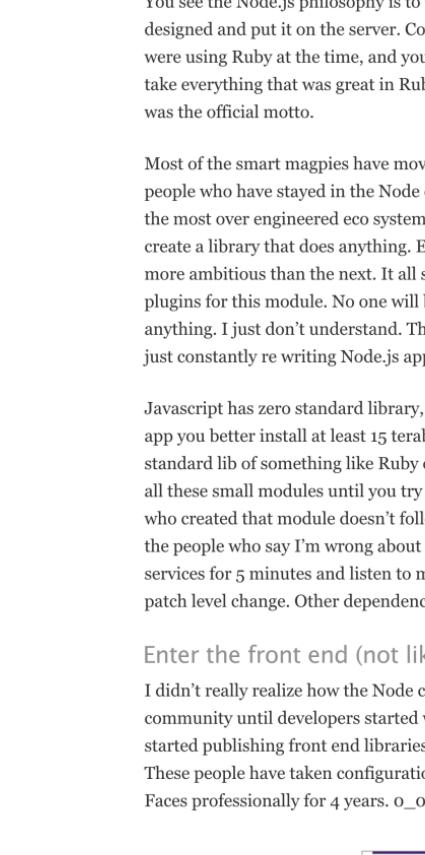
Random thoughts on web development

Going to shit

2015 is when web development went to shit. Web development used to be nice. You could fire up a text editor and start creating JS and CSS files. You can absolutely still do this. That has not changed. So yes, everything I'm about to say can be invalidated by saying that.

The web (specifically the Javascript/Node community) has created some of the most complicated, convoluted, over engineered tools ever conceived.

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At times, I think where web development is at this point is some cruel joke played on us by Ryan Dahl. You see, to get into why web development is so terrible, you have to start at Node.

By definition I was a magpie developer, so undoubtedly I used Node, just as everyone should. At universities they should make every developer write an app with Node.js, deploy it to production, then try to update the dependencies 3 months later.

The only downside is we would have zero new developers coming out of computer science programs.

You see the Node.js philosophy is to take the worst fucking language ever designed and put it on the server. Combine that with all the magpies that were using Ruby at the time, and you have the perfect fucking storm. Lets take everything that was great in Ruby and re write it in Javascript, I think was the official motto.

Most of the smart magpies have moved on to Go at this point, but the people who have stayed in the Node community have undoubtedly created the most over engineered eco system that has ever appeared. No one can create a library that does anything. Every project that creeps up is even more ambitious than the next. It all starts with a core module and 400 plugins for this module. No one will build something that actually does anything. I just don't understand. The only thing I can think, is people are just constantly re writing Node.js apps over and over.

Javascript has zero standard library, so as soon as you npm init a new Node app you better install at least 15 terabytes of modules to get 1/16th the standard lib of something like Ruby or Go. It may seem super cool to have all these small modules until you try to update them. When the developer who created that module doesn't follow semver, so you're fucked. Sorry. To the people who say I'm wrong about this; STOP rewriting your micro services for 5 minutes and listen to me. Your shit WILL fucking break on a patch level change. Other dependencies will not play nice.

Enter the front end (not like that)

I didn't really realize how the Node community affected the front end community until developers started writing their tools in Node. Then started publishing front end libraries on NPM. Now we're really fucked. These people have taken configuration to the extreme and I did Java Server Faces professionally for 4 years. o_o



Babel

A great project called 6t05, which did what it's name implied. By installing a simple Browserify transformer you could write ES6 code(well ES7 too, hence the name change) and "compile" it to ES5.

Now it's some convoluted mess of plugins that tries to do everything everyone ever wanted, while actually doing nothing out of the box.

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I removed the section where I called out the creator of Babel by name. Honestly I overlooked the statement as a personal attack. I apologized to him publicly and hope to talk to him more in the future.—Drew

PostCSS

People actually use this thing. Can a library actually do shit out of the box anymore? I just want to install something and use it, not decide all the little plugins I want to use. New developer comes onto your team:

Oh hey, we use PostCSS. Look at the gulp/grunt/broccoli/brunch file and see what plugins I've used. When you do that, then look up what each plugin does. After you have wasted the entire day on that, then start writing some css, or PostCSS, whatever the fuck it actually is. I really just wanted SASS but decided to use these 185 plugins instead and you know, because it's written in Javascript

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