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Re: Letter of Support for Links

The development of modern web applications suffers from a disjointness of technologies deployed at the various tiers, manifesting itself in a plethora of languages, data formats and protocols. As a result web application development is complicated, error-prone and costly. Correctness and reliability can only be achieved through extensive testing, and changes are expensive.

The industry has responded to this complexity with the development of increasingly sophisticated tools and development environments, and specialised toolkits for constructing particular kinds of web applications. However, when trying to accomplish anything out of the ordinary in these frameworks, all the underlying complexity resurfaces with much greater force since now the developer also has to deal with the intricacies of the tools.

The aim of Links is to address the above problems by devising a programming language that unifies all aspects of web applications, yet is universal, has powerful means of abstraction and re-use, and provides strong static guarantees of correctness and safety.

Web application development has been at the centre of LShift's business since its inception. In fact, part of the motivation for founding the company was the dissatisfaction with the web development process as practised by the rest of the industry. LShift's founders developed some of the UK's first widely used web applications in 1994 (an "Ideal Car" search service for BBC Topgear, and a personalised TV listings service). More recently we deployed one of the UK's first continuation-based web applications (New Media Knowledge).

We have experience in the construction of web applications in a wide variety of programming languages, tools, and technologies, and are therefore very familiar with the state of the art in the industry, and the issues mentioned above. We have also conducted R&D activities in this area, and are familiar with much of the research on which Links builds. Links would have an immediate and noticeable impact on almost all the work we do, and be a significant step forward for the industry as a whole. We therefore welcome and support the work on Links, and are looking forward to opportunities to contribute to its success.

Regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Matthias Radestock".

Matthias Radestock
Technical Director
LShift Ltd.