

RIC ROBERTS

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"Ric is highly talented, enthusiastic, self-motivated professional with the drive and ability to work towards his own professional development while mentoring and encouraging others, all balanced with the business needs of the company and the targets of the team. Ric was a key member of the team and a real asset to the company. Ric has always been dedicated to learning new skills and keeping up with current trends and advancements" -

Saeed Choudhary, Head of Development, Jontek Ltd

Profile

I'm a motivated, inquisitive software developer, with over 9 years experience in the industry. I've been a full-time commercial software developer since I graduated in 2001 from the University of Warwick with a Maths-based honours degree. I'm passionate about technology and usability, and I'm always striving to improve and learn.

I run my own software company called [Swirrl](#) where we make tools for working with data online. For the 2 years leading up to the beginning of August 2011, I was the Technical Lead at [Stardotstar](#), an award-winning digital agency in Manchester. In August, I delivered a successful 3-day [Ruby on Rails training course at the MadLab](#). I am a founding member of [OpenDataManchester](#), a Manchester-based organisation which works to open data for the benefit of the local area.

I'm a fairly active blogger, starting my [personal blog](#) in 2006. Since then I've written for (and founded) a few others, including [DailyJS](#), [RubyInside](#), [LearnLinkedData](#), [SwirrlSpeak](#) and [FutureChanges](#).

Skills

My current main areas of technical expertise are Ruby on Rails, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, relational databases (such as MySQL and PostgreSQL) and NoSQL (particularly CouchDB and RDF), but I'm not a bad linux sys-admin either. I'm also keenly interested in, and rapidly improving at, front-end web work such as HTML5, CSS3 and more advanced JavaScript techniques. I'm adaptable, having worked with many different technologies in the past including Java, C++ and C#.NET and I've also recently started to get into Cocoa development (for OS X and iOS).

Recent Work Experience

CTO and Lead-Developer, [Swirrl IT Limited](#), Manchester & Stirling, June 2007 – present

Swirrl was founded in 2007 with my brother, Bill. Our current project is PublishMyData, a Linked Data publishing platform. We also run a SaaS wiki service called SwirrlWiki, but we're [closing this down soon](#). I act as Lead Developer and CTO for Swirrl.

PublishMyData is our current focus: we launched an early version a few months ago, and we are continuing to develop it. We're aiming mainly at the UK public sector at present and have had very positive feedback (including an [EU Open Data Challenge Award](#)) about our trial applications, such as [Open Data Communities](#) and [Linked Manchester](#). PublishMyData is based on Rails and Jena (an RDF triple-store). As we're working with emerging technologies, we've had to come up with some innovative solutions to problems that Rails developers may normally take for granted.

I've also built a simple open-source blog engine called [SemanticJournal](#), which runs on Rails and CouchDB. It helps people augment their blog's html with RDFa, and it was a good excuse to play with CouchDB. My personal blog and our company blogs run on this system. I'm currently in the process of improving and extending this project.

SwirrlWiki was my first serious Rails project. We started work on it in 2007 and launched it in 2008, but we've now stopped actively developing it, as although we have over 2000 users, no where near that many pay! Needless to say, since starting my own company, I've learnt a great deal about business, marketing, and user experience.

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JavaScript Developer, European music-related startup, Aug – Oct 2011

I worked for several months as a freelance Node.js and front-end JavaScript developer for a European music-related startup (the project details are confidential). I was involved with product design, software architecture design, front-end and back-end development.

Technical Lead, [Stardotstar Ltd](#), Manchester, July 2009 – July 2011

At Stardotstar I was lead developer and software architect (mainly working with Ruby, Rails, JavaScript and databases). I was also responsible for running and maintaining their live sites and applications. For the last year of my time at Stardotstar, I worked part-time so I could spend more time on my own company.

In addition to building on my previous development experience, I learnt an enormous amount about front-end web work, design and user experience... along with how a digital agency operates. Recently, I've been mentoring a junior Rubyist who has joined the company, and for larger projects, I've also been involved with managing freelance developers.

Some highlights of projects on which I've worked at Stardotstar:

- [BeaverLeaks](#), a Rails-based site produced for the *Beaver Falls* TV programme shown on Channel 4 during August 2011.
- A Rails/JavaScript/CouchDB assessment application for a large British academic institution (not released yet).
- A Rails/JavaScript/CouchDB CMS, on which many of Stardotstar's sites run, including [Stardotstar's own site](#), [Manchester Knowledge Capital](#), and [Corridor Connections](#). Corridor Connections additionally features a Rails/MySQL forum.
- [The Mersey Basin Campaign](#) houses an archive of 25 years of work by the Mersey Basin Campaign. The 'static' HTML produced for this site was generated by a Rails/MySQL app.
- I've worked on the back-end code and tools (mainly in Ruby) for various Flash apps for clients including the [Open University](#) and the [GMPTE](#).

Other Work Experience

Upon graduating from university in 2001, I worked at Accenture as a software developer and consultant for clients including Credit Suisse First Boston (C++, Oracle) and the London Stock Exchange (C#, ASP.NET, SQLServer, NCR Teradata).

I left Accenture at the end of 2003 and went on to work for a couple of small software houses (initially Skillweb in High Wycombe, and then Jontek in Stockport from 2005), where I continued to work with Microsoft .Net on desktop, web and mobile applications. In the summer of 2007, I left Jontek to work on my own company, Swirl.

Education

2:1 BSc (Hons) Mathematics, Statistics, Economics and Operational Research, 2001
University of Warwick.

Interests

As much as I love my Mac, I try to get away from it every so often to go for a run or a bike ride.

My CV is also available online here: <http://ricroberts.com/pages/hire-me>