

I'm Joel Helbling, and I am fanatical about integration. I have a profound belief in connectivity, and I love to see people and the systems they create reach their full potential. My personality, vision and passion lead me to opportunities where complex technology challenges interact with the goals of the people with whom I work. I am addicted to discovery, and I instinctively teach anything and everything I know to anyone who needs to know what I know. Here's what that passion looks like in the jobs I've held.

Adelphus Solutions [2008-2009]

Ruby on Rails consultancy, and live streaming video systems.

What I did there:

I co-founded Adelphus. In addition to development work on the Farsite product, I worked as project manager and business developer on the consultancy side. I was a driving factor in introducing and encouraging agile software development practices in our projects. I also introduced Kanban to Adelphus as an implementation of lean software development.

I also represent the company to various community developer groups and charity events, and gave talks on business development, particularly as it relates to the web.

Micros-Retail (formerly Datavantage) [2005-2008]

Retail systems provider, from point of sale to back office decision support and integration.

What I did there:

I returned to Micros-Retail as a database developer working predominantly in MSSQL Server (2000, 2005) and Oracle. Initially I came back for a 60 day contract, but ended up staying longer than that: after two years I accepted a full time position.

I also did ETL work, picking up the primary maintainer role for the company's CRM and loyalty rewards systems. I made the case to my supervisor for a strong emphasis on documentation and training material. Happily he agreed, and the training material I wrote and augmented became the foundation for training my replacement.

From there I went on to develop a proof of concept reporting system for one of the largest single location retail stores in the world, working with various Micros-Retail reporting systems, the ARTS retail XML format and Pervasive. This project put me at the nexus of a crucial area of need for the company: with several recently built and/or acquired retail support applications, the company needed to integrate them so that they could be offered as a complete end-to-end solution.

This led me to the position of Chief Engineer/Systems Integration Architect, where I designed and developed a light but flexible ETL framework in Java. One near-universal rule about retailers is that they are all different in their needs. Our systems had to coexist with everything from ancient AS400's to archaic DOS batch processes and flat-file reports. The

ETL framework I built had to tightly integrate our applications, while also providing outer edge adaptability in order to meld with our clients' existing ecosystem. This ETL framework is still in use at Micros-Retail today, and is under active development by a good friend and colleague of mine.

The Internet Antique Shop [2000-2004]

E-commerce services provider for antiques dealers and shops worldwide.

What I did there:

I joined the TIAS team as a Perl programmer and Linux system administrator. Within eight months our VC funding began to run dry, and they began to cut back staff. Our developer team of eight or so was aggressively cut back, and within two years I was the only full time developer on staff.

TIAS had a terrific team of people. The entire company was distributed; in fact it was two years before I actually got to meet any of my coworkers in person! This distributed environment was a great opportunity to work on communication skills within the dynamics of a distributed team.

I had the chance to work with the then brand-new eBay API: in fact our CEO negotiated us a spot in their alpha program, so we were using the API before nearly anyone else. I was also responsible for the interface to Yahoo Auctions and Amazon. This was my first foray into the world of web services. Since TIAS also had screen-scraping interfaces, I saw first-hand the potential which web-delivered API's offered.

Micros-Retail (formerly Datavantage) [1996-2000]

Retail systems provider, from point of sale to back office decision support and integration.

What I did there:

I joined Datavantage as a customer support specialist. Within a few months I had been promoted through three tiers in their helpdesk, handling more complex service issues. After eight months at the company, I was promoted to the Technical Services department. In that role I was responsible for escalated issues, often consisting of systemic, difficult to troubleshoot problems affecting systems throughout an entire retail chain.

This led naturally to an integral role in chain-wide software and hardware deployments: I automated software installations for our staging/shipping operations, and scripted system roll-outs, coordinating hardware setup at client sites, and automation of software install/config. I often travelled to client sites to oversee the first several deployments in the roll-out to observe and correct any unanticipated issues before other sites were deployed.