Human Infrastructure 96: Money, Prestige Or Knowledge - What's Your Certification Goal?

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Editor's Note: Some Changes To Human Infrastructure

By Drew Conry-Murray

Hello. We've decided to combine our Human Infrastructure and Link Propagation newsletters into one. It's like the Voltron of newsletters--more powerful when combined.

OK, maybe not. But we figured there'll be less clutter in your inbox with one weekly missive instead of Link Propagation once a week and Human Infrastructure twice a month. You'll still get articles from the Packet Pushers, links to compelling blogs and IT news with commentary, and industry updates.

If you're not a Link Propagation subscriber and have no idea what I'm talking about, my apologies for delaying you from Ethan's very good article about certifications. Carry on.

Money, Prestige Or Knowledge: What's Your Certification Goal?
By Ethan Banks

As the new year rolls in, many folks recognize an opportunity to set goals and make plans. For many of you, those plans will include certifications. Before you march down the certification road, I challenge you to clearly understand why.

For some, the answer is money. You want more money than you are currently getting, and you see certifications as a stepladder to a salary increase.

1. Consider that certifications without experience don't necessarily equate to an increase in salary. Many businesses don't care about certifications.
2. Your company is unlikely to offer you a higher salary simply due to a certification unless they have an established program for this. Don't assume without talking to your manager and human resources department that your salary can be adjusted. Many companies have specific guidelines and criteria around positions, and certifications one way or the other usually don't change the equation. Value added resellers are exceptions to this, as they need certified folks on staff to meet their partnership requirements and

get integration deals handed to them by regional vendor sales teams.
3. Even if you get additional money, the satisfaction afforded by the additional funds will be short-lived. Earning a certification is a long, time-consuming project. Don't do it for the hit of dopamine you get the first time the larger paycheck comes through. After a few paychecks at the new level, the novelty wears off.

For some, the answer is prestige. You want to feel confident and competent. You want to be recognized as an authority and respected as a leader in your organization. You believe a certification is the way to achieve those goals.

1. Leadership within an organization is often driven by the human side of things as much or more than technical competence. You are unlikely to displace an existing leader just because you've earned a certification. Politics and personalities impact how groups are organized.
2. Just because you hold a certification in high regard does not mean others do. You might earn a certification only to find out that no one else you work with cares. They have no sense of how difficult the certification might have been to earn and how well-respected the cert is to industry folks in the know.
3. Some will view you as "too serious" if you pursue a certification. Many view the workplace as work, and prefer to go home and relax at the end of the day. Opening a book or online course and experimenting in a lab after hours is anathema to these people. Some might even view your certification pursuit as competitive or aggressive, and see you as a threat to the hierarchy within the team--a troublemaker.

For others, the reason is knowledge. I consider this the best reason. You want to be better at what you do, and you see a certification as a way to improve. Might that lead to more money? Eventually. Will others respect you more? Perhaps.

In my opinion, going after certifications for the knowledge they can impart is the root reason to do so. Money is important--we need

support ourselves, and more money offers a certain ease in life. Prestige is nice--we all want to be respected by our peers.

But in a tech career, money and prestige are tightly coupled with knowledge and experience. As you learn more and experience more, the financial reward and peer recognition tend to follow. Never as quickly as we'd like, to be sure, but with a bit of diligence and a willingness to change jobs now and then, they come.

As you consider what to spend your time doing this year, do whatever you decide to do for the best reasons. I hope you succeed.

For more thoughts on certifications and their bearing on your life, you might get some value my short YouTube series on the Packet Pushers Network channel. You can watch all three videos in about 12 minutes.

1. Should You Get A Certification? (2:18)

2. Do Certs Equal A Big Salary? (3:37)

3. Certifications, Money, Happiness & Fulfillment (5:19)

Sponsor: ThousandEyes

2018 Global DNS Performance Report

More than two-thirds of Global Fortune 50 companies and nearly half of the top 25 SaaS providers are not ready for the next major DNS attack, according to ThousandEyes 2018 Global DNS performance Report.

Measuring the performance of three DNS infrastructures — managed DNS providers, public resolvers, and global roots — the report serves as an informational resource to empower the enterprise IT community with data-driven insights into DNS.

With this report you'll better understand the digital journey of your users and how regional variations, geo-political factors, and best practice implementations can impact overall experience.

Learn how to ensure your services aren't at risk. Download the 2018 Global DNS Performance Report today.
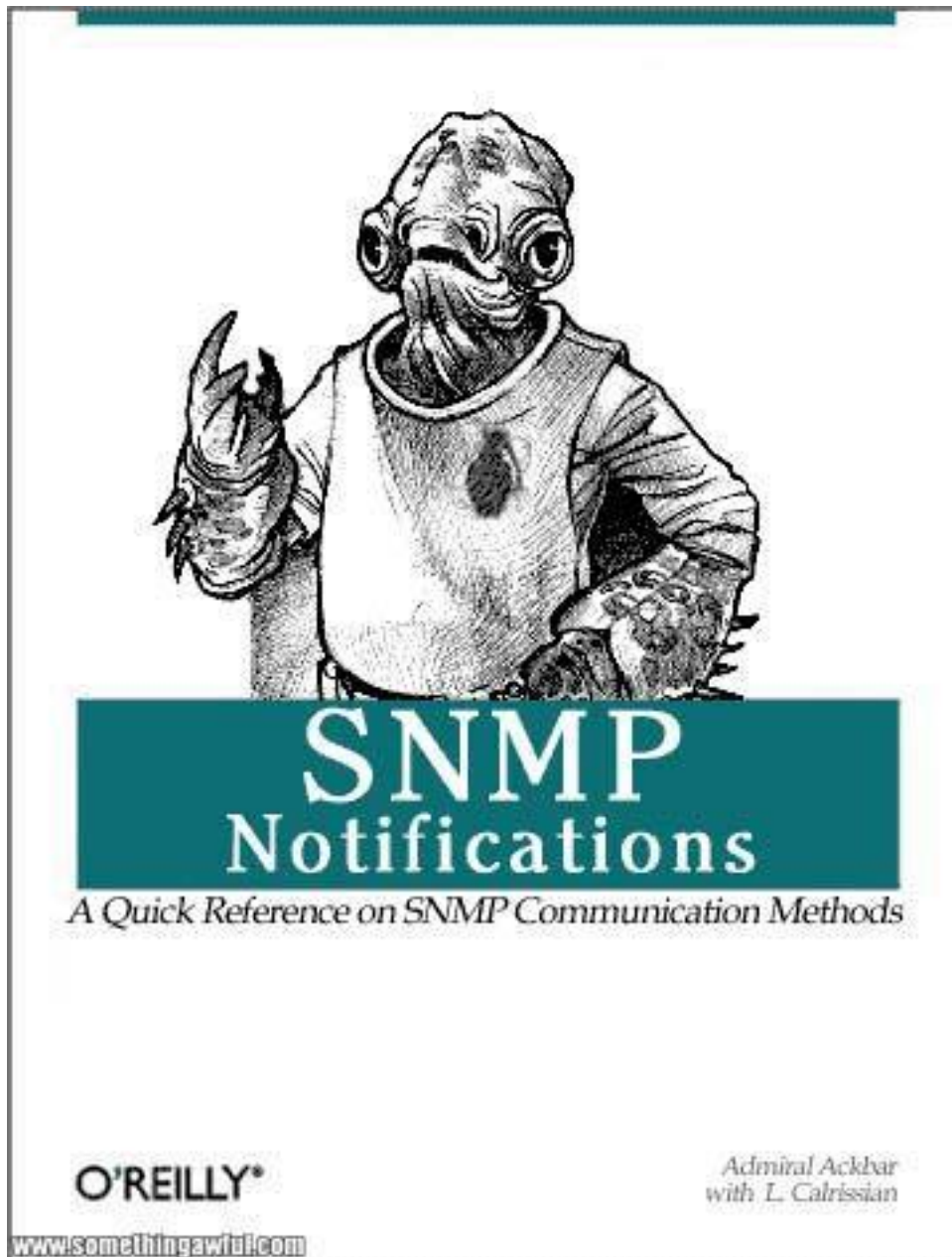
The Lulz

Give it a second--you'll put it together.
Shared by Christopher Kusek, on Twitter

Internets Of Interest: Blogs

Managed SD-WAN: An Enterprise Perspective - Neckercube
https://neckercube.com/index.php/2019/01/07/manage...

Jed Casey walks through his company's decision to use an MSP for SD-WAN, including benefits and tradeoffs.

Jed writes "We purchased a completely managed service, and in theory the MSP is supposed to handle all operational aspects. In reality, you still need someone on the customer side who is knowledgeable in all aspects of the service, including operations and design. ...we coordinated with the MSP for every aspect of the overall WAN design (including resisting various "upsells" that we felt were unnecessary), and we retained the ability to make configuration changes as we see fit."

Engineering Management: The Pendulum Or The Ladder - Charity.WTF

https://charity.wtf/2019/01/04/engineering-managem...

Charity Majors @MipsyTipsy writes a long piece that is, "primarily aimed at new managers, who aren't sure what their career options look like or how to evaluate the opportunities that come their way, or how it may expand or shrink their future opportunities."

Read this post if you are considering a jump from engineering to management...or back. This is a deeply thought-out piece loaded with real-world experience and perspective.

The Pac-Man Rule at Conferences - EricHolscher.com

https://www.ericholscher.com/blog/2017/aug/2/pacma...

A great idea on how to be inclusive at tech conference. Stand like Pac-Man!

"The Pac-Man Rule. The rule is: When standing as a group of people, always leave room for 1 person to join your group. More memorably, stand like Pac-Man! The new person, who has been given permission to join your group, will gather up the courage, and join you! Another important point, the group should now readjust to leave another space for a new person."

Do we really need network automation? - Mirceaulinic.net
https://mirceaulinic.net/2019-01-09-do-we-need-net...

This is a bit of a clickbait headline because his answer is "Yes, we do." But it's a good post because he walks through the rationale of network automation, expands network automation to encompass more than just config management, and deals with the (false) notion that everyone will have to learn to code. And if you're worried about maybe automating yourself out of a job, this post may address that concern too.

Deploying and Configuring the Cisco 9800 Virtual Wireless Controller for the First Time - Network Phil
https://networkphil.com/2018/12/27/deploying-and-c...

Phil writes "In this post, I'll review how to deploy the virtual wireless LAN controller in VMware ESXi and stand up a very simple WLAN. We'll also take a look at some potential gotchas and some noteworthy differences between how the new WLC is configured compared to the AireOS WLC."

Just For Laughs: /dev/null as a Service
https://devnull-as-a-service.com/

"Have fun clicking around this parody site loaded with puns that makes fun of the cloud, containers, and big data. Don't miss the Careers page--they're looking for a Map-Enlarge Engineer. Could be the opportunity you've been seeking!"

Thanks to Brian Rak in our audience Slack channel for this link.

Internets Of Interest: Tech News

The Verge: AT&T misleads customers by updating phones with fake 5G icon
https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/7/18172355/att-fak...

Oh, look! Marketing lies just like enterprise IT.

How a Russian firm helped catch an alleged NSA data thief - Politico
https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/09/russia-k...

This is story about an NSA contractor who was hoarding classified data at his home and how Kaspersky ended up reporting him to US law enforcement--but it didn't stop the United States from chasing Kaspersky products out of government systems.

Security flaws let anyone snoop on Guardzilla smart camera video recordings - TechCrunch
https://techcrunch.com/2018/12/27/guardzilla-secur...

The article states, "The researchers at 0DayAllDay found that Guardzilla's top-selling indoor wireless security system contains a set of

hardcoded keys that can be easily extracted, because the device's firmware was protected by a root password encrypted a decade-old algorithm that's nowadays easily crackable. Each device uses the same set of keys to upload video recordings to the company's Amazon Web Services' storage servers. Anyone can use these keys to log in and gain full access to the company's cloud storage — and customer data uploaded from the device."

How Much of the Internet Is Fake? - NYMag Intelligencer
http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/12/how-much-of...

Bots are employed to fool Web analytics into thinking there's a lot more activity than there really is. How much fake traffic is generated by bots? The article notes "Studies generally suggest that, year after year, less than 60 percent of web traffic is human; some years, according to some researchers, a healthy majority of it is bot."

Kubernetes Dominates in IT Job Searches - Sdxcentral.com
https://www.sdxcentral.com/articles/news/kubernete...

"Kubernetes was the dominant technology skill requested by IT firms in 2018, according to a new report from jobs board Dice. The report, which scoured the site's job postings, found that "Kubernetes" was far and away the skill most requested by IT recruiters and hiring managers." Terraform was also mentioned as a skill in strong demand.

Industry & Vendor Announcements

Wipro Joins Linux Foundation Networking (LFN) As Gold Member - Linux Foundation
https://www.linuxfoundation.org/press-release/2019...

"The LF Networking Fund (LFN), which facilitates collaboration and operational excellence across open networking projects, continues its membership growth and deepens its global presence with the addition of new Gold member Wipro Limited, a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company."

Cisco NX-OS and SaltStack for Event-Driven Data Center Automation and Management - Cisco Blog

https://blogs.cisco.com/datacenter/cisco-nx-os-and...

We've covered Salt for network automation with Mircea Ulinic in Weekly Show (now Heavy Networking) episode 351. SaltStack is gaining momentum, to be discussed in the same breath as Ansible by some network engineers.

Cisco is, "pleased to announce a new automation solution partnership between Cisco NX-OS and SaltStack, which provides unique, event-driven automation to solve complex data center network security and configuration management challenges."

Google Public DNS now supports DNS-over-TLS - Google Security Blog

https://security.googleblog.com/2019/01/google-pub...

"Starting today, users can secure queries between their devices and Google Public DNS with DNS-over-TLS, preserving their privacy and integrity. ... We implemented the DNS-over-TLS specification along with the RFC 7766 recommendations to minimize the overhead of using TLS. These include support for TLS 1.3 (for faster connections and improved security), TCP fast open, and pipelining of multiple queries and out-of-order responses over a single connection."

New year, new GitHub: Announcing unlimited free private repos and unified Enterprise offering - GitHub

https://blog.github.com/2019-01-07-new-year-new-gi...

"Today we're announcing two major updates to make GitHub more accessible to developers: unlimited free private repositories, and a simpler, unified Enterprise offering."

The free private repositories announcement is especially interesting for those of us who dabble with code, but want privacy while we work on various projects trying to figure out what we're doing.

The End Bit

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Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.

We don't give away your email address or personal details because that would suck.

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