GROWING A DISTRIBUTED/REMOTE TEAM

Chris Hardie
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ChrisHardie.com

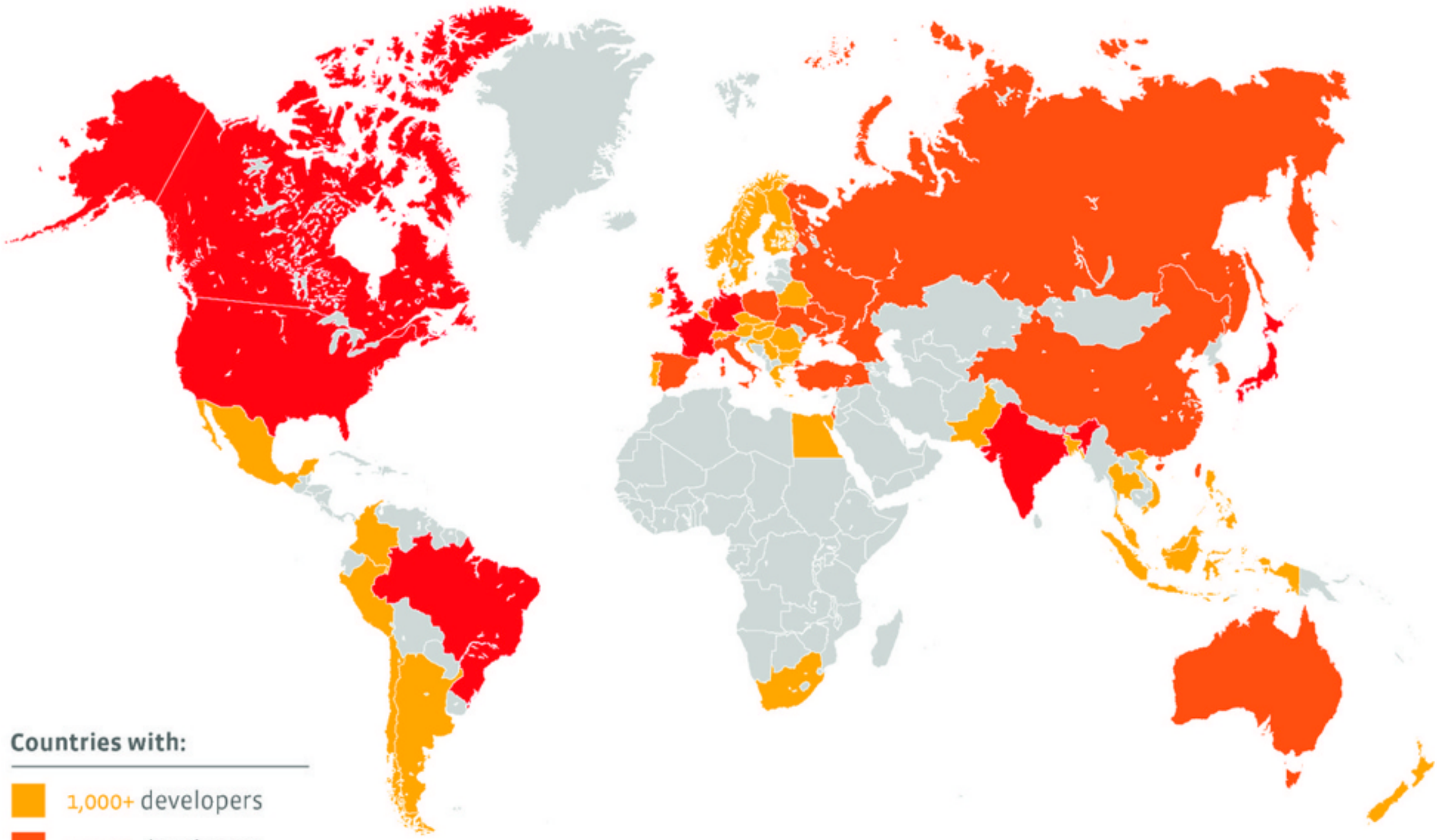
ABOUT ME

- In Richmond since 1995
- 17 years running a web dev agency
- Lead on VIP Team at Automattic, vip.wordpress.com
- We're hiring! automattic.com/work-with-us/
- Personal site at chrishardie.com

IDEALLY,

The right people could be in the same place at the same time to make awkward stock photos of a diverse workplace.

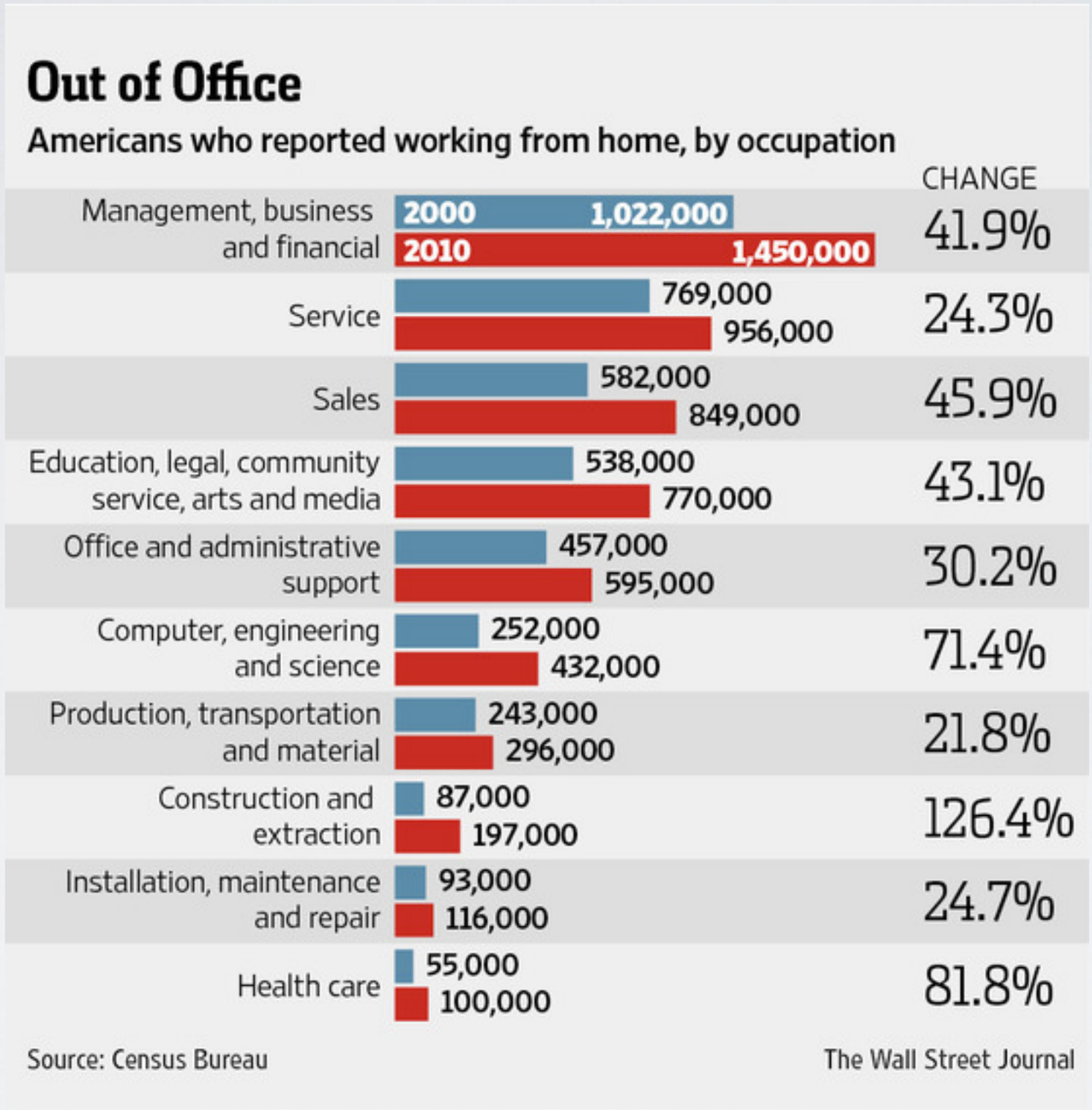
REALISTICALLY,



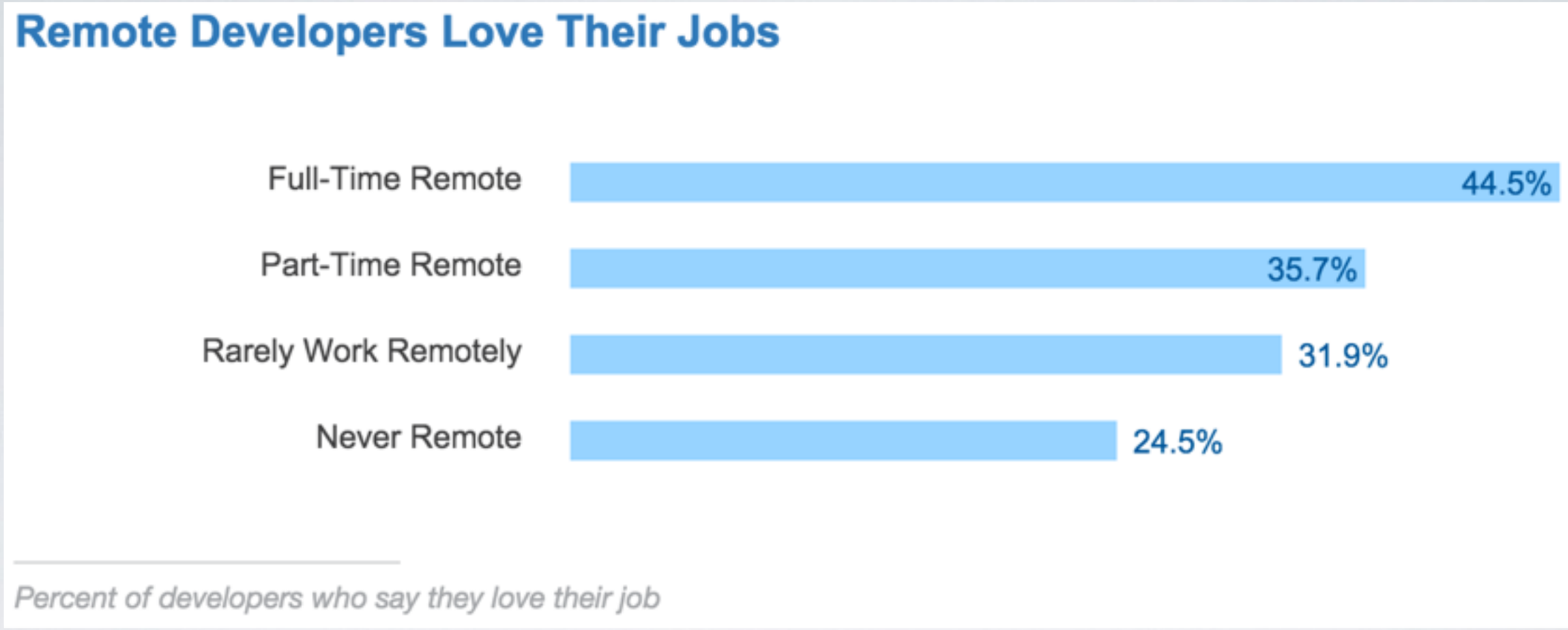
Locations of Facebook's third-party devs, 2013

http://www.connecttotheworld.com/where-in-the-world-are-facebooks-developers/

NOT JUST TECH



http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324539404578342503214110478



"Developers with 11+ years experience are nearly twice as likely to work remote as developers with less than 5 years experience."

-Stack Overflow 2016 Developer Survey
http://stackoverflow.com/research/developer-survey-2016#work-remote

REMOTE WORK

is changing how we
do business
build things
find talent
scale up

Photo credit: http://www.wheredowego.in.th/2015/08/20/step-in-melbourne/

BENEFITS

- Increase worker satisfaction
- Save money
- Increase productivity
- Reduce distractions/ meetings
- Reduce bias in hiring
- Increase talent pool
- Increase job opportunities
- Save energy/reduce transportation needs

CHALLENGES

- Completely different culture
- Self-discipline
- Home office setup
- FOMO and Imposter Syndrome
- Security
- Shift in infrastructure
- Employment/tax law
- Time zones
- Collaboration tools

CULTURE

ALL OR NOTHING?

- For most orgs, need to pick one or the other
- Mixed environments mean twice the investment
- If you do mix, make sure remote workers aren't second class

ASYNCHRONOUS

- Value comes from productivity, not desk presence
- Keep meetings & scheduled things to a minimum
- Get used to new modes of collaboration
- Bake in respect for different time zones, work schedules
- Increase measuring of outcomes, not activity

INVEST IN ENVIRONMENT

- Avoid temptation of "REMOTE=NO EXPENSES"
- Create a budget for desks, chairs, ergonomics
- Encourage co-working
- Generous equipment upgrade/replacement plan

LifeSpan
YesAll

09:58
Good morning, Chris.
What is your main focus for today?

HIRING

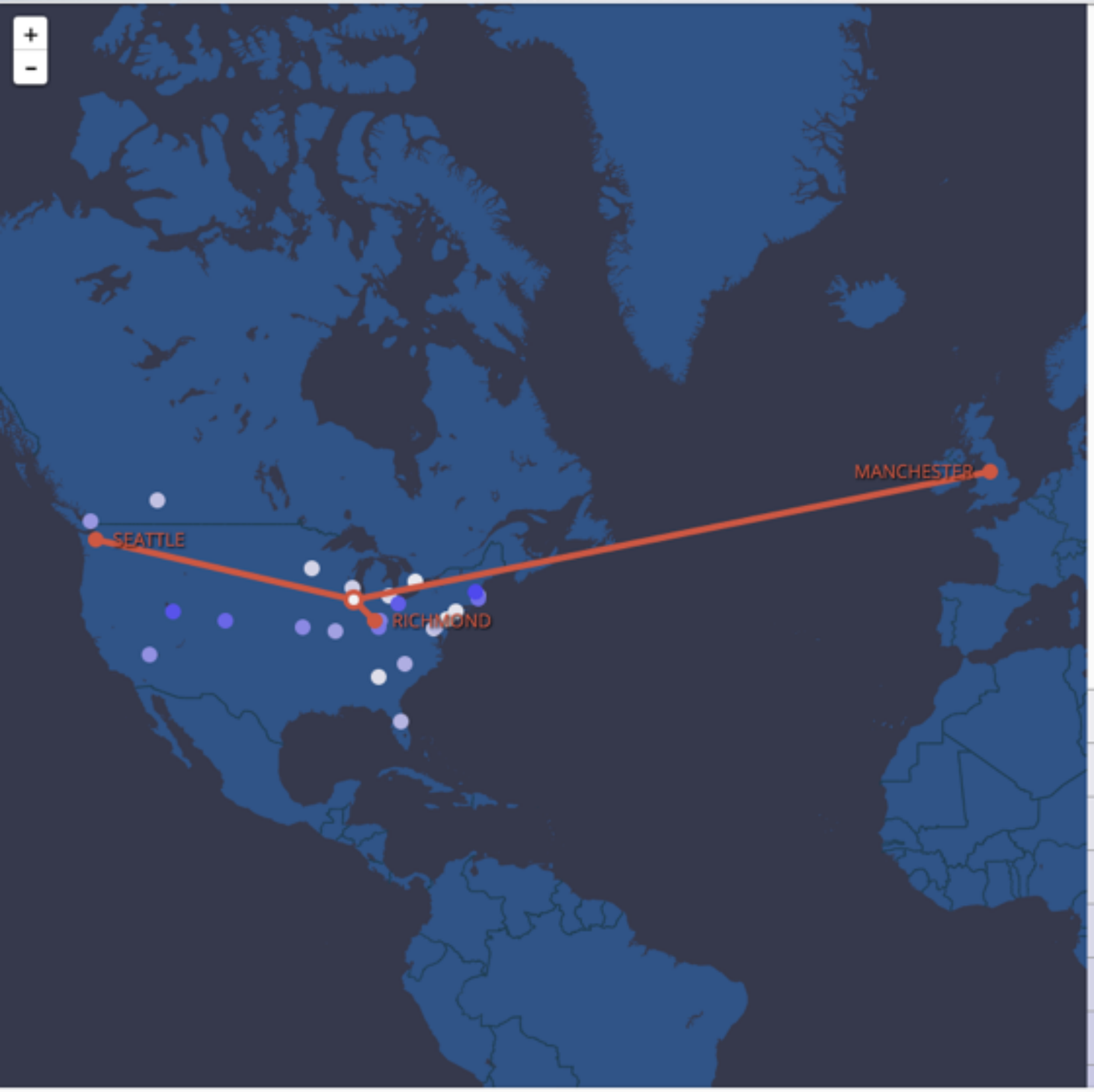
- Optimize for people who demonstrate self-reliance
- Interview by working together
- Pay attention to output, not style or generic fit

COMMUNICATION

- Encourage over-communication
- Default to text-based communication
- Default to sharing everything with everyone
- Don’t trap conversations/decisions in email

MEETUPS

- Learn personalities, communication styles, humor
- Realtime work/planning sessions are efficient
- Co-working helps learn tools, workflow, processes
- Explore new and interesting places
- Usually cheaper than having an office



CHICAGO

15h 37m | 3 / 0 | ~ $ 2,600

TOTAL DISTANCE TRAVELED

9,333 km

AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME PER PERSON

05:12 h

TRAVEL TIME PER PERSON

TRIP	TICKETS	TRAVEL TIME	STOPS	TOTAL
DAY-ORD	1	02:22	direct	$150
MAN-ORD	1	08:48	direct	$950
SEA-MDW	1	04:26	direct	$500
TOTAL FLIGHT COSTS				**$1,600**

WHERE TO STAY

See all apartments on Airbnb

APARTMENTS	AMOUNT	PER NIGHT	NIGHTS	TOTAL
3 BEDROOMS	1	$200	5	$1,000
TOTAL HOUSING COSTS				**$1,000**

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHICAGO - SEE LIVING COSTS, JOB MARKET, HOUSING COSTS, STARTUP SCENE AND MORE

BOOK THIS TRIP FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP

PHILADELPHIA	16h 07m	3 / 0	2,650
TORONTO	16h 11m	3 / 0	2,450
NEW YORK CITY	16h 16m	3 / 0	2,800
ATLANTA	17h 04m	3 / 0	2,750
DETROIT	18h 03m	3 / 1	2,400
MINNEAPOLIS	18h 14m	3 / 1	2,650
MILWAUKEE	18h 15m	3 / 1	2,750

flock.teleport.org

TOOLS

P2

- Project planning and discussions
- Team activities and updates
- Document and media sharing
- Live updating, simple task management, media embeds, responsive.
- WordPress plugin at geto2.com

Home About

HI THERE! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Post

Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

RECENT UPDATES

Keyboard Shortcuts | Toggle comment threads

Allen 5 hours ago

It's That Time Again

I looked at the jobs queue and it looks like we're running a bit #hot on the number of jobs that are taking longer than 20 seconds to complete. As part of our annual get the numbers right effort, I'd really like to see this number down to more like 19 seconds. I don't have any idea how to accomplish this, so I'm open to suggestions. Perhaps we could randomly discard every 20th job? That might help.

BEAU IS DISCUSSING.

Beau 4 hours ago

Sounds perfect! @pento can you make it so?

Gary 8 hours ago

What One Can Invent

There was once a young man who was studying to be a poet. He wanted to become one by Easter, and to marry, and to

Teaming Up!

This team o2 is the cat's pajamas!

Search ...

- Recent Updates
- Recent Comments
- My @Mentions
- No Replies
- My Posts

Recent Activity

Comment on What One Can Invent
4 minutes ago

Comment on It's That Time Again
4 hours ago

It's That Time Again
5 hours ago

Comment on What One Can Invent
7 hours ago

What One Can Invent
8 hours ago

Everything in the Right Place
Yesterday at 6:02 pm

Comment on Easy Brownies
Yesterday at 4:52 pm

1

New comment by Jennifer
4 minutes ago

Clear Notifications

SLACK

- Company-wide channels for announcements, discussion
- Team channels for collaboration and planning
- Private channels or DMs for sensitive topics
- Great mobile apps, archives, notifications, integrations
- slack.com
- Alternatives: HipChat, Hall, Yammer, IRC, Pie, Skype, Glip, Fuze

Slack

Wayne County I...
Chris Hardie

⌘1

⌘2

STARRED
techworkers
watercooler

CHANNELS (7)
announcements
buyselltrade
economy
politics
newsfeeds

DIRECT MESSAGES (23)
slackbot
Ben Byrne
Bradley Wood
Brian Meeker
Brian, Ben
Christopher Blinn
Dakota Collins
dawnnr
Eric Dimick Eastman
Jason Whitney
scottzimmerman

#watercooler
21 members | Add a topic

Search

March 8th

Josh Ward 11:00
joined #watercooler. Also, @markpea joined, @arai13 joined, @mcsmith12 joined, @rayo joined.

March 9th

Brian Meeker 08:58
@channel: The first Richmond Tech meetup is official for Wednesday March 23. @chrishardie will be presenting on growing a distributed team. http://www.meetup.com/Richmond-Tech/events/229358777/

> Meetup
> **Richmond Technology Meetup**
> How do you grow a team of distributed/remote workers while maintainginggood communication, encouraging individual productivity, developingstrong company culture and getting effective results? This kind

Bradley Wood 09:18
If anyone knows chicken farmers near New Castle, IN I'll be at the Rural King demoing my chicken watering buckets this Sat. Working with Rural King Corporate to bring down the price so I can help sell the remaining 8 buckets in their stock.

March 11th

Bradley Wood 10:15
So the chicken watering bucket is now available on Rural King.com http://www.ruralking.com/auto-chicken-watering-bucket.html it will be interesting to see how many sales the site will generate

> Farmer Brad 2 Gallon Automatic Filling Chicken Watering Bucket & Lid GF-001

ZOOM.US

- Video calls for real-time discussion and planning, team socializing
- 1:1 Audio/video calls with coworkers, clients, vendors
- Desktop and mobile clients, screen sharing, scheduling, text chat
- Free at zoom.us
- Alternatives: Google Hangouts, Slack audio calls, Skype, join.me, UberConference, GoToMeeting, etc.

Zoom Meeting ID: 164-613-653 Participant ID: 39

1/2

1/2

Audio | Settings | Invite | Participants (27) | Share Screen | Chat 1 | Record | Leave Meeting

OTHER TOOLS

- Trello
- Zendesk
- Email
- Google Apps
- Docusign
- Various To-Do Managers
- TripIt
- Expensify
- Salesforce
- Dropbox
- Polldaddy

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING

- Start with mockups
- Test-driven where possible
- Development sprints with limit scope
- Daily “standups”

SHIP EARLY AND OFTEN

- Ship embarrassing, basic things, then iterate
- “Usage is oxygen for ideas”
- Run tests, collect stats
- Open Source / invite collaboration

PEER CODE REVIEW

- Code Review P2
- Private Github repos with issues, PRs
- Phabricator
- Clear coding standards and security guidelines
- Commit checklist

ROBUST DEV ENVIRONMENTS

- Use Vagrant to give everyone a production-like sandbox
- Use HockeyApp for mobile
- Struggle with cloning production data

OBSERVATIONS

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

THANKS!

ChrisHardie.com