

Eric Armstrong

Software Systems and Documentation
Strategist, Evangelist, Technologist

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Summary

Accomplished, author, software developer, and production specialist. Creative problem solver, with an extensive list of [publications](#) and development projects. Self-starter bubbling with project ideas. Passionate user-advocate. Ability to communicate, inspire, and motivate. Ability to listen and find solutions that work.

Your work is a pleasure to read! It flows easily from one topic to the next, with rarely a misstep.

--Editor at Sun Microsystems

Goal

Work with a team of smart people, integrating, documenting, and building tools that enable collaboration and enhance productivity.

Professional Experience

LongJump (Technology Evangelist, Apr 2010 –)

- Helped create a programmer-friendly environment on the LongJump cloud platform (PaaS)
- Programming examples, MediaWiki articles and graphics, developer-intro talks (Java, Eclipse, PowerPoint)
- MediaWiki enhancements and maintenance (PHP)
- Acted as a developer advocate to improve the platform, helping to make it more attractive to developers.

Narus, Inc (contract, Jan-Mar 2010)

- Wrote installation and user guides for a new network traffic management module. (DITA, XMetaL)
- Provided usability feedback on the new module.
- Converted existing installation guide for network management/attack-detection system. (FrameMaker, DITA)
- Reorganized and rewrote the guide for usability and minimalism.
- Helped to establish writing/tagging standards, customize outputs, and set up production procedures.
- Created processes for delivering context-sensitive WebHelp. (JavaScript, JSON, Ruby)

Propylon (2009)

Built foundation technologies and did client-side programs, and extensive documentation to help meet a major milestone for an asynchronous-message, document-processing system.

- Wrote a test harness and API extraction tool for OOoBasic code (Python). Auto-generated folder hierarchies from OOo documents (OOoBasic). Created a client build system (Rake). (Sliksvn, TSVN, Trac, OOoBasic, DOS, Python, Ruby, Jing)

Independent (2009)

Focus on making contributions to the open source and entrepreneurial communities.

- **Development:** [RuDi](#) (Ruby Utilities for DITA processing)—a foundation for next-generation collaboration systems. The idea is to use Ruby's capacity for DSL-construction, in conjunction with DreamWeaver templates, to streamline the DITA production process, improve authoring efficiency, and (eventually) customize DITA to empower distributed design-and-decision-making. (JRuby, RSpec, RDoc, NetBeans, DITA OT)
- **Technology Assessment:** Summarized the technology vision. Proposed an initial "proof of principle".

Eric is like a great translation machine! Put in technologeze and out comes English.

--Sandy Klausner, Founder, CubeSystems

Sun Microsystems (2005-2009)

- Investigated DITA technologies, evaluated and selected tools, ran the pilot study, gave talks on rationale and lessons learned, participated in team-building.

Eric communicates effectively with groups and individuals. If he has new information or discoveries of note, he shares them with everyone and listens (an important quality) to what people say in response.

- Defined semantics for generated web pages. Built [tools](#) to automate the process. (Javascript, JSP, Glassfish, Ruby)

Kudos to Eric for making the (web page) vision a reality. He thought it through, raised and clarified various semantic issues, and is the technical brain behind the implementation.
- Evaluated several CMS systems. Designed algorithms for automated link management using Subversion.
- Devised a DITA implementation strategy and rollout plan.

I have found Eric to be super creative and innovative...but he also has a pragmatic approach that produces results in the real world.
- Ran a DITA pilot. Took notes on lessons learned. Wrote papers and gave presentations to explain DITA's major concepts. Listed, clarified, and identified heuristics for the 20-some design decisions that face any DITA project. (blog post pending) Wrote a paper on one of them, published at CIDM. (See [publications.](#))

Eric's progress with the DITA pilot is directly attributable to his tenaciousness and his technical acumen.

- Investigated collaboration vehicles for online editing. (Wikis, DITA editors, publishing systems: Drupal, Daisy)
- Identified DITA as a single-source solution for multi-version man pages and installation pages.
- Constructed a build process for man-page production. (Rake)
- Wrote the **html2man** utility to automate the construction of man pages from HTML file sources, preventing errors and increasing departmental efficiency. (Ruby)
- Set up a Subversion workspace for departmental collaboration. Configured Apache for WebDAV access. (Subversion, Apache, WebDAV)
- Evaluated DITA-based document-collaboration strategies. Wrote a paper on potential future uses that would take advantage of DITA's extensibility: [Enabling Collaborative Design-and-Decision Discussions, Online](#)
- Wrote the program that management used to reduce 8,000 broken links in 13,500 files, down to under 500. Set up a monthly cron job to run it. (Java, cron)

Other

- Acted as a technical resource for the team of 12 writers, documenting procedures, establishing infrastructure.
- Reorganized directory hierarchies and proposed workspace strategies to allow for more extensive use of link-managing tools like DreamWeaver.
- Managed production processes for 13,500 documents taken from multiple workspaces, and pushed to several locations.
- To support the Java Community Process (JCP), wrote a series of scripts that used an HTML differencing tool to produce reviewable HTML "diff" pages. Ran it as needed for new releases. (TopBlend, CSH)

Independent (2003-2005)

- *Guide to Generics* for version 1.5 of Sun's Java platform
- *Java Web Start Guide* for Sun. (116 pgs, 42 screen shots, 1 diagram).
- *Java 1.3 to 1.5 Migration Guide* for Sun.
- Unpublished manuscript: *The Politics of Health: A general-systems examination of interlocking forces in our society.*
- Established CitizensAdvisory.org to begin taking the money out of elections.

Sun Microsystems (1996-2004)

Acting as a consultant, wrote tutorials and API documentation, managed production processes, and built quality- improvement software. (Java, CodeGuide, Unit Testing)

- **Development**
 - **CommentMerge:** Merge comments from a compilable spec hierarchy into source files.
 - **StubMaker:** Extract comment-complete, compilable stubs from source files. Used by the Security team.

- **LinkCheck:** Look for broken links and missing anchors, treating discrete sets of files as though co-located.
- **LinkFix:** Changing HTML links en masse, using pattern-based substitutions.
- **DocCheck:** Lint utility for API comments. ([DocCheck release](#))
- **Glossary Servlet:** Displaying and edit a localization glossary in any two of 9 different languages.
- **Utility library:** Application templates, fast I/O, regular-expression library for files. ([Regex-for-Files Library](#))
- **Technical Writing**
 - Reorganized and updated troubleshooting guides for application server product.
 - Revised and improved the Swing API descriptions.
- **Other Activities**
 - Participated in Douglas Engelbart's Bootstrap Colloquium at Stanford (<http://www.bootstrap.org>). Gave two talks.
 - Covered JavaOne conferences and wrote freelance articles for *JavaWorld*.

Independent (1996)

- **JBuilder 2 Bible.** A tutorial published by IDG Press, targeted at beginning Java programmers, using the Borland JBuilder IDE. Includes an AI application (Othello) and a tree-structured personal project planner to predict completion dates.
- **Software Development:** Helped to construct a .NET-based demo and create a Protege ontology for a pre-funding startup. Explored the idea of ontology-based program generation.

Additional Professional Experience

- **Oracle:** Technical Writing. Wrote conversion tools & a proofreading tool (MS Word).
- Reengineered a voice mail system. (PL/I)
- Founded a startup focused on building productivity software. Initial product was an outliner. Focused on product definition, marketing, and business development, while my partners focused on technology development.
- As a member of a "Major Opportunities" Team, played a significant role in landing contracts of \$2m, \$3m, and \$6m for a large hardware vendor. Wrote demos, gave presentations, ran benchmarks, set up hardware, and provided general technical support for multi-million dollar opportunities.
- Created "vaporware" demos for a Colorized office automation system, simple voice messaging system.
- Wrote a multi-tasking emulation library and a code-profiling tool. Two reported bugs in two years. (SP/Pascal)

Professional Memberships

- Silicon Valley DITA Interest Group (SVDIG)
- SDForum Ruby Interest Group
- JRuby developers list, NetBeans users list
- Kenai (project hosting) users and issues lists.

Education

Recent coursework and conferences:

- DITA-OT Training, 2008
- JoAnn Hackos' DITA Bootcamp, 2007
- Solaris System Administration I & II, 2006
- SDForum Ruby Conferences, Santa Clara, 2006, 2007
- Knowledge Technologies Conference, 2004
- Numerous JavaOne conferences since their inception (press)

Formal education:

- Post graduate work in pursuit of masters degree: Ohio State University: Computer Science
- BA, Ohio State University: Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, General Systems Theory, Mathematics. (Abstract Algebra, Topology, & Mathematical Logic).

Personal

- *Development:* AI Game Playing program (Othello). Original heuristics. Tie for 5th in international competition, program to teach people to play music by ear.
- *Athletics:* Played volleyball at highest amateur levels short of the Olympics. Gold and silver medals in Bay State games as player/coach. Black belt in martial arts.
- *Writing:* Articles on nutrition and fitness at [TreeLight](#). Political-reform posts at [Citizens' Advisory](#).

- *Other Interests:* Taiji, golf, cycling, Irish music, singing, sudoku, crosswords, chess.q

References

- For references, see my LinkedIn page: <http://linkedin.com/in/ericArmstrong77>.
- For other kind comments, see: <http://treelight.com/eric/kudos.html>.