



Glenn Patterson: The Man Behind the Apps

October 14, 2014 Industry News By Julie Downey

Ever think of the origin of the term “Mad Hatter?” It referred to the psychosis experienced by those working in a felt factory, as a result of the toxic chemicals in the adhesive used to compress the fibers.

Felt, Aluminum, and Rockets

xkzero’s Senior Applications Director Glenn Patterson’s early employment history included a stint in such a place, which he found fascinating, but was glad to escape the fumes before the effects went to his head!

Glenn likes working at places where he can learn about processes he had never considered before. Once, he developed software for an aluminum telephone pole manufacturer. He would watch them use a gigantic mechanical arm to press and roll out the sheets of the metal, then another large tool would whack its ends, then create precise, small crimps.

His path led to xkzero after studying aerospace engineering at Boston University. “I was always into rockets and airplanes growing up.” At BU, all engineering students take the same courses for the first few years, so he had the same foundation classes as those in the computer sciences track, and by senior year, he became more interested in desktop

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machines than flying vehicles. Problem solving, design work, and visual thinking skills easily translated well into this bend in the path, and he still uses them today.

He followed in his mother's footsteps a bit as she was a computer programmer, and he got his start when her company hired him to help out in the summers.

Aikido and Japan

Before Glenn became fully immersed in his career, he spent a year in Japan, teaching English. He later reignited his interests in Japanese culture and passing on knowledge to others when practicing Aikido, and eventually leading classes, too.

Glenn is currently recovering from shoulder surgery, and is anxious to return to the dojo. He might even miss the body aches from the nights with three back-to-back classes.

The Aikido philosophy may have influenced the way he solves programming and business challenges. It involves "channeling the energy of an encounter to resolve a conflict non-aggressively."

"These include harmonizing with, rather than confronting, the attacker, acting decisively and being present "in the moment", and letting techniques flow naturally by being in tune with the universe."

[More on Aikido](#)

Aikido emphasizes the importance of being present, which can require shutting off the intellectual side is a default for many of us in an educational setting. His instructor insisted that students learn by watching and mimicking—trying out what works. He also insisted on practicing with minimal speech. The human tendency to want to discuss what is happening makes us "neglect what is really happening in the

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moment. It's a tough thing to break," Glenn says.

"I lived a summer at the dojo. This is really a short period of time. There are apprenticeships that last 3, 4, 10 years."

I'm on an island.

When learning that Glenn spends time in a cabin on an island in Canada, many of his co-workers have a romantic notion of a man living off the land, chopping down trees and catching fish with his bare hands, breathing in the fresh scent of pine and bending down to pluck blueberries from wild bushes. While he said it is a "beautiful, incredible paradise," it's not all about campfires and babbling brooks. (Lyrics: ["I'm on an island."](#))

The cabin is on an island owned by his extended family and located in the 1000 Islands on the St. Lawrence River near Lake Ontario. It's not the same as renting a lodge where at season end one can pack up and never think about broken structures or winterization. Glenn said he spent two weeks there this summer "fixing the roof and the boathouse and the boat," and expects to have more work on the cabin next year.

The group of islands is called the Lake Fleet, named after 1800s gun boats such as Axeman, Bloodletter Psyche, and Endymion. Mink, beaver, raccoons and black and red squirrels are among the wildlife that shares the island. He said sometimes deer will swim across the river, which is filled with bass, pike, and muskie.

Music

"I can play the sax, flute, and guitar. I don't practice enough and I forget songs the next week. Last night I was playing the Kinks, "[Sunny Afternoon](#)." I heard it pulled up how to do the fingering on Youtube. I was breaking my hand! It does this

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walk that was hard.”

Glenn says he doesn't dance. He also doesn't have a go-to karaoke song, but says, "I can pronounce karaoke correctly."

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About the author

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Julie writes articles for our blogs, and gathers relevant material from ERP and mobile app experts, and edits contributors' stories. She brings her experience as an adjunct media arts professor and long-time teaching artist into our content development process, inspiring others to express ideas. In addition to bloggizing content, Julie manages several of our social media accounts.

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