

Urban Legends: What You Code Makes You Who You Are

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Where I work



A little on where I work. Mattermost is an open source platform for secure communication, collaboration, and orchestration of work across tools and teams.

One of the things I do there in my role as head of Developer Relations is the amazing podcast, What Matters. Feel free to check it out.

A little about me...



I'm a Developer Advocate, which means I come to speak at conferences, build internal tools, help people with meet ups and stuff like that. Also, I'm a musician, a hockey coach, a dad who let's his kids keynote conferences, and a general people person. I like people, and people are what we are and what makes up the tech community.

What this talk is about

- Common misconceptions about the various languages we use
- Ideas certain parts of the tech community have about other parts of the tech community
- Concepts that differ in the perception of open source and enterprise

The main focus of this talk is kind of three fold. There are misconceptions about the languages we use. That one is better than another. That there is a golden hammer to solve all the problems. That being well versed in any one makes you a superior developer.

Some of these misconceptions come from the communities we identify with, others from the communities that spawned us.

Finally, some of the perceptions we've all dealt with are the difference between being an open source developer vs. being an "enterprise" developer.

What this talk won't be about



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We won't be talking about cryptozoology, actual urban legends, or mythical beasts. There will be no unicorns in this talk (not even during the ruby part!)

Ruby

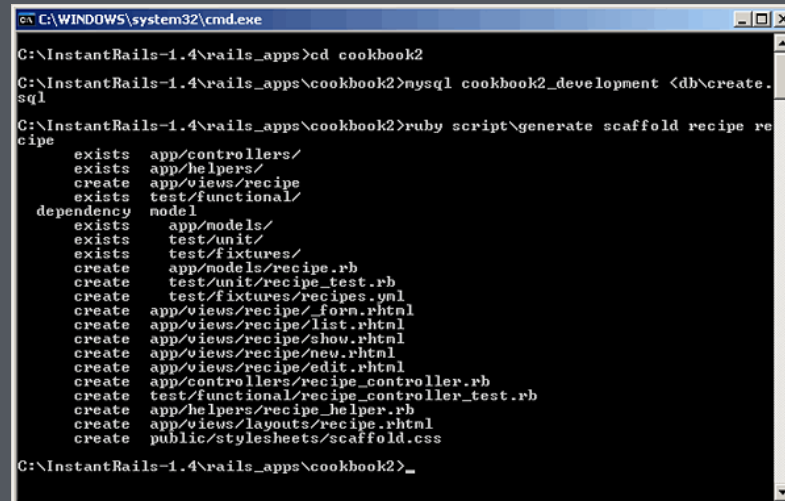


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Rubyists - my posse - my people. But...those who are on the outside think - what a bunch of fucking hipsters! So let's take a look at some outside perceptions of ruby.

Because Rails



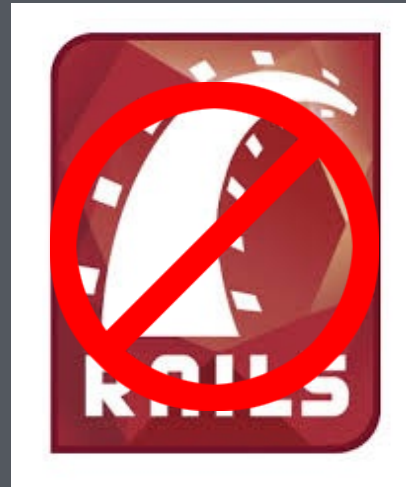
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C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe
C:\InstantRails-1.4\rails_apps>cd cookbook2
C:\InstantRails-1.4\rails_apps\cookbook2>mysql cookbook2_development <db\create.sql
C:\InstantRails-1.4\rails_apps\cookbook2>ruby script\generate scaffold recipe re
cipe
  exists  app/controllers/
  exists  app/helpers/
  create  app/views/recipe
  exists  test/functional/
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  create  test/fixtures/recipes.yml
  create  app/views/recipe/_form.rhtml
  create  app/views/recipe/list.rhtml
  create  app/views/recipe/show.rhtml
  create  app/views/recipe/new.rhtml
  create  app/views/recipe/edit.rhtml
  create  app/controllers/recipe_controller.rb
  create  test/functional/recipe_controller_test.rb
  create  app/helpers/recipe_helper.rb
  create  app/views/layouts/recipe.rhtml
  create  public/stylesheets/scaffold.css
C:\InstantRails-1.4\rails_apps\cookbook2>_
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Many people who don't know much about ruby or the community basically know about rails. While rails is pretty widely used and has a fairly vibrant (LOUD) community, it's hardly the end all be all. Also, because of things like scaffolding and easy setup, people believe everything a ruby or rails does is automagical. I really hate that word. Like one click and the whole project is there, just throw some CSS on it and BAM done - pay me a million bucks! Not true folks. Start with this...

Ruby != Rails



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Ruby does not necessarily equal rails. As a matter of fact, I haven't touched rails for a project in about a year and half. And I'm okay with that. It's not always necessary. So let's not pretend we all do nothing but scaffold a few things and call it a day. Rubyists work hard.

Ruby Is Not Useful



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I'll let this one sink in or a sec. This was taken from a blog post that wanted to claim enterprise software development is not dead. A true sentiment, and I'll get to that later. For now, let's focus on the fact that apparently if you aren't an enterprise dev you make worthless self-serving crap. And live in San Francisco. And have a beard and a hat.

Just for Hobbyists



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The attitude that ruby is just for hobbyists or people making garbage applications is a myth. A ridiculous myth. Plenty of companies use ruby daily to deliver high quality applications



Just saying. There are more than a few companies that are using ruby in some capacity. Is it the end all be all? No...but it's good, and it fits a purpose. And it's gets certain jobs done well. So that's ruby - let's talk about the arch-enemy, PHP.



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First off - let's dispel the rumor. I'm a ruby guy, but I have no animosity toward PHP, it's community, their frameworks, whatever. It's about the right tool for the job, right? I feel like this is me saying, "It's cool, I have PHP friends." Whatever. It's true. I do. If we perpetuate the "us and them" philosophy between languages, what are we helping. Our jobs as developers are to solve problems. No end user cares what language you used as long as your application works.

PHP Is Dead - Long Live PHP



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Fact - PHP is the world's most widely spread web development language. It's on most servers. Eighty some odd percent of web applications use PHP in some capacity. That's pretty good for a dead or dying language. Sure it's not the new sexy anymore, but frankly, it's widely used and not likely to be toppled anytime soon. It's alive...and it's vibrant

Microservices



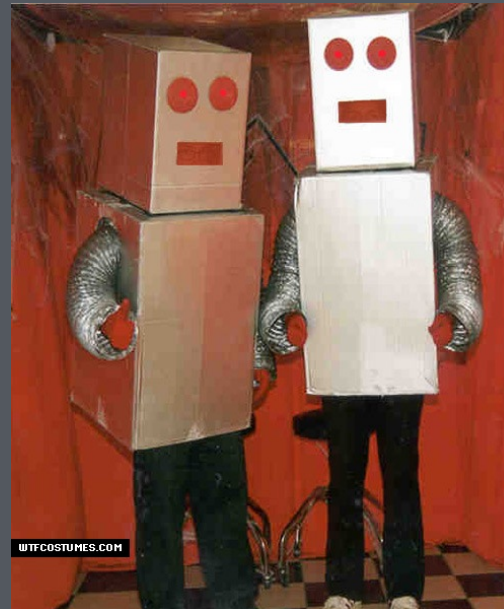
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Some folks think that PHP, because it is often used in monolithic applications, can't do microservices. It's all just one big file, right? One GIANT PHP file.

Truthfully, with the advent of frameworks and the outbreak of more architecture directed initiatives, PHP is a valid choice for micro services concepts.

Slow



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PHP is an interpreted language, and it doesn't have a built-in compiler. The same is true of other web languages, at least Perl. Python has a built-in runtime compiling system, so you get compiled byte-code without having to do anything.

Security



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There is a perception that applications created with PHP lack security. PHP is as secure as the next language. That is to say, any application is as secure as it's made. Nothing, no matter how it was created is unhackable. Keeping that in mind will help you sleep at night. Maybe.

Stuffy



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PHP is often seen as a business language - something for boring banking web applications or boring business sites. Stuffy also has a dual meaning. While it's easy to dispel the myth that PHP applications are only for strict business types - the idea that the PHP community is a bit obsessed with stuffed elephants is no myth at all.

The Internet

Me: It's a PHP elephant.
Coworker (C++ nerd): Does it have 3
different-length trunks, but only 1.5 legs?
Me: Yes, and it still manages to run most of
the internet. [#micdrop](#)

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The key here is, PHP still runs about 75% of the internet. Sure, it's different flavors of PHP like HHVM and WordPress - but it's still PHP at the heart. This can lead to some opinionated thoughts like you see here, but it doesn't change the truth of the matter.

Java



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Java is another language thought dead. But yet it powers the biggest apps available today. Remember that image of the guy on the plane talking to the SOMA coffee dude? Yeah - he wrote in Java. I can use both sides of that argument. Java runs giant things that keep things running. Java runs a majority of the things the big businesses use to keep things functioning. From Airplanes to manufacturing robots, java is there. It might be ugly and cantankerous, but it's not going anywhere. How many of you have tried ot learn Java and switched to something easier? How many of you have coded for space shuttles?

Python



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Python...that's just for academia and science stuff right? Wrong. It has wider applications and can build web apis like you wouldn't believe. At a previous job, we used Python to build an app that allowed us to dole out cash to people and projects we, the employees, were passionate about. That's neither scientific nor academic, that's just love. You can't quantify that.

Python Fun



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This is a shot from RailsConf a few years ago where Paul Lamere. He gave a talk about manipulating data and cool tools like Boil the Frog that are all based on music and what we can learn from it. A great example of python not being just for the academics.

Linux



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So linux, not a language but people have this perception that it's for neck beards and basement dwellers. How many busted bank machines or airplane movie screens have featured this happy penguin upon reboot? Making things happen is important. We all want to do it. Right tool for the job. I repeat: our job is to get things done, be it for our client, our business, our great idea...our bit coin miner. Granted, a lot of the linux community does little to dispel their own stereo type, but there are good people every where.

Perl



Aristotle

Slicing and dicing the onion, tears running

Is Perl dead?

By **Aristotle** on December 27, 2014 10:14 PM under [Reaction](#)

Or just **deader than Ruby**?

(Does this constitute a Ruby-o-meter++? Can it increment in reverse?)

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This was a funny reaction to a blog article I wrote a while back. Apparently, the Perl folks thought it would be funny to take a poke at Ruby since the title was “Ruby Isn’t Dead”. While I don’t believe Perl is dead either, it has been in a torpid, static state for years. This Christmas, however, Perl 6 was released - and from what I’ve heard, the wait was worth it.

Perl



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A little while ago, after several years of development, we got Perl 6. It was an interesting gift - they spent so long to develop it people had given up the ghost, like it was the Half Life 3 of programming languages. But the reasoning behind it - finding the imperfections and making them just right - was the reason behind the wait. And, according to many people, Craigslist included, it was well worth the wait.

JAMStack!!



Jamstack

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JAMStack is the future. Everything else sucks - Thank you, buenas días

It's not always the new hotness



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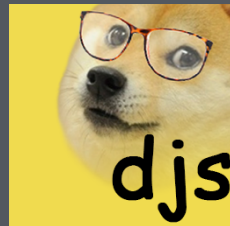
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Seriously...attitudes like this are part of the reason we have imaginary animosity in the current tech community. Really? After all these years, all the objective-C coders are obsolete because Apple said something?

Anything with a JS



PhoneJS



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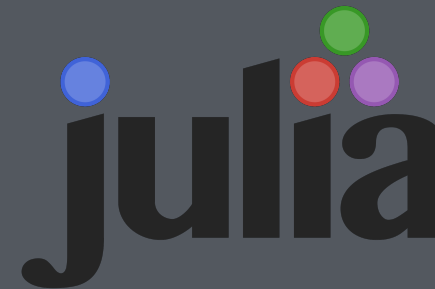
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Just because something has JS tacked onto the end, don't assume it's useful, helpful, or even necessarily has a point. While I grant, JavaScript is ubiquitous, all these JS's flying about aren't helping new people to get into coding, they're just confusing people. Apparently there is a belief that adding JS to any word, be it neck beard or bacon, means you have created a new framework or helpful thing.

And so many more...



Clojure



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There are so many languages and we've just hit on a few. We should take the time to explore everything we can - find new things and learn more.

It's not about being with it

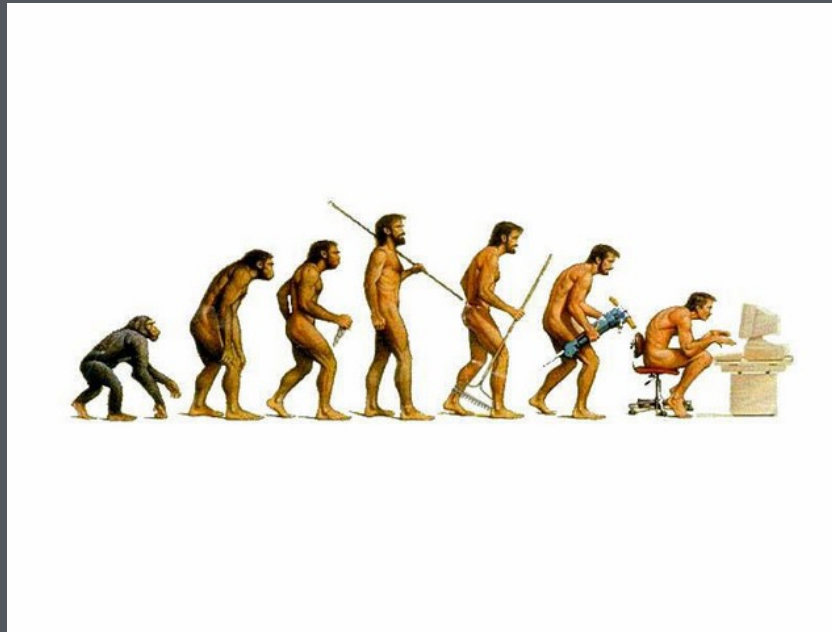


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To avoid that hipster-ish feeling, it isn't always about leaving the last best thing behind for the new hotness. It also isn't about clinging to that old, faded thing that is "dependable" forever. If we NEVER evolve, we never find out what works best for us and what might lead to a next great tool. At the same time, without an engaging community to be a part of, you might not know what the best parts of any particular tool were to begin with.

Evolution is Important



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To become stagnant is always the biggest way to guarantee things fail. Point of fact, in the world of DevOps, we started on bare metal. Many organizations are 100% cloud - leveraging AWS and the ELK stack to deliver the best logging experience possible. But it didn't start there. It started with a pain point and a local server.

And even now many places are returning to bare metal for the ability of control over the server or to gain better security protocols.

Communities



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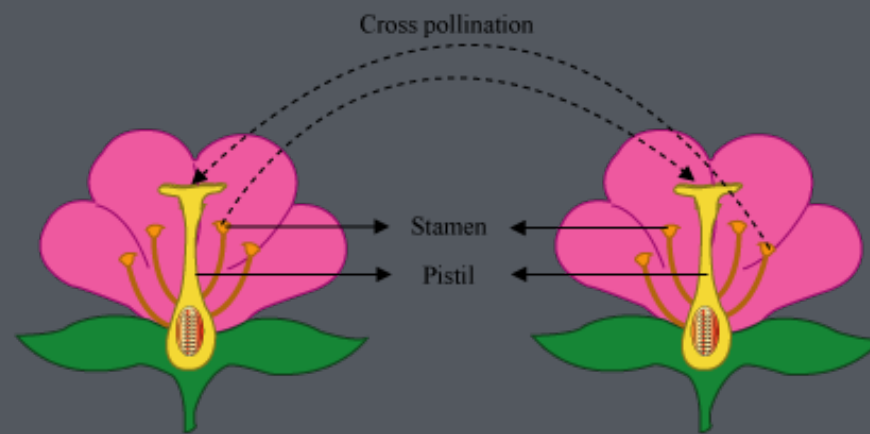
Yeah - let's talk about communities for a bit. There are so many!! This even alone could be called the ATO community. And we all love our communities! Separately! Equally! Never mingling... That's kinda the issue - the big problem. We all live in glass houses but we LOVE to throw stones

Some messed up things people say...

- “Designers aren’t developers...they shouldn’t be at ‘hard core tech’ meet ups”
- “SysAdmins can live without developers...what do we need them for?”
- “Business folks just don’t get developers”
- “Tech people are socially inept...all of them”

So here are some things people have actually said, while not necessarily to me, within my range of hearing. I’ve heard it mentioned the idea of “be careful of being overheard”. I overhear a lot. I go to quite a few places. These are all things I’ve heard people say at conferences, meet-ups...on business calls. So let’s take a look...

Cross Pollination



So the first part is getting people to leave their own niche. Go to a PHP conference you crazy rubyist! Go to the Java meetup you wacky Perl developer! Invite the Linux lady in your town to speak at your wicked awesome Ember meetup! If we do not get new perspectives, we stagnate and die. There I said it.

The Tech Community

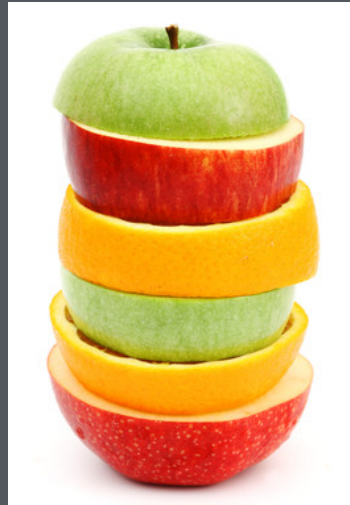


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We are all part of a greater community outside of our jobs, outside of our chosen languages. We are part of the tech community. We all want to make applications, hardware, software, anything, that brings joy into some end user's life. We want to succeed at solving problems using technology. I think you may have heard, I work at Engine Yard. Our company was started to solve a single problem - where do you put your Ruby app. Then, how do we cloudify that. We keep moving forward and adding language support so we can keep solving new problems. It's not just Engine Yard, We all want to make things better, so why not make things better together.

Open Source and Enterprise



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So finally we get to the, possibly most contentious part. The dichotomy between open source software and enterprise, or really non-open source, software. How many of us here are open source developers? And how many are not? How many of us that are open source developers haven't always been? I know I haven't.

Back to this...



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Let's talk about how people perceive open source developers. Shaggy, living in SF, all west coast, making useless crap apps. Or living in their mom's basement, scraping together linux packages and hoping for cash to feed their 40 cats.

The Enterprise Dev

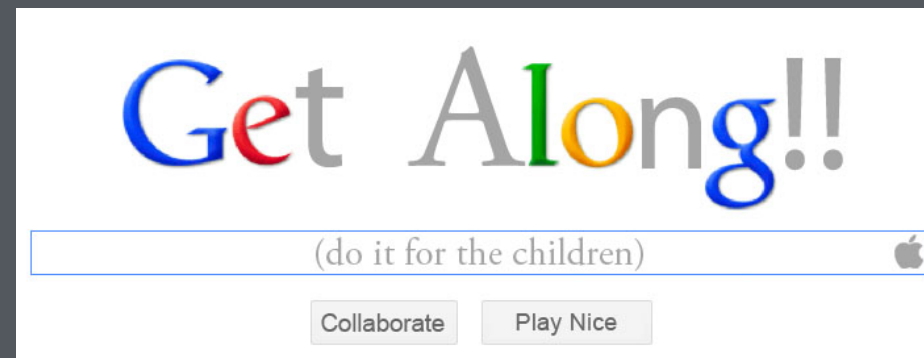


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And of course enterprise devs only have fun when making mad money. The perception of enterprise devs ranges from toiling cogs in a grey cube factory making software for other grey cube factories or a well-heeled group of go getters that are after the cash prize.

Hmm...



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So maybe the idea that the poor downtrodden open source dev is just as bad as the earning so much cube dweller. There is a lot about organization and general usefulness the open source community can learn from enterprise developers. And I imagine there is a lot about craft and creativity enterprise devs can learn from open source players. We are not completely unique - just enough to have a different view and hopefully the desire to share that view with others. FOR THE CHILDREN

So what else



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Part of the point of this talk is to point out that there are flaws in logic. We, as people, tend to inflate our own interests until things grow out of proportion. We try our best to be useful for 50 or 60 years then we move on. I'm ignoring those teenage years when we switched useful for being disruptive (not in the startup way either).

Smash the Pedestal



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I love all you people. You are truly awesome. You are doing something no one else does, and that's great. But be realistic. If you were a ninja I wouldn't be able to see you. If you were a rock star, you'd probably play an instrument. And there are no wizards...probably



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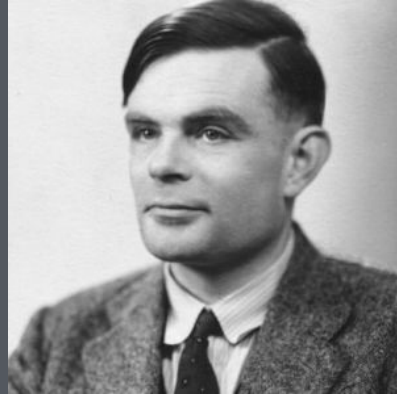
So, forget the legends. Forget the myths about who you are and what you do. Do the best you can and be cool with everyone around you. Help new people get into this game without all the surrounding bullshit and eventually these urban legends will disappear like a chupacabra in the night.

You are not who you are
because of your code

You are not just a developer or
designer or database specialist

You are not a super ninja
rockstar wizard

You are not this person



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Or this person



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But...

We all have potential to be great. And we
all should strive to be great...together

Thanks!



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