“PHP is a very loosely typed language and that was one of the reasons I loved it so much because there weren’t as must restrictions as other strongly typed languages such as JAVA and C++. The issue with that though is that sometimes somebody who is looking at your code might have to do a lot more work to find out and make sure that they are setting the right variables and returning the right type of variable. I see this though as a good request to help structure and make code collaboration easier.”

Hi Adrian,

Thank you for bringing up this topic. When I first learned Perl 15+ years ago, I have to admit that I first hated it, and this was a big reason, coming from a C background. However, I eventually learned to like it because I could write code very fast and its handling of regular expressions was perfect for dealing with genomic data. Nevertheless, even though I am not experienced in PHP, I fully agree with you that implementation of this feature would make programs much easier to understand. I have been given the task of maintaining a lot of obfuscated scripts where I work, and something like this would make my job much easier. Another problem that I have encountered with software implementing the features of weakly typed languages is that they are vulnerable to “type errors”. Many times, I would not know that there was a problem until a program finished executing. Strongly typed languages would prevent this by reporting the error at compile time.

I noticed that you have a space between “get Average”. Is there any particular reason you did this instead of “getAverage” or “get\_Average”?

Regards,

Emanuel

Hi Zubair,

Thank you for reading and your reply. I fully agree with you that the decision to outsource is largely dependent on the organization itself. It sounds like in the first situation that you described, it would have been ideal for them to just build the system in-house. I’m actually a bit surprised that a large technology company chose to go the outsourcing route instead of just doing it in-house themselves.

The company I work for would never go the outsourcing route since we sell products that are predominantly based on trade secrets. One of our biggest products is consumable molecular probes that used for detecting specific DNA fragments. We have more than 8 million of these in our database systems, and when customers order them, they are immediately manufactured (only taking an hour), and then shipped. However, we do not disclose the exact formulation of them. If we were to ever contract out our website to another vendor, we would risk these formulations getting out into the public sphere. Considering that the revenue for our consumables is billions of dollars a year, it would make very little sense to not develop and maintain our website in-house (Life Technologies, 2014). However, for a non-profit organization that takes donations through its website, it would probably make more sense to outsource. While true that it may choose to record the information of its donors (e.g., name, contact information, credit card), I think the risk is minimal as long as the outside vendor does not have a bad reputation for security breaches.

Reference:

Life Technologies (2014) Life Technologies Announces Fourth Quarter and Fiscal 2012 Results [Online]. Available from: <http://www.lifetechnologies.com/us/en/home/about-us/news-gallery/press-releases/2013/Life-Technologies-Announces-Fourth-Quarter-Fiscal-2012-Results.html> (Accessed: 23 June 2014)