Supporting Developers, Supporting Research

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the issue
the role of ‘developer’ is not valued

- very few developers make it into senior management in higher education and research
- developers are not invited to contribute at a strategic level for fear of being seen to be ‘technology driven’
- developers come and go, often on very junior and short-term contracts - therefore not recognised and trusted
- we have a rich & continuous source of talent from our student cohorts
- this means that there is little investment in developers
- consequently, we don’t get the best value from our developers (through no fault of their own!)

the case of the missing career path....
response: create conditions to give developers a **strategic** voice

about DevCSI

- funded by the JISC
- managed by the UKOLN Innovation Support Centre

http://devcsi.ukoln.ac.uk
events - supporting research directly

- e.g.
  - Semantic Web Applications and Tools for Life Sciences Hackathon - two day event hacking content, systems and services for the Life Sciences
  - working with Semantic Web Applications & Tools for Life Sciences and Open Knowledge Foundation

Cloud Computing
Open Mapping
Accessibility
Bio Geeks
Challenge at OR11
Challenge at RepoFringe11
Apache SOLR
Transfer Summit UK
UK Unix User Group
Agile Prototyping
Quick Wins with Apache SOLR
Software documentation

events - empowering developers

- media training to pitch ideas
- peer-peer training
- £85K of ‘free’ training to developers in one 2-day event
direct challenges

• by issuing challenges to engage developers
  • we encourage developers to collaborate with each other
  • we emphasise the importance of working with non-developers
  • we Get (useful) Stuff Done
  • “show us the future of repository systems”
  • http://vimeo.com/27049319

engaging developers early (undergraduates)

• DevXS & the University of Lincoln

• Student as Producer emphasises the role of the student as collaborator in the production of knowledge

• DevXS is about students sharing their ideas, mashing up data and building prototypes that improve, challenge and positively disrupt the research, teaching and learning landscapes of further and higher education

• http://bit.ly/nH8W4D
dev8D - the DevCSI developer days

- the (un)conference for developers in higher education & research
- 4 days of knowledge exchange and collaborative hacking
- will be in February in London, UK
- we have had great contributions from Australian participants before - would love to have more!

dev8Dau

- as you can see, dev8D has crossed the world!
- kudos to Steve Androulakis (Monash) & Jared Winton(VeRSI) for organising!
the future: a strategic role in the institution?

survey of institutional stakeholders, 2010

- 495 respondents including developers, their managers, IT directors, vendors, funders, users (academics, librarians, researchers)

  - 75%+ agreement that local developers understand the local context and act as a bridge between remote service providers, open source communities, and local end users, and add value by integrating into local contexts

  - 75% agreement that local developers work closely with end users to deliver innovation (more work needed though)

  - 70% agreement that local developers are undervalued as evidenced by short term contracts, lack of professional development or career opportunities and poor management
the strategic local developer: exploiting the cloud in the local context

"If the UK's creative businesses want to thrive in the digital future, you need people who understand all facets of it integrated from the very beginning. Take a lead from the Victorians [...] bring engineers into your company at all levels, including the top."

Eric Schmidt, Chairman of Google
thank you for listening!

thanks to Dr Ann Borda & VeRSI for supporting my visit

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