Little Rock Techfest relies on Everleap to help them serve the Arkansas developer community

Little Rock Techfest is an annual event (http://lrtechfest.com) held in Little Rock, Arkansas. The conference features a variety of speakers that cover popular developer-related subjects, from technology specific overviews and tutorials to other more general topics such as SEO, web design, tools and entrepreneurship.

This is a free conference open to anyone and is run by a team of dedicated volunteers. This year's event is taking place on October 16th, 2015 at the Statehouse Convention Center. As the hosting sponsor for the conference, we recently caught up with developer Kyle Neumeier, one of the organizers, to learn more about the event.

Everleap: Thanks for talking with us Kyle. Could you tell us a little more about yourself and your professional background?

Kyle Neumeier: I'm a software developer based in Little Rock, Arkansas. I deal mainly with Microsoft technology but have used other tech as well, namely

Customers
Developers in the Little Rock area.

Business challenge
Finding a fully managed cloud hosting solution so they could focus on their application, and not worry about infrastructure.

Solution used
Single site plan

Java, in the past. I've been doing this for eight years. I currently work remotely for CareEvolution, a health information technology company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Can you give us some background on the Little Rock Techfest and who's behind it?

The event started in 2004 as a Microsoft focused conference. Two years ago the event name was changed to Little Rock Techfest and took on a wider breadth

> "One of the great things about cloud is that you don't need to worry about infrastructure, servers and where they are, Operating Systems, whether they are up to date, security patches to apply, etc. I can focus on the application, not the infrastructure." - Kyle Neumeier, Little Rock Techfest

of technology and presentation categories. It's a free conference. We raise money from sponsors, both local and national, that are able to support what we are doing. In 2013, 225 people attended and there were 19 speakers. In 2014, 360 people attended and we had 22 speakers. So things are definitely rolling and seeing growth. This year, we will be a little crammed for space, what with the attention we got last year and what's coming forward for this year's event.

We have six core team members focused on planning the event. During the event, that number will increase to 10 or 12. I manage the website. But really, everyone helps and picks up what needs to happen. So for example, last year I helped with organizing the breakfast.

We also get other volunteers from the community. Last year we got help from students at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to help run the registration booth, for example. We also have people helping us with social media, helping attendees find the sessions, etc.

It sounds like the event is growing and you've got a great team of organizers. How did you get involved?

I've been involved since last year, so I'm relatively new to the team. I found out about the conference via the Little Rock Dot Net User Group, however, we are focusing on getting the word out through several mediums this year. I got involved because I wanted to be able to have an impact on the developer community here in central Arkansas. I also wanted to be able to meet other developers in the area.

What are some of the challenges you face in putting on the event?

There are a couple of main challenges with running an event like this. First of all, reaching out and finding speakers. One of the main goals for this year is to have great speakers. While last year was great, we want to bring things up a notch, so we need to raise enough

money to pay for the speakers and their travel expenses. We do also look locally for presenters. In short, we want the content this year to be really good. Another challenge is getting the word out to the local community so that people know the event is going on. We also have to work to build awareness around sponsorship opportunities for businesses.

Are you doing anything different for this year's event?

One thing I'd like to highlight about this year is that we are focusing on connecting the developer community. We'll have more opportunities to network at the event itself. Also, the Arkansas Venture Center is hosting a hackathon the day after our event. So we see Techfest as not only a way for developers to learn about new technologies and pick up new skills, but also as a way for them to come together to meet each other.

Initially you hosted your site on our shared hosting platform, DiscountASP.NET. How did you first connect with Everleap?

DiscountASP.NET was hosting the site for the Little Rock Dot Net User Group and that's how the connection was made with the event. I started around the time that DiscountASP.NET offered the switch to Everleap.

How has the experience with Everleap been for you so far?

One of the great things about cloud is that you don't need to worry about infrastructure, servers and where they are, Operating Systems, whether they are up to date, security patches to apply, etc. I can focus on the application, not the infrastructure.

One of my favorite things about Everleap is that since you are running the Microsoft Azure Pack, this allows me to deploy applications really easily. Our site uses Node.js, which is supported by Azure. It's super cool for developers and a new thing, so it's really nice that with Everleap I am able to deploy and run Node.js.

Another feature I really like about Everleap is

something that no one but a developer would care about, but I appreciate having the automatic deployment when I check-in my code into Git. There's nothing I have to do.

Well, we're really glad that our hosting platform is working for your site, and we appreciate you taking the time to speak to us today. We'll do our part to help raise awareness of your event.

It's my pleasure and we appreciate all you do for the community.

To learn more about the Little Rock Techfest or to attend the next event on October 16th, 2015 go to lrtechfest.com.

Everleap supports the developer community and provides free hosting for user groups, code camps and developer events. We have been a hosting sponsor of the Little Rock Techfest since 2012. ■

Everleap is modern hosting for today's developer. Built by the team at DiscountASP.NET on top of Microsoft Windows Azure Pack, Everleap brings together the reliability and scalability of the big cloud hosting providers with the predictable pricing, bundled services, and ease of traditional web hosting.

More information at Everleap.com