

The Definitive History of Backwood Realm Systems: 2010-2014

Written by Tim Wray
Monday, 02 March 2015 10:12

Yeah...that busy. So busy that I didn't have time to reflect for half a decade.

I think the "overload" theme has continued. I didn't abandon "The Backwood Realm" altogether, although I did abandon it in a business sense. Backwood Realm Systems is the spiritual carrying forward of everything I aspired to do in my youth with the personal computer, first, in repair and maintenance, and now, in development. It has proven a good ground for me when I want to dabble in the "old stuff", and as a result, I have kept the Backwood Realm BBS running in it's revived form ever since launch in September 2008, which is exciting to me. At this point, it has had a longer life than most of the old Bedford, IN area BBS systems, aside from the Hotseat (~1989-1997), and it will eclipse it's lifespan in 2017.

I have, in these passing years, become very proficient in Microsoft SQL server and it's query language, Transact-SQL. I also picked up PHP, which has been HUGE in my transforming into a modern developer. I just wish I'd had some of the opportunities a little earlier that I had starting in about 2007. Regardless, I'm glad for where I am today.

I've coded several industrial IT software packages, primarily for data collection in manufacturing settings, in VB.NET, interfaced with MSSQL. One of them has been in use since 2011, and continues to be used today at my former employer. I've since moved on from BMT/MTI/BRI to better things, where I finally hold a title with the word "Developer" in it, which, looking back, was my dream in the beginning.

I about faced pretty quickly from 2009's focuses...I have done my best to not spend time repairing computers for others, but have focused on learning new development ideologies and programming languages. I've tried my best to move up in general IT, but just as much, I've worked to move out of general IT, and into a primary focus of not only software, but web development and programming, to the extent I'd like to see development of applications for the web that are just as robust as things I've worked on for Windows and MS-DOS in the past.

I'd like to say I've arrived. I find, though, that I continue to learn, I continue to grow. I've now taken on Javascript, jQuery, and am getting as close as I can to PHP. I now know and understand CSS fully, which, when I began working on v6 of the Backwood Realm in 2008, which I've maintained ever since, I did not.

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I have dabbled lightly in hobby programming a few times....I've written a door logging program in VB.NET/MSSQL for The Backwood Realm BBS, that also includes an application to generate an ANSI screen for the board showing door activity.

I've also undertaken documenting my source code library dating back to late 1997. I don't have everything, but I certainly have the majority of everything I've written documented back through that time.

In 2011, Matthew Abel was able to come onboard and work with me at BMT/MTI/BRI. That proved excellent opportunity for us both, as his skill grew even further as he found creative ways to develop new solutions for realtime data collection and reporting at MTI. That led to other external opportunities for him, writing management software for the local Boys Club organization, and by 2012, he started an LLC we call [Abel Tech](#). I joined in to assist him as I can and hope for great things for the LLC. It's the spiritual successor to the "business" portion of "Backwood Realm Systems" to me, in a way, combined with his own moniker from our younger days, "Late Nite Systems". I generally do logo and graphical designs for him, some of the web development, and assist his development projects in any manner that I can. We have also done some IT general contracting around the area as of late. In late 2012, we even fired up a home-built Time and Temperature line at (812)675-5599 that replaces a long ran service locally, which has been a component in our success and getting our name out there.

I'm hoping to bring forth a new version of "The Backwood Realm", this time running on my own source, not static HTML or a CMS (It's been Joomla! since 2008), for 2016, which, in December of that year, will be 20 years past when I brought forth the BBS originally, and began labeling my development projects "Backwood Realm Systems" as I struggled to PROVE OUT that I knew my stuff, and what I didn't know, I would learn. I had hoped it would become a large business...while it did not, it has fed other opportunities that have provided for me nicely.

It's been a great ride so far...not without bumps in the road, but 2010-2014 were the best learning grounds I could possibly have had, generally. I had great employment opportunities that allowed me to grow...and eventually, move on to bigger things.

I plan to keep plugging ahead and find out what happens next!

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