

Interview With Wrishiraj Kaushik

by Chinmoyee Deka - Tuesday, March 24, 2015

<http://gonitsora.com/interview-with-wrishiraj-kaushik/>

1. Tell us something about your childhood.

Answer: I was born in December 1993. I am the only child of my parents, and that made me the prince in the family. My father had always been very caring. I am what I am because he is my best friend and guided me every time, be it my professional or my personal life.

2. When and how did you discover your passion for computers, and then eventually software development?

Answer: I was into electrical stuffs since I was born I guess. At age 3, I nearly killed myself by touching a running generator in my aunt's (Mahi's) marriage. During school days, I made lots of stuff from scrap electronics such as a motor boat, a hydroelectric generator (capable of power a torch bulb). I really came into computers since class 7 (in the year of 2006), when my grandmother gifted me my first computer and I guess I never looked back. Software development came as a hobby as I like to fiddle with machines of every type. I mostly fiddle with my PC and I like to go deep into the mechanisms of working and this inquisition inspired me to develop my software.

3. Who has been your inspiration, both personally and professionally?

Answer: My inspiration had been my father. Although he is not from the scientific background, the stories of his student life, as a student activist (1980s you know) have always inspired me to do good for the people. Additionally, I am a big fan of Batman; I read and watch every Batman comics, animation and movie I come across. I take the character very seriously and try to follow him in real life.

Professionally, I am very much inspired by Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, although we are ideologically on opposite poles in terms of software licensing i.e proprietary vs. Free Software but I like them as human being and try to bring their good into my free software evangelism.

4. Not many people have the idea of a free and open source software. Can you please give a rough idea on what it really is?

Answer: Its really simple, the in English language the word "Free" as two meanings:

1. i) Free, as zero in price
2. ii) Free, as in Freedom

Free software is about the second meaning. Think of free speech, not free beer. Open source is a similar term; it was mainly devised as a business phrase as not many CEOs and business executives want to use the phrase "Free software" in their business. Both the words have their own definitions but they generally

intersect and can be used alternatively. Free software is about morality and individual freedom and open source is about practical benefits of free software and distributed development model, crowdsourcing software development. Free and Open Source Software advocates like me, generally suggest people to use local words like “Mukt” (in Indian languages) or Libre (in French) for defining freedom than the generic word “Free”. For software to be Mukt/Libre/Free Software, it has to grant at minimum, freedom to run the software for any purpose, as well as to study, modify, and distribute the original software and adopted versions.

5. What was the thought behind setting up Libresoft Technologies?

Answer: The sole thought behind this was to propagate software freedom and liberty. At first we did not think of a company, but it was clear that in order to achieve our goal we need to have more people involved, we need to generate revenue, and create jobs. Finding a company was the logical choice.

6. Tell us something about SuperX OS. How is it different from other operating systems like Windows and Macintosh?

Answer: Fundamental difference is the ideological as you might have guessed by now. Technically SuperX is based on Linux, so it part of the Linux ecosystem. It shares a lot with other Linux OS like Redhat, Ubuntu or Android. We’re trying to make SuperX a very good *mukt* alternative to Windows and Mac for the general consumer. But most important, we’re trying to solve local problems in the local market. SuperX is an OS designed towards the Indian market, with technologies made for Indian use case. We’re at the moment working on the first Assamese OS (SuperX Axomiya Edition) and we plan to do 22 different editions tailored towards 22 recognized Indian languages, it’s not there yet but we are on the right direction. We do not consider us a threat or even a competition to Microsoft or Apple, we consider ourselves as solution providers to problems that only exist locally. Even if we go to some other country, we will try to solve the problems in a way that meet the local needs, which is something that is very unique compared to product based software companies like Microsoft or Apple which is like one taste for all, local problems are secondary thought for them. SuperX is a platform to solve problems in the most tailored way possible.

7. Did the thought of starting up and failing in the venture ever come across your mind? How did you deal with it?

Answer: Yes, it comes every time, and it is my greatest fear. But we should not try to deal with or overcome fear as fear teaches us our limits; we should try to overcome those limits. Whenever the fear of failing comes to my mind I work harder and find more innovative solutions to solve problems that might cause a failure. Innovation is a never ending process and fear of failing and pushing the limits are also never ending process. “Keep hitting until it breaks”, I say this to anyone who wants to know what fuels me. At the end of the day it really does not matter as there are only two things that may happen, If I am successful I will be a role model and will be followed by many which will bring more success to the humanity. If I fail, I will still be a role model as I took the unknown path, which turnout to be wrong and that path will be avoided by my successors which will bring more success to humanity. There is nothing to lose actually, considering the fact that humanity has lot to learn and evolve.

8. After the successful SuperX, what next can we expect from Libresoft Technologies?

Answer: We do not consider SuperX a success yet. We are currently working on some associative technologies that we will either bundle with SuperX or offer as additional services. I cannot share them to you right now, but trust me, they are awesome.

9. Apart from Libresoft, what other projects were you associated with?

Answer: I along with a friend are starting a website called Amiaxomiya.com, the website will be a showcase of the composite Assamese culture. I am doing this because I think Assamese people have an identity crisis at the moment. The idea is same as the word “American”, an American can be of any origin, be it Indian or African or Chinese or anything else, but what makes one an American is the American Nationalism, American way of living or as they say it, the [American Dream](#). The website will be crowd sourced, and anyone will be able contribute content. The goal is to harness indigenous cultural materials be it literature, art, clothing or food or anything else from across Assam’s different “jati-upojati” and make a digital archive, so that people around the world can know about us and appreciate our diverse culture, what constitutes the greater Assamese culture and identity.

10. Countries like US have millions of tech innovators. Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, there are many more. In India, the number is very less. What do you think may be the reason?

Answer: This is a harsh question and I am giving a harsh answer. Countries like US have a progressive vision which countries like India lack a lot. I am not saying Indians lack innovative ideas but still India, as a nation has not yet harnessed its full potential. While the American Dream is associated with individual freedom and progress of the nation, Indian Dream is still about “roti, kapra, makaan and sarkari noukri”. I everyday feel lots of resistance from many people, they suggest me to go back and complete my studies and get a job. I think this is pushing us back, as boys and girls who are innovative and brave enough are discouraged from being entrepreneurs. This discouraging attitude is so rooted that it is hard to find investment for your startup even if it’s the only one of its type in the nation. But things are improving and we will see more Indian people doing good job in India itself in coming decades. I am hopeful.

11. 20 years from now, what significant changes do you expect to see in the country, from IT point of view?

Answer: 20 years is a HUGE time in IT. By that time, people will be able to connect their brains to the Internet, its 2015 and “Internet of Things” is happening and by 2035 you can call me crazy but, we might not recognize our own planet if we fall asleep now and wake up then. India is the 2nd largest IT service provider after US (as far I know). I think we have a good chance of topping the chart as well. Hopefully Libresoft and I will be involved in the game, Liberalizing IT. One significant change I expect is states like Assam, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Odisha etc. which are not known for technology related industry as of now, will play a much larger role in terms of number of IT startups. We’ll see smaller cities producing great startups. This has already started, and will see it at its prime in 20 years.

12. What would be your advice to the youngsters who are working or even fairly interested in the software world?

Answer: Follow you heart. Avoid what’s “cool” but define your own “cool”. Life is very small and our

time is limited. Try to do something for your state, your people, your nation and humanity at large. A great King once asked his mother whether he should stay with her or go fight the war. His mother said: “If you stay with me, you will have a wife and children, you will be happy but if you fight the war, you will be immortalized”. My advice to them is, try to be immortalized.

PDF generated from <http://gonitsora.com/interview-with-wrishiraj-kaushik/>.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.