

Career Highlights of Robert Archard

I started my full time career in 1988 as a programmer writing software to test display terminals. I used Data/Basic R83 on the Mentor PICK operating system. The test suite was used to test the functionality of the firmware as specified in the functional specification and manual. The success of the test suite spawned the creation of a new engineering test group. In parallel worked to develop a new Quality Assurance system. I was the primary Sysadmin, DBA, and programmer of that system. Programs were written to enter and report on quality data collected.

In 1989, I was not satisfied with the editors available on the systems I did development. A line editor and a pseudo word processor/ semi-full screen editor was all that existed. So, as a side project, I began writing my own truly full screen editor. I have used it to develop on every PICK system I have worked. Over the years I have enhanced it many times. I have also written a suite of useful utility programs. Many of my colleagues have used the editor and utilities I have written. It supports many versions of Mentor PICK and mvBASE.

In 1990, I was the principle programmer for our company's new manufacturing system which was written in Mentor PICK 3.0. It was designed for the manufacturing product in lots of one or more. It tracked the product through the process flow, collecting key process and failure data for reporting purposes. Testing of some product was done automatically by the system directly. Other testing was done on other systems that communicated with the manufacturing system. Label generation was automated using dot matrix and thermal bar code printers. A link with the ERP system communicated sales order requirements and product completion data. The system won several awards from our parent company (NCR). I received one for my programming contributions. Over the years to come I have made numerous changes and enhancements to that system to support changing requirements. The manufacturing process for many products still depends on this system in 2003.

In 1994, I joined a team to implement a new Product Development Management (PDM) system. The software was acquired from Sherpa (now EDS as of 2002). The application was not plug_and_play. A thick functional specification was written and the software and database had to be tailored as such. All coding for the application was in HP ANSI C. Some shell scripting was required for various functions. API's were also written to send and receive data to the ERP system at that time (a MOE 3.0 system with Dataworks software). Coding had to done on the Sherpa and ERP systems. Soon after we went live with the system, all of the team members, but me, moved on to other jobs. I became the sole person to support all aspects of the PDM application and system. The database server and client servers were HP-UX 9.X, but were later upgraded to 10.20. The database originally ran on Ingres, but later was moved to Oracle. I have had some exposure to the Oracle database, using some SQL and performing some DBA functions. The system is still in use in 2003.

In 1995, I moved to the IT application group. The ERP system was in need of some cleaning up; too many unskilled programmers had touched it. Over the next few years I enhanced and cleaned up the system. I totally rewrote key functional areas of the code. As a result, the system ran faster and with fewer problems. The number of support requests decreased too. Unfortunately, the need for other programmers decreased too.

In 1999, a new ERP was purchased from QAD (MFG/Pro). The application was written in Progress 8.3. A new HP-UX 11.00 N-Class server ran the database, while the users ran the application in character mode from the server or in GUI mode on Windows systems. Two bolt-on applications from TRW, AIM warehousing and Rocca sales order dating applications were also purchased. The initial installation of the database and applications was done by consultants, as well as some coding. The rest of the customizations were done by me and two others. I later became responsible for all programming, Sysadmin, and DBA functions for the new QAD ERP system. The system went live on 12/2000 and it is still in use in 2003.

I am still at the same company as programmer after 15 years of service. The company has reorganized many times over the years. There have been layoffs. I survived them all; I would like to think because I am a key person performing a necessary role. I plan to continue that level of service and dedication at my present job and all future jobs I may hold.

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