

**Building a
commercial
side project

on the tube**

I'm Rik Heywood

Director of software engineering
@ POD Point

Founder of Team Absence

**Who has a
side project?**

[138 captures](#)

3 Dec 98 - 25 Mar 16



Assorted Bits & Bobs

Downloads

Download a couple of the programs I have written. Source code (C++) is also available.

Evolva

Find out more about the game I am writing now.

Starship Titanic

Find out more about the last game I worked on at TDV - A graphical adventure with a script by Douglas Adams.

Bullfrog

I was involved in several titles while working at Bullfrog. See what they are up to now.

Contacting me

If you want to get in touch, find out how.

Who the hell are you?

My name is Rik Heywood and I write computer games for a living. As livings go, it's pretty good. I get to play with all the latest toys, and I can claim that I am doing research whenever I have a quick game of Quake.

I work for Computer Artworks Ltd based in London, a cool company dedicated to bringing the coolest games to the PC. I am currently working on a game called Evolva which will be published by Psygnosis, a division of Sony. Expect to see it when its finished.

What's on this web site?

Right now there is not a lot actually. As a way of teaching myself about all the new stuff that happens in the PC games industry, I often write little programs to test stuff out. Some of those programs are on this site ready for you to download. Some of them even have the source code available. To start off with, there is a screen saver that I wrote a couple of years ago to teach myself about Direct Draw, a super fast way of drawing to the screen. More programs may well make there way onto this site if I get around to it.

[20 captures](#)

15 May 98 – 7 Feb 04



AP

199

Enter



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Apple



May 8, 1998

Hot News Headlines

Intuit Commits to Quicken for Mac.



Pro.

Creative professionals, meet your match.



Go.

We rewrote the book on mobile computing.



Whoa.

It's okay, you don't have to say anything.

The
Apple Store

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[5,746](#)[captures](#)

1 Jul 98 - 1 Jun 16



1997

1998

1999

[Help ?](#)

PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor

[source](#)[search](#)[downloads](#)[documentation](#)[support](#)[in the news](#)[projects](#)[links](#)[mirror sites](#)

PHP 3.0 Final is out!

See the [In The News](#) page for the release announcement and the accompanying press release.

What is PHP?

PHP 3.0 is a server-side HTML embedded scripting language and it is a complete rewrite of the popular PHP/FI 2.0 language. This rewrite is faster, more robust and uses less memory than version 2. All users of version 2 are encouraged to upgrade.

If you are new to PHP, a good place to start discovering the power of this language is by clicking on the "Source" button in the top right corner of all the pages on this site. What you see is the actual PHP files that are behind each of the pages you are looking at.

So, how much does it cost?

This may sound a little foreign to all you folks coming from a non-Unix background, but PHP doesn't cost anything. You can use it for commercial and/or non-commercial use all you want. You can give it to your friends, print it out and hang it on your wall or eat it for lunch. Welcome to the world of [Open Source](#) software! Smile, be happy, the world is good. For the full legalese, see the official [license](#).

Year 2000 Compliance

Just like your C compiler or your favourite text editor, PHP is just about as year 2000 compliant as your pencil. If you're still worried (perhaps all pencils are built to break on December 31st 1999?) - [read this](#).

Other Side Projects of mine

3D game engine

e-commerce site

WorkFu

Band framework

The Attraction of a side project

Learning New Stuff

Tinkering with things

Intellectual Challenge

One day I'll be a millionaire



On the Tube??



Yes

21050

**Built my current project in
30-40 minute sections**

A photograph showing the interior of a subway car during rush hour. The carriage is packed with people of various ages and ethnicities, all standing. Some individuals are looking towards the front of the train, while others are looking down or talking to those next to them. The lighting is somewhat dim, typical of a subway environment. A purple arrow points from the text "Bad for productivity" to the right side of the image.

Bad for productivity

Only worked if
I could sit down.

Demo

What did I build this time?

Conventional Wisdom

Getting from side project to a launched
start-up

Market & Keyword analysis

Find a niche

Throw together a trivial app
in 3 weeks

**Launch and try and get
some traction**

If you get customers,

I~~terate~~

If you don't,

Move on

My Approach

Planning and Research



Spend 2-3 years building
something

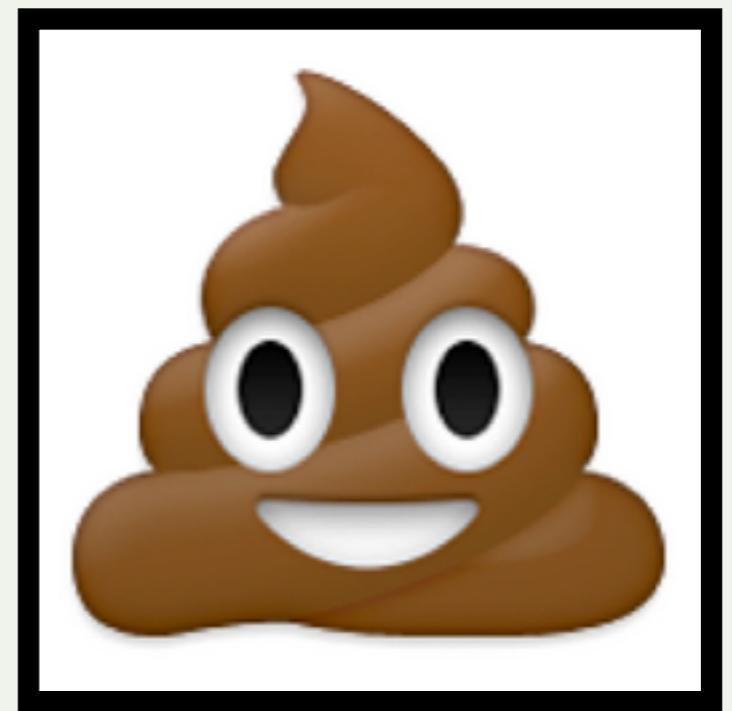
Launch it!!!

See if there is a market

Yay!



Doh!



Wisdom

Learnt the hard way

This is your spare time!

Do it for fun

Do it for the
satisfaction
of building something
you're proud of

If you get success as well,
BONUS

Be your own boss



**What was great
about working on
a project like this?**

Total Creative Freedom

If I wasn't happy with a
feature, I could delete it and
start again

No deadlines!

**What sucked
about working on
a project like this?**

Total Creative Freedom

If I wasn't happy with a
feature, I could delete it and
start again

No deadlines!

Drifting aimlessly

Laravel 4.2

Laravel 5

Laravel 5.1

Laravel 5.2

Vue.js

Billing

version 15

Things that
go wrong on
the Tube

**Large complex feature were
hard to do in 30 minutes**

Crappy 3G connection

Anything that needed lots
of interaction with external
APIs.

Hello again, billing

**Things that
worked well
on the Tube**

Crappy 3G connection.

Forced me to

keep things lean

**Loads of Tests.
They run, even with no
Internet connection**

Killed a tedious commute



Free Stuff

AWS, Slack, DataDog,
Codeship, Help Scout, Trello,
Wistia, Wootric,
Heap Analytics

Getting Real

fun to commercial

Getting Real

- Building production servers
- Building a marketing site
- Setting up some kind of analytics

Getting Real

- **Forming a company.** Easier than it sounds, but time consuming.
- **Customer Support.** What's the plan? How do you fit it into your day?

Getting Real

- **Billing.** You have to get this right
- **Sales & Marketing.** Are you good at that?
Do you know someone that is?

Getting Real

- **Budget.** Can you afford to run things?
What if you only get a couple of
customers? Are you prepared to look
after them?

Getting Real

- **Your Day Job.** You can't let any of this mess with your day job.
- Maybe one day your side project will be your day job, but that day isn't today.

Getting Real

- **Don't bend over backwards for one customer.** Unless bespoke development is what you're selling.

Getting Real

- **Automate the crap out of everything.** You don't have much free time to look after this, so it has to run itself everywhere that's possible.

Getting Real

- **Be Realistic.** You can't work 100 hours a week.
- If you can only support 10 customers, don't try and get more. You'll let them down, your employer down and yourself down.

**What are you
doing this
weekend?**

Got an idea?

Just start it already!

Figure it out as you go

Don't worry about a plan

Remember to do it for fun

**Massive Plug:
What do you use
to book time off
work?**

TeamAbsence.com



Team
absence

It's awesome &
runs on PHP 7