/dev/random

ROBERT G. FERRELL

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You may remember last month I outlined a failed job interview with Facebook. This month's curious encounter is with Amazon (the mega-corporation, not the river, although there are certain similarities).

I got a phone call at work one day from a cheery recruiter who wanted to discuss a job position with me. She then told me about the working conditions and benefits at Amazon for a good 15 minutes, at the close of which I told her I was sold. Then she asked me some really elementary questions about UNIX, such as, "what command would you use to see what processes are running." I told her much more than she wanted to know about ps, including an exposition on all the command-line options available depending on whether your kernel is derived primarily from AT&T or BSD. Then I talked about GNU ps on Linux. "Wow," she replied, helpfully.

"What's the job?" I finally asked, since that seemed a germane point. It was a systems engineer position. "That sounds like a lot of scripting," I said, warily. "Oh, it is," she enthused, "C, C++, Perl, Python, and Ruby, mostly." I rolled my eyes. "I've never been very good at any language that starts with C," I explained. "I was once decent at Perl. I fiddled around with Python when it first came out. I skirted the perimeter of Ruby, looking for an easy way in and found none. Java 1.0 and I had a short but intense relationship. Coding isn't my strong suit, in other words. How about a job involving information security?"

She sounded doubtful, "I don't think we have any of those, but I'll look."

"Amazon has no need for any security people? I find that hard to believe."

A minute or so later and she's back.

"I found one!"

"Great. What's the title?"

"Systems security engineer."

"Let me guess: it involves scripting with C, C++, Perl, Python, and Ruby."

"Yes, yes it does! How did you know?"

"Lucky guess. Look, all of my current certifications are in infosec. I haven't been certified as any sort of programmer since 1998. You should be able to tell that from my resume. Why did you call me?"

She hemmed and hawed for a moment. "Because AWS is getting into the classified information space and people with your security clearance are hard to find."

"Super. I'll tell you what: if you locate a bona-fide information security position, feel free to call me back. Otherwise, please take me off your list of people whose rusty or non-existent

skills we're willing to overlook just because they won't have to sit around on their thumbs for eighteen months to get the right clearance."

As you can probably surmise from my "job recruitment disaster chronicles," I've experienced a sudden surge in activity from headhunters lately. From my observations this is always a good sign for the economy, if nothing else. In the course of listening to/reading their spiels, I had a Scythian moment (a public mention for the first person who gets this reference and communicates with me) and got fixated on the language they were using to describe UNIX/Linux sysadmin positions instead of comprehending the totality of the recruitment effort itself. This led, inexorably, to scouring the InterWebs in a quest for the perfect representative job announcement. Below you will discover—verbatim, spelling and grammatical errors intact—the fruits of this labor. Don't forget to scoop out the pits first or you'll break your teeth.

Position ID: aX075ENGir4zY1eJe4bk1X

The UNIX System Administrator must possess a high level knowledge of the UNIX/Linux OS. Must be highly proficiency at the UNIX command line involving a variety of utilities, interpreters and compilers and have Shell Programming skills. In addition, high proficiency in Operating Systems. Works on unusually complex technical problems and provides solutions that are highly innovative and ingenious. Establish a defined framework as an analytic environment. Experience with System Management tools to include NetApp Management, and tools such as SPLUNK, NAGIOS, ZENOSS, GANGLIA, or CLOUDERA. Experience or ability to perform HADOOP System Administration, installation, configuration, networking, server administration/management, troubleshooting, security, monitoring, tuning, capacity planning, backup/recovery, service pack/hot fix/patch install, vendor support liaison, coordination with technical staff at all levels.

Experience with NoSQL technologies (Cassandra, HBase), NoSQL Data Warehouse technologies (HIVE), Lucene, Tomcat, Pentaho, OpenLDAP, BIND/DNS, YUM, Puppet, Cacti, VMware, KVM, Xen, Hypervisor, OpenVZ, Brocade Fiber Channel experience in zoning, Memcache, Redis, experience using Chef to deploy and manage large clusters of servers, AllFusion ERwin Data Modeler; Data modeling software; IBM Rational Data Architect; Visual Paradigm DB Visual ARCHITECT, Gluster FS, Drupal, Sendmail, Postfix, Cyrus, Dell Open Manage, IT Assistant, What Up Professional, Spine, Openstack, Spacewalk/RedHat Satellite, F5, HP Lefthand, EMC, Elastic Search, Voldemort, NFS, DAS, NAS, and SAN. Assures Data Center is clean and clear of obstructions.

Ideal candidate will be a bright, enthusiastic, flexible, energetic, and results-driven professional who works best in a multi skilled team, sometimes during non-core business hours. The company has a very casual and great culture. They house an indoor gym with accessible classes and showers, state of the art kitchen on site and promote a 37.5 hour work weeks along with many other perks! They are very focused on "work-life" balance. This is the type of company that you will want to grow with long term. Reasonable regular, predictable attendance is essential. Requires hands and fingers dexterity to operate computer components such as a keyboard or mouse. Must possess sufficient peripheral vision to have the ability to observe an area that can be seen up and down or the left and right while eyes are fixed on a given point. Ability to identify and distinguish colors essential. To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. Must have knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar. Must possess the ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events). Must have the ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations) and the ability to generate or use different sets of rules for combining or grouping things in different ways.

Perks include: Weekly FreshDirect grocery delivery & weekly catered lunch. Classic Pac-Man/Galaga arcade machine. Coke machine stocked with free drinks.

I'm off to update my resume now. I think I remember a little GW-Basic. GOTO rules!