Madison Area: Software Developers Meetup Review by Ranjit Sekhon

<http://www.meetup.com/softwaredev-113/>

Main site

<http://www.meetup.com/softwaredev-113/members/3263/>

Bio on Paul Miller who started the group. Who found it August 1st, 2008.

“Meet and drink beer with other local Software Developers. Discuss various programming languages and techniques, software architecture, cross-platform development, iPhone development, etc. We're an informal, social group designed to get most of us out of the office/home.

Our members cover a huge cross-section of the programming industry, from web to embedded, desktop to iPhone, from Java to C++ to Haskell.

If you program, either professionally or as a hobby, you'll probably get something from our group.”

<http://www.meetup.com/softwaredev-113/members/188436744/>

Ben’s Profile

Meetup 1: October 21 · 6:00 PM – Essen Haus

As I arrived there were a group of diverse individuals, usually they pick a topic to discuss, however today the group founder and facilitator was not there, so his friend Don, another software developer in the area was appointed. After introductions and explaining what all of us 20 or so people were doing in IT, and what brought us to the meeting, groups formed over individuals expressing their own interests as far as employment, to preferred coding language. I prompted a couple people who seemed promising in knowing their technical jargon and decided to use Spring MVC framework as part of my individual projects java framework, which I’m still learning to get a grip on. I joined a group who was chatting up on what was good and what was bad about Github, some tempers flared but I just assumed they were typically not use to much social interaction and all was fine. After a couple beers, people started to lose more focus on the technical jargon and the meeting that lasted 45mins-1hr was over. Others lingered around for the social aspect of the meet up. I figured an overall review of this group is that you get what you give. If you’re trying to find a job (usually looking for mid level developers) headhunters, i.e. google employee comes regularly, and many more company employees and consultants are there to talk to. If you want help on code, bring your material with you. It’s a group of mainly likeminded individuals who are hoping to learn and stay in the loop with code trends in Madison, WI.

Meetup 2: November 18 · 6:00 PM – Essen Haus

This meeting was overall more technical than the last, which seemed more social. There were individuals ranging from a man whom described himself as a .net developer and a phone “hacker” ie can jailbreak products etc – which you probably shouldn’t ever mention in a professional atmosphere, to a couple who worked for IBM in Iowa that came all the way to join the meeting. The group founder Paul Miller was there and winged a rather non-technical topic of sponsors/funding for the group now that it has 1077 members, but usually only 30 or show up. He was trying to figure out more ways to get people to come rather than using free beer tabs as an option. Before people really started to dig into the topic, which didn’t last very long, the group went through introductions. I started chatting with an employee of the Supreme Court who was there and was looking into hiring a ruby developer, whereas now he said they use Scala. At the time I had no idea what Scala was, and he told me that it was where Object-Oriented meets Functional Code, so I assumed it was similar to how you’d use JavaScript to act as OO language, when there is no such thing as true class definition in JavaScript, but you could get around it. Later that night I googled it, and found similar findings. More info on what Scala is below:

<http://www.scala-lang.org/what-is-scala.html>

I also learned that angular.js is already becoming obsolete to many, and that more coders are gravitating to learning the react.js library when it comes to similar functionalities. Link for more info on react.js below:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/React_(JavaScript_library)>

After a couple more small tidbits of conversing later, I decided to call it a day about 50mins or so in. On my way out, the same “phone hacker” individual, as he described himself, asked if I had an android based phone. To my advantage I pulled out my ancient iPhone 4s, he had a face of disappointment. To my amazement he had literally installed computer chip in his hand between the thumb and index finger, and said that all he would have to do to share his contact info would be to tap my phone, if it was android based, and the chip would read the info contact information in. That’s when I realized that IT isn’t just a job for some people, it’s also a lifestyle.