The Trials and Tribulations of a Build Manager

by Dwight Krossa

When I was offered this job (a little of a two months ago), I had to ask what a build manager is. Ron Davis, my boss, gave me a mumbled reply about managing the people that compile, assemble and link the OS/2 code every week. My experience has been in applications development, where there were rarely more than three or four people working on a project, and they were always in the same office, so problems with builds were unheard of. I remember thinking that this would be a great position to come into Microsoft with, because it would allow me learn the process and come up to speed without any major head aches. Boy, was I wrong.

Before I even arrived in Redmond (I moved from California) my job title and description changed several times. Every time I talked to Ron he was adding more responsibilities to my job description. I had been told that things move fast at Microsoft, but I was astonished that on my second day on the job I was interviewing someone for a new position, and the pace has only sped up since then.

As Steve Swartz explained last week, there are really two build groups, one for Presentation Manager and one for Base. Steve and Andy Pierce work exclusively on the base, while Anita Li and Pat Brenner work on PM. Gerry Weiler works on both PM and Base, he also is the lead technical person for both groups. What I do is to manage both groups, which means that I take care of problems that come up and talk to IBM.

A majority of my time is spent tracking down fixes for problems that come up with in builds, finding ways to enhance the build process, and constantly talking to the build, test and development managers at IBM. With myself acting as a buffer between IBM and our builders, Anita, Pat, Steve spend less time on the phone and more time is spent actually doing the builds.

Every week we do an official base version 1.1 build on Monday, an official base version 1.2 build on Monday and Thursday and an PM build on Wednesday. We also have periodic base 1.0 warranty builds on some Wednesdays and base 1.1 build on Thursday when needed. We also do daily PM builds which are unofficial and private driver builds when needed. As you can see, the build group is quite busy.

The trials and tribulations of the build manager,
while being monumental, are not yet overwhelming. Through a great deal of patience and fast talking, I have started to establish a good working relationship between the build and development support managers at IBM and Microsoft. Builds are going off smoother because the builders are left alonge to do their work. We are even beginning to examine a restructuring of the build and development environment to remove a few obstructions to fast, efficient builds. If you ever have any questions concerning the build, or any suggestions for improvement of tools, stop by my office (2/2173), or drop me an email message. I am alway willing to listen to your ideas or problems.

Thanks to everyone who made the EXIT CT party such a success! Thanks to Debbie Hill for setting up the food and music, RonDavis for the great t-shirts, Bryan Diehl for bringing his motor boat, and of course, thanks to SteveB for letting us trash his beautiful home and for using his boat for some skiing!
Distances and Driving Times

From KAHLULI

To Lahaina 23 miles, 35 minutes
Kula 18 miles, 23 minutes
Haileakala 30 miles, 1 hour, 45 minutes
Hana 52 miles, 2 hours, 15 minutes
Wailuku 5 miles, 6 minutes
Kihei 9 miles, 20 minutes
Wailea 18 miles, 35 minutes

From Lahaina to Kaanapali 4 miles, 7 minutes

From Kaanapali to Napili 8 miles, 12 minutes

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Maui — THE VALLEY ISLE

Most visitors to the Valley Isle arrive at the jet airport in Kahului, the main commercial center of Maui. Next door is old, provincial Wailuku, where you can investigate Hawaiiana in the Maui Historical Society Museum. A ten-minute drive gets you to verdant Iao Valley and its towering rock monolith, which overlooks the site of a bloody Hawaiian battle for control of the island nearly two centuries past.

Across the Island, on Maui's idyllic eastern coast, near tiny Hana, is some of Hawaii's finest scenery. The drive to Hana is one of soaring vistas, winding along the ocean past black sand beaches, isolated fishing villages, old lava flows, lovely waterfalls, dense jungle growth and lush groves of mango and monkeypod trees.

On Maui's western shore are long, sweeping beaches of golden sand and secluded coves. The ocean, extremely clear here, is ideal for skin-diving. The Islands of Lanai and Molokai lie directly across the straits.

Sailing and deep-sea fishing charters are available in Lahaina. This fascinating town is Hawaii's old royal capital and much of it has been restored as it was a century ago, vividly depicting the days of native royalty, missionaries and whaling men. Black coral, a precious gem growing two hundred feet deep in the ocean, was discovered off Lahaina only a few years ago.

Maui's most spectacular sight is Mount Haleakala, with its enormous volcanic crater which could swallow Manhattan. Horse trails creep down the crater's steep sides and meander across its moonlike surface. From Haleakala's rim, scientists from several universities and institutions are studying the sun and heavens, making an important contribution to America's space program and scientific knowledge generally. Known as Science City, the facilities are not open to the public.

Mauians have a saying, "MAUI NO KA OI" or, "MAUI IS THE BEST!" After visiting the Valley Isle, you're sure to agree.

Points of Interest

BALDWIN HOME — now serving as a museum, this is an excellent example of early Island missionary homes.

BANYAN TREE — planted in 1873, this magnificent tree is said to be the largest banyan tree in all Hawaii.


HALE PAHAO — this old jail was built for drunken and disorderly members of whaling crews that roared through Lahaina in the mid-1800s. The whole Lahaina area, royal capital of the islands until 1845, is filled with sites and scenes of great interest to students of Hawaiian history and legend.

HALE PAI — here you will see the quaint old press on which Hawaii's first newspaper was printed in 1834.

HALEAKALA NATIONAL PARK — it was here, according to Polynesian legend, that the demigod, Maui captured the sun and held it captive to give his people more daylight hours. And it is here that you will stand to capture an unforgettable scenic memory. From the crater's topmost rim to its floor is a drop of 3,000 feet. The floor measures 25 square miles, a fascinating area of richly colored cinder cones. Haleakala's last eruption was more than 200 years ago. A public observatory stands on the rim of the volcano's crater. The outer wall of the volcano, cut by ravines and gulies, slopes down to the shore of the island.

HALEKII HEIAU — ancient temples of worship, sacrifice and refuge, ordered destroyed by King Kamehameha II in 1819, has now been partially restored.

IAO VALLEY — now enchantingly tranquil park, this was the site of a bloody battle in 1790 when Kamehameha conquered Maui in the famed Battle of Kepaniwai.

KAHUMANU CHURCH — oldest Congregational Hawaiian church of central Maui, the original section was built in 1837.

KAANAPALI — one of the top resort areas, situated along three miles of golden sand beach with a misty mountain backdrop. Lots of recreational facilities — golf, tennis, riding, swimming — and a unique whaling museum/shopping center.

KAIWALOA HEIAU — there are eerie legends about spirits that walked from this heiau at night, and about daring humans who followed them and were never seen again.

KANAPA BIRD SANCTUARY — each winter, migratory birds from the Northwest make this park their Island home.

KAPALUA — Maui's newest destination is the luxurious Kapalua Resort. On the northwest coast of Maui, Kapalua offers its residents and guests golf, tennis, three beaches, restaurants, luxury hotel and vacation condominium accommodations.

KAUMAHINA PARK — halfway point on the drive from Kahului to Hana, the perfect place to pause and picnic.

LAHAINA — first capital of the islands and historic heart of Maui; this colorful town is steeped in the memories and evidences of whaling days, missionaries, ancient Hawaiian rulers and the plantation workers of various ethnic origin who migrated to this island.

LAHAINALUNA SCHOOL — oldest school west of the Rocky Mountains, established in 1831, its first building of poles and grass was replaced by a stone building which still stands on the modern school grounds.

MAUI ZOOLOGICAL & BOTANIC GARDENS — an entertaining and educational view of animals and plants from many parts of the world is situated on a three-acre site in Wailuku, across from Maui War Memorial Stadium.

ONE O STREAM (SEVEN POOLS) — truly a photographer's paradise, it is said that in the crystal pools, the mother of Maui, the demigod, used to wash and bleach her tapa-cloth.

PUAA KA PARK — a gem of a park whose name means "the place of the rolling pigs"— dating from days gone by when plump wild pigs were said to have rolled down the slick, steep grassy hills in this area.

TEDESCHI WINERY — Hawaii's only winery. Taste its light pineapple wine, a forerunner to the production of grape wine from vineyards on the slopes of Haleakala.

WAIANANAPA CAVES — strong swimmers and scuba divers, by diving into a pool and swimming underwater, can reach a big inner cave, a legendary treasuring place for lovers of old.

WAILEA — a deluxe 1500-acre beachfront resort area between Kihei and Makena. Facilities include hotels, condominiums, fine restaurants, two championship 18-hole golf courses, a tennis club, excellent swimming beaches and a view of neighboring islands.

WAILUA LOOKOUT — a choice view of the entire Kananee Peninsula and its spectacularly lovely coastline.

WHALE'S VILLAGE MUSEUM — hundreds of antiquities recalling the boisterous, rowdy years of the great whaleers housed in a picturesque atmosphere of yesteryear.

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