

Thom Brooks
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Employment History and Professional Experience

Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum, Chicago, IL

Contract Programmer
Senior Systems Engineer
Computer Support Supervisor

January 2009 - Present
April 2007 – December 2008
August 2002 – March 2007

Systems Design and Engineering

- Designed and built a new server room, 48-blade render farm, and 15 TB SAN in support of “One World, One Sky,” a full-dome show starring Elmo, Big Bird, and Hu Hu Zhu, in collaboration with Sesame Workshop and the Beijing Planetarium.
- Provisioned *iCaption*, a domed-theater closed-captioning system for hearing-impaired patrons, using WiFi-enabled PDAs.
- Designed and built a distance-learning video studio capable of bringing the entire museum to students around the world.
- Automated exhibits and meeting rooms using Crestron touch panels and processors to simplify operation and save resources.
- Worked with NASA to set up connections for visiting schoolchildren to talk to astronauts on the International Space Station, witness shuttle launches and landings, and learn about space.

System Administration

- Responsible for Open Directory and OS X File Servers, SAN (XSan / StorNext), DHCP and DNS (ISC), Web Server and Web Application Servers (Apache, MySQL, PHP and other languages).
- Managed loadsets from Mac OS 8.5 through OS X 10.5.
- Used open-source tools to monitor the status of network equipment and servers (netdisco, nagios).

Programming

- Created numerous Flash- and Director-based exhibits, website activities and instructional tools – many of which utilize dynamic back-end database connections or RSS feeds to stay current.
- Implemented an intersystem messaging framework that allowed all exhibits in a gallery to simultaneously change content (XML-RPC, Nebulae, Java, PHP, Lingo).
- Wrote or modified existing PHP code and shell scripts to solve a variety of data-munging problems.
- Commissioned an AIR client / SQL server solution that ran on digital signage at box offices and handled ticketing and calendaring for special events.

Supervision / Training

- Managed a small staff of tier-one and tier-two support technicians.
- Created an interview process to assess a candidate's technical skills in a high-stress situation.
- Wrote technical support literature, provided training seminars, and held classes for end users.

Technical Support

- Provided third-tier in-house support for all network, server, exhibit, and end-user issues.
- Documented systems using wikis, diagrams, and technical writing skills.

LivingText, Ann Arbor, MI

Lead Programmer, System Administrator

1999 – 2001

- Supervised a small staff of programmers on various e-learning projects, primarily using PHP and Director. Our products were CD-ROMs distributed with Meteorology and Earth Sciences textbooks, which could use an internet connection to download new data about the user's geographic area.
- Managed all servers (web hosting, email, database, file sharing, DNS), and a seven-workstation LAN.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

A/V Programmer I, School of Social Work
Advanced Visualization Lab, Media Conversion Facility

1998
1995 - 1998

- Created touch-screen wayfinding kiosks for two new buildings on campus. Written in Director, they used back-end database connections to automatically update directory information from Oracle and Access.
- Taught Director and Photoshop at *Camp CAEN*, the Computer Aided Engineering Network's summer camp for children ages 12-17.

Certifications

Crestron Electronics, Inc.

Programming for Certification (CAIP)
Intermediate Crestron Programming
Essentials of Crestron Programming

In progress
May 2006
March 2006

Affiliations

Special Days Camps, Jackson, MI

Tech Team Director, Webmaster
Camp Counselor

2004 – Present
1998 – 2003

While volunteering at Mott Children's Hospital during my undergraduate studies, I learned about Special Days, the world's second-oldest camp for children with cancer and their siblings.

I first volunteered as a camp counselor; by 2003 I had worked with all age groups. In 2004, I realized I could better serve camp by applying my technical skills, and formed the Tech Team. I took over the website (<http://www.specialdays.org/>) and now maintain it year-round. We use the Joomla CMS for content, Zen Cart for donations, Gallery2 for photos, and phpBB for forums.

During the two weeks of summer camp, my team are photographers and videographers by day, and journalists by night. Using Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Lightroom, we produce a full-color, two-page newsletter every day of camp that parents can download from our site. We also use Final Cut Pro to produce a yearly memento DVD for the campers.

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Green Team

November 2005 – Present

Our team brings together members of various departments, and members from other cultural institutions in the Chicago area, to share ideas about reducing our energy footprint, minimizing waste, using non-toxic chemicals, implementing recycling programs, and other environmental and energy-focused initiatives.

Bike to Work Coordinator

April 2005 – Present

In June 2004, I began bike commuting year-round; to date, I have logged over 20,000 miles. In early 2005, I coordinated a brown-bag lunch session about bike commuting, and the movement grew. Partnering with the Chicago Bike Federation (CBF), Adler participates in events year-round. In 2007, Adler won CBF's Commuter Challenge award for highest staff participation (21%) in bike-to-work week among similar-sized non-profits.

Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Bachelor of General Studies, computer programming concentration

May 2000