

The Ultimate Tech Glossary for Recruiters & HR Managers

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Super technical positions can be challenging to recruit for, especially if you don't consider yourself a "technical expert", but we're here to help. In order to build credibility with candidates, you'll need to be knowledgeable about the field they work in. Each role you're recruiting for has a different skillset and varying qualifications, and it's your job to effectively convey them to the developer in your pitch. If you don't know the difference between Java and JavaScript, you're bound to fail.

Learn all about the different technology languages, skills and roles in a way that's easy to digest and understand.

About Stack Overflow

Stack Overflow is the trusted destination site for developers to find, ask, and answer programming questions. That's why with Stack Overflow Careers, we also help them find jobs they love and give employers and recruiters the tools and best practices needed to reach, attract, and engage developer talent.

A

Access
Agile
AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML)
Amazon Web Services
AWS
Android
AngularJS
Apache
API (Application Programming Interface)
Application Developer
ASP.NET (Active Server Pages on .NET Framework)
Augmented Reality (AR)
Azure

B

Back End Developer
Big Data
Bug Tracking
Bug
Build

C

C (Pronounced "Sea")
C# (Pronounced "Sea Sharp")
C++ (Pronounced "Sea Plus Plus")
CAD (Computer-Aided Design)
Cloud

Cocoa
Code Coverage
Codec (Short for "Coder Decoder")
ColdFusion
Content Management Systems (CMS)
CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)

D

Database
Database Administrator
Data Modeling
DBMS (Database Management System)
Debugging
Deployment
Developer
Development Environment
DevOps ("Development + Operations")
Django
Dreamweaver
Drupal

E

Eclipse
ETL (Extract, Transform, Load)

F

Flash
Flash Builder 4
Flex
Front End Developer
Full Stack Developer

G

Git
GitHub
GO / go lang

H

High-level Programming Language
Hadoop
HTML (HyperText Markup Language)

I

IDE
iOS
IIS (Internet Information Server)
Illustrator
Intranet

J

Java (rhymes with lava)
JavaScript
Joomla
jQuery
JSON (JavaScript Object Notation)

L

LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, and Perl/PHP/Python)

Lean Programming

Linux

Low-level Programming Language

M

Magento

Mobile Developer

MongoDB

MVC (Model View Controller)

MySQL

N

.NET Framework

node.js

NoSQL Database

O

Object-Oriented Programming

Objective-C

Open Source

P

Photoshop

PHP

Postgres

Puppet

Python

R

Rackspace Cloud, EC2, S3

Ruby

Ruby on Rails

S

SAN/NAS (Storage Area Network/Network Attached Storage)

Scala

Scrum

SiteCore

Source Control

SQL (Structured Query Language)

Stack

Swift

System Administrator (sysadmin)

T

Titanium

U

Unit Testing

UNIX

User Interface (UI)

UX (“User Experience”)

Developer

V

VBA (Visual Basic for Applications)

VB (Visual Basic)

VB.NET (Visual Basic .NET)

VB6 (Visual Basic Version 6)

Version Control Systems

Visual Studio

VPN

W

WCF Web Services (Windows Communication Foundation)

Web developer

WordPress

Wowza Media Server

X

Xcode

XML (Extensible Markup Language)

XAML (Extensible Application Markup Language)

Share this



A

Access

Software for creating and managing databases from Microsoft.

Agile

A type of development that calls for keeping code simple, testing often, and delivering small, functional bits of the application as soon as they're ready. The focus is to build a succession of parts, rather than delivering one large application at the end of the project.

AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML)

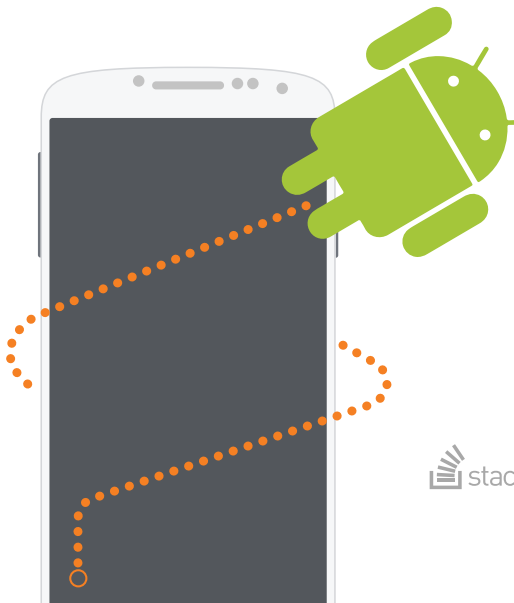
A web browser development feature that allows web pages to be more interactive and dynamic such that content can update without requiring manual page reloads. The "X" is a red herring, these days it's more common to use JSON than XML.

Amazon Web Services AWS

An Amazon-run service where a "cloud" of computers can be made available on-demand. This allows you to only pay for server capacity that you actually need when you need it. It includes Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) and Amazon S3.

Android

A mobile operating system developed by Google. It is designed primarily for touchscreen mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.



A

AngularJS

An open-source web application framework that addresses many of the challenges encountered in developing single-page applications. It aims to simplify both the development and the testing of such applications by providing a framework for client-side model–view–controller (MVC) architecture, along with components commonly used in rich Internet applications.

Apache

A widely-used free and open-source web server software. It is most commonly used on a Unix-like system, and the software is available for a wide variety of operating systems, including Windows, OS X, Linux, Unix, FreeBSD, Solaris, NetWare, OS/2, TPF, OpenVMS and eComStation.

API (Application Programming Interface)

A standardized module of program functionality that provides a specific service and can be re-used by multiple programs or developers.

Application Developer

A developer who writes standalone apps that run on desktop and laptop computers.

ASP.NET (Active Server Pages on .NET Framework)

A framework for developing custom web server applications on Microsoft Server Platform. The term includes the original ASP.NET known as Webforms and the newer ASP.NET/MVC.

Augmented Reality (AR)

A subset of graphics programming and things like image recognition, pattern recognition, face recognition; machine learning is also not unlikely to be involved.

A

Azure

Microsoft's cloud service, a competitor to Amazon Web Services. This is essentially a similar platform to Amazon Web Services (AWS) and the google cloud offerings.

B

Back End Developer

A developer who focuses mainly on the server side of code for a web application. They are knowledgeable about databases, server internals, system administration and technologies used once a site reaches scale.

Big Data

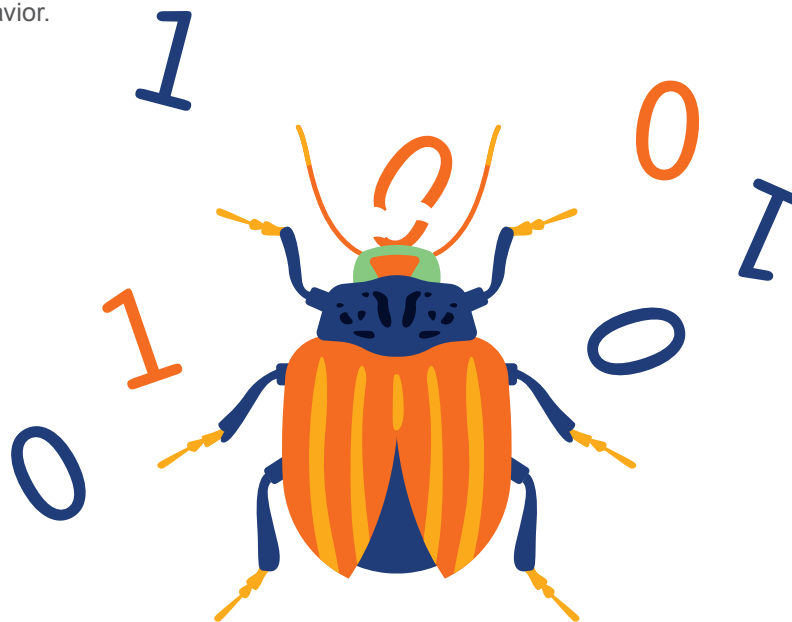
A buzzword for "data science" which means "working with very large amounts of data".

Bug Tracking

A database or project management system for tracking program bugs.

Bug

A program defect or erroneous behavior.



B

Build

Verb = the act of compiling programs from their source human-readable form into computer executable format.

Noun = the final executable output form itself as a “release.”

C

C (Pronounced “Sea”)

A general purpose programming language used to program low-level applications for embedded applications, device drivers, operating system kernels, etc.

C# (Pronounced “Sea Sharp”)

A very common development language for ASP.NET platform. It is a general purpose language that is extensively used for Think Client (Silverlight) apps and Windows (WPF) apps.

C++ (Pronounced “Sea Plus Plus”)

An object-oriented version of the “C” programming language, commonly used for developing desktop Windows and Linux applications. Competes with Java, C#.

CAD (Computer-Aided Design)

A combination of hardware and software that allows engineers to design a variety of objects.

Cloud

A service of another company managing your hardware. Using a cloud service means you don’t own your own physical hardware, and you can add or remove servers on-demand without much up-front cost.

C

Cocoa

One of the Apple technologies, is a programming API for OS X.

Code Coverage

An analysis method that determines which parts of the software have been executed (covered) by the test case suite and which parts have not been executed and therefore may require additional attention.

Codec (Short for “Coder Decoder”)

A device or program that converts signals or content from one form to another. Additionally, it may be used to refer to a standard that does such activities in a standard way. MP3 is an Audio CODEC for example.

ColdFusion

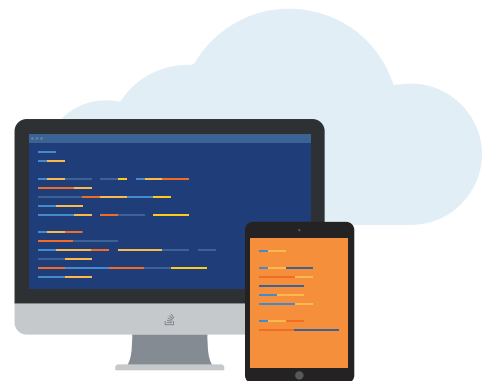
An Enterprise Web Development Framework sold by Adobe Systems used for developing Web applications.

Content Management Systems (CMS)

A database for content storage that is intended to help manage workflow and version tracking of content. Usually used as a way to have multiple people contributing to the content of a particular web-site and track all those revisions and history.

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)

A way to describe the presentation and formatting semantics separate from the actual textual content in HTML pages.



D

Database

A collection of data stored in a computer in such a way that a program or a webpage can easily find, select, and/or manipulate the desired data. Typically, databases are organized by fields, records and tables. A field is one piece of data, a record is a collection of fields, and a table is a collection of records.

Database Administrator

A developer who has exceptional knowledge of the internal workings of a database server. Their primary roles are ensuring data integrity, backup, and performance efficiency.

Data Modeling

The analysis of data objects that are used in a business or other context and the identification of the relationships among these data objects.

DBMS (Database Management System)

Software for creating, reading and writing to a database.

Debugging

The process of finding and removing the causes of software failures.

Deployment

The process of moving compiled code (and other items - such as images, CSS, documentation etc...) from development to production. Common to web applications.

D

Developer

A person who solves technical problems and implements them primarily by writing software. Developers must be able to write working code.

Development Environment

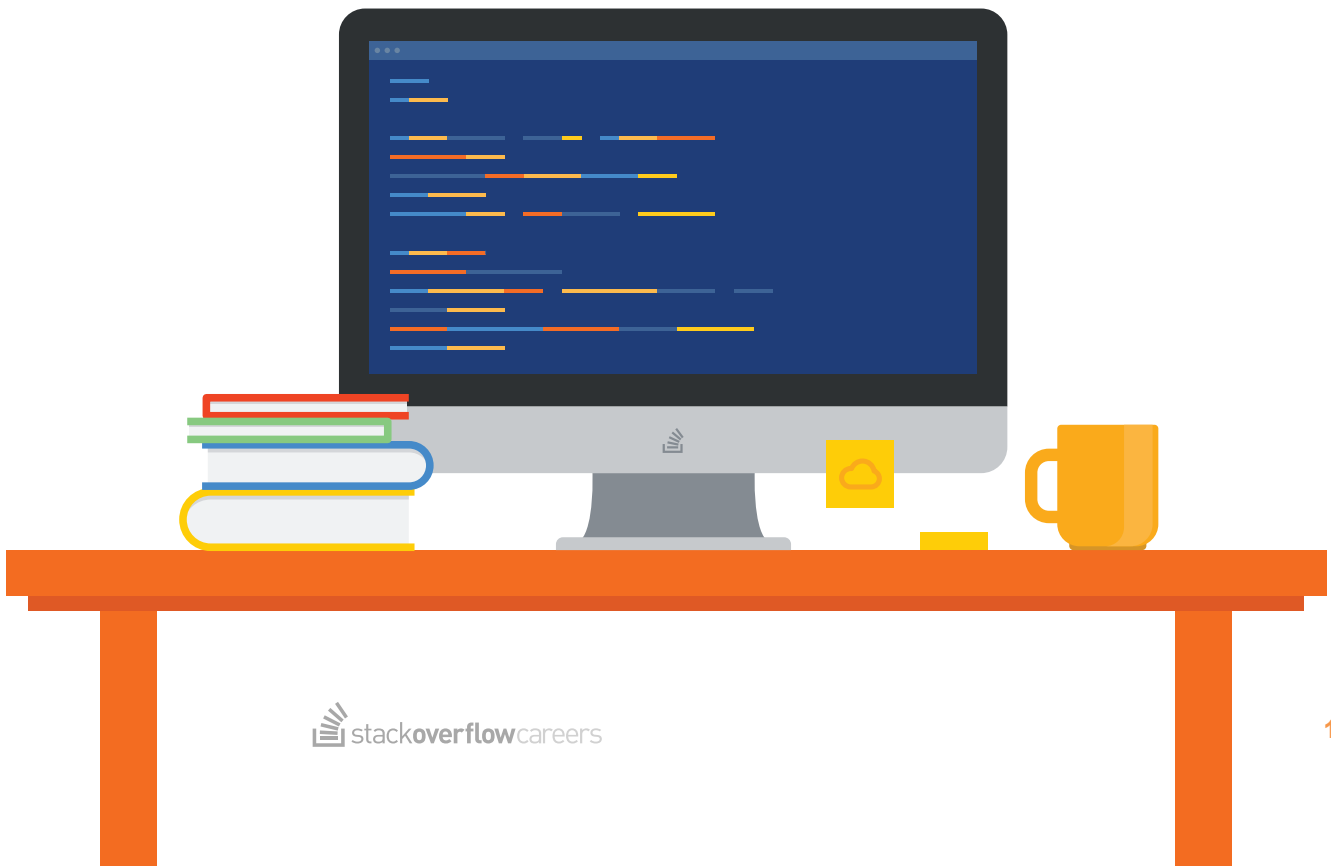
The set of programming tools used to create software.

DevOps (“Development + Operations”)

A software development practice that emphasizes close collaboration between software developers and other operational teams like system administrators, or a person who specializes in a hybrid developer-sysadmin role. Contrast this against the traditional model still in use at most companies called “waterfall”, where Developer and Operations are given conflicting priorities and collaboration isn’t encouraged.

Django

An open-source web framework written in Python.



D

Dreamweaver

A web development application. Used to create and manage web page content and applications.

Drupal

A free and open source Content Management System that is written in PHP.

E

Eclipse

An Integrated Development Environment used to write Java code.

ETL (Extract, Transform, Load)

The process of moving and transforming data between two systems, which are usually both very complex.

F

Flash

An Adobe proprietary multimedia platform for adding animation, video and various forms of interactivity to web applications. Normally realized as a downloaded application that runs via web browser client-side plug-in. Many Flash developers are proficient in ActionScript.

Flash Builder 4

An interactive development environment for build Adobe FLASH applications. See Flash.

F

Flex

Earlier versions of Flash Builder. See Flash Builder 4.

Front End Developer

A developer who focuses mainly on the part of the application that runs in the browser. They work directly with HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

Full Stack Developer

A developer that can get a website live on the internet all on their own. Requires the use of many technologies, including a database, operating system configuration (OS), server configuration, a server framework, HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

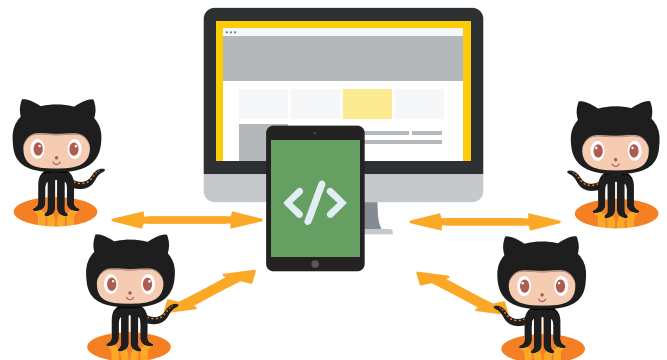
G

Git

A distributed source control system, where everyone who clones a project gets the complete history of it. It is possible to develop locally without any dependency on a central server.

GitHub

A website for hosting source code in Git. It is the most common place to share and collaborate on open source projects, and can also be used to host private repositories for companies.



GO / golang

A general purpose computer language developed by Google.

H

High-level Programming Language

A programming language that's designed to be easier to read and use. Provides more abstractions from the details of how computers work, may include natural language keywords (e.g. making some code read like English prose). Examples: Ruby, Python, C#.

Hadoop

An open-source big data framework written in Java.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)

The language used to specify the content of web pages.

I

IDE

Stands for Integrated Development Environment. A software application that helps developers write code. Examples include Eclipse and Visual Studio.

iOS

A mobile operating system created and developed by Apple for Apple hardware. It presently powers many of their mobile devices, including the iPhone, iPad and iPod touch.

IIS (Internet Information Server)

A software used to serve web site pages. Runs on Microsoft Windows Server.

Illustrator

A vector graphics based editor, Adobe Illustrator. This program allows graphics to be created using lines and various structured objects. Alternatively, Adobe Photoshop operates at the pixel level.

Intranet

A company's network - not usually accessible from outside company premises, though sometimes such access is available via a VPN (see VPN).

J

Java (rhymes with lava)

An object-oriented programming language that is associated with a write-once run-anywhere philosophy. Java applications can be run securely on any platform.

JavaScript

A programming language most commonly used for client-side web browser based applications to build interactive and dynamic web page content. However, its popularity in server-side programming has been increasing lately; see "node.js". This language has no association with Java.

Joomla

A free and open source Content Management System (CMS) for web servers written in PHP.

jQuery

A cross-browser JavaScript library designed to simplify the client-side scripting of HTML. It is the most popular JavaScript library in use today.

J

JSON (JavaScript Object Notation)

A lightweight way to move data for web applications. It's intended as a more efficient alternative to XML when the sophistication of XML is not needed.

L

LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, and Perl/PHP/Python)

A fully free and open source technology stack usually used for development of Web Applications on Linux platforms. LAMP is a competitor to Microsoft ASP.NET stack with Microsoft SQL Server.

Lean Programming

A concept that emphasizes optimizing efficiency and minimizing waste in the development of a computer program; the concept is also applicable to all enterprise practices. The concept originated in manufacturing and is also known as the Toyota approach.

Linux

A computer operating system assembled under the model of free and open-source software development and distribution. The word Linux is used to describe a whole family of operating systems, the best known of which are Ubuntu, Fedora, CentOS, and Debian.



Low-level Programming Language

A programming language that provides few abstractions and allows programs to be written that resemble hardware instructions. This allows for code that is potentially harder to read but runs faster than a high-level counterpart. Examples: Assembly, C

M

Magento

An open-source E-commerce content management system written in PHP.

Mobile Developer

A developer who typically writes programs for smartphones and tablet computers using iOS, Android, or Windows Phone (less common).

MongoDB

A cross-platform, document-oriented database which makes the integration of data in certain types of applications easier and faster. Belongs to the family of NoSQL databases.

MVC (Model View Controller)

A design pattern for creating a separation of concerns where the user interface is separated from the data and business logic of the application.

MySQL

A relational database management system that is a popular choice for use in web applications. It is a central component of the LAMP open source web application software stack.

N

.NET Framework

A software framework developed by Microsoft that runs primarily on Windows. Programs written for the .NET Framework are most commonly written in C#, but can also be written in Visual Basic .NET, F# and several other languages. Microsoft has recently released the .NET framework under an open-source license.

N

node.js

An open-source, cross-platform runtime environment for server-side and networking applications. Node.js applications are written in JavaScript.

NoSQL Database

A database that provides a mechanism for storage and retrieval of data that is modeled in means other than the tabular relations used in relational databases. NoSQL databases are increasingly being used in big data and real-time web applications. NoSQL databases are often contrasted with more traditional relational databases like MySQL, Postgresql, MSSQL and Oracle. Also called “a key-value” database because given a key (the item being looked up), the value (answer) is found.

O

Object-Oriented Programming

A programming model where data and code is combined together into a logical abstraction. A type of programming that helps improve the structure of programs so that common elements in the code could be structured more like the real world “objects” they represent. Many modern programming languages are object-oriented, including Java, C#, Python, Perl, Ruby, PHP, Objective-C and Swift.

Objective-C

An object-oriented version of the “C” programming language, commonly used on Apple platforms including Mac OS X and iOS for iPhone and iPad. Apple’s answer to C++. Also see “Swift”, which was created by Apple in 2015 and which has a good chance of mostly replacing Objective-C in the long run.

O

Open Source

A program whose source code is made available for use or modification as users or other developers see fit. Other terms used are “Free Software” and “Libre Software” (less common) and the acronyms OSS, FOSS, and FLOSS; the difference between these terms is mostly philosophical.



P

Photoshop

A photo editing software made by Adobe.

PHP

A scripting type programming language with many powerful libraries. This language is commonly used to develop web server applications, especially on open source platforms such as Linux.

Postgres

A free and open object-relational DBMS. Used for storing and management of data via SQL. Competitors include Microsoft SQL, MySQL, Oracle, etc.

Puppet

A configuration management solution that allows you to define the state of your IT infrastructure, and then automatically enforces the desired state. It is primarily used on Linux and Unix systems. Competitors include Chef, Ansible, SaltStack, etc.

P

Python

An object-oriented programming language commonly used for web development and scripting applications.

R

Rackspace Cloud, EC2, S3

An example of cloud-based computing and cloud based storage applications.

Ruby

A dynamic, reflective, object-oriented, general-purpose programming language.

Ruby on Rails

An open-source web application framework written in Ruby. Ruby on Rails is a MVC (model-view-controller) framework, which provides default structures for a database, web service and webpages.

S

SAN/NAS (Storage Area Network/Network Attached Storage)

Dedicated devices and infrastructure for management of data intensive applications.

Scala

An object-functional programming language for general software applications. Scala source code is intended to be compiled to Java bytecode, so that the resulting executable code runs on a Java virtual machine.

S

Scrum

A development process that emphasizes writing software in short, iterative “sprints”. The person responsible for facilitating the process is called the Scrum master.



SiteCore

A web-based content management system written in C#.

Source Control

A database that tracks changes to software source code. Common source control systems include Git, Subversion, Team Foundation Server and Mercurial (source).

SQL (Structured Query Language)

A (mostly) standardized syntax for accessing and updating data in a database management system (DBMS). Common SQL databases include MySQL, Postgresql, Microsoft SQL Server (MSSQL) and Oracle.

Stack

The core set of technologies used to implement solutions. Generally companies that describe their stack are web development companies because most standalone app and mobile developers use a much smaller set of tools. A product has a specific stack, but a company can use different stacks for different products.

S

Swift

A modern programming language created by Apple for iOS and OS X development.

System Administrator (sysadmin)

A person responsible for building and maintaining server infrastructure.

T

Titanium

A cross-platform mobile development kit -- the idea is that when using it you don't need specific knowledge of iOS/Android/Windows Phone to write apps for all three.

U

Unit Testing

A method by which individual units of source code are tested to determine if they are fit for use. A unit is the smallest testable part of an application. The goal of unit testing is to isolate each part of the program and show that the individual parts are correct. A unit test provides a strict, written contract that the piece of code must satisfy.

UNIX

An early operating system developed in the C programming language. Many current operating systems such as Linux and Mac OS X are based on UNIX.

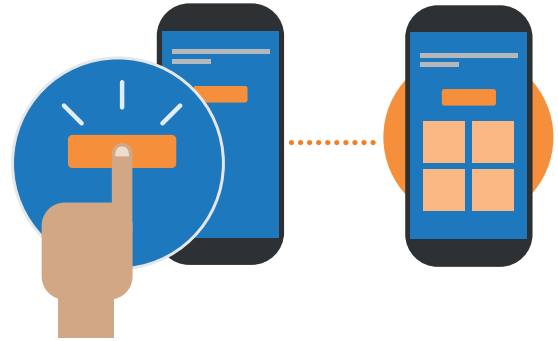
U

User Interface (UI)

The human interface aspect of a computer application or device. The user interface is what the end user/human sees and uses.

UX (“User Experience”) Developer

A developer that is responsible for the design and workflows of the user-facing part of the application.



V

VBA (Visual Basic for Applications)

The programming environment used to develop application on top of the Microsoft Office Suite such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

VB (Visual Basic)

A Microsoft Programming language. See VBA.

VB.NET (Visual Basic .NET)

A version of Visual Basic that runs on the .NET framework and Runtime.

VB6 (Visual Basic Version 6)

A legacy Microsoft version of the BASIC programming language.

V

Version Control Systems

See Source Control

Visual Studio

An Integrated Development Environment used to write .NET code.

VPN

Stands for Virtual Private Network. It extends a private network across a public network, such as the Internet.

W

WCF Web Services (Windows Communication Foundation)

An API under Microsoft .NET for creating service oriented applications in a distributed environment.

Web developer

A developer who works on applications that run in the browser.

WordPress

A web-based Content Management System (CMS) typically used for blogging. Written in PHP.

Wowza Media Server

A commercial server built for efficiently delivering rich media streaming content over the web – like videos, images or audio files.

X

Xcode

An IDE that contains a suite of software development tools developed by Apple for OS X and iOS.

XML (Extensible Markup Language)

A set of standard rules and syntax for encoding any type of structured data. XML is commonly used as a data interchange format in web applications and various document types.

XAML (Extensible Application Markup Language)

A Microsoft flavor of XML used in .NET development of desktop or rich client applications with WPF and Silverlight.

Looking to hire a developer?

Talk to an expert

