

My NOTIS and post-NOTIS Bio:

I interviewed with Jerry Specht for a Systems Engineer position at NOTIS in 1986. As he ushered me out from the second interview, he asked, rhetorically, "You do own a suit, right?" Jerry, I think I can now safely admit that I lied when I said I did.

A few weeks later (and several hundred dollars poorer) I reported for work in my brand new blue, pinstripe suit. I was told someone mistook me for a new IBM sales rep.

One of the attractions of the job was occasional travel. As a VSE SE I traveled to many beautiful cities where I spent my time in computing centers. Ultimately my work in the years since has taken me to San Juan, Stockholm, Berlin, York, Sheffield, Perth, and quite a few cities in North America. So the travel part was (ultimately) fulfilled.

After a year, I was tasked with being the "expert" on the NOTIS circulation module. For a while I rivaled Jerry at creating problem reports. No one rivaled Jerry at *closing* them, however.

I brought a VSE tape to an MVS install (or was it the other way around? Perhaps you can see how the mixup happened.) Thankfully I had Jerry Specht (and FedEx) to rescue me.

I subsequently worked in RID under James Miesse, another great manager from whom I learned a lot, alongside Gary Phillips, from whom I gained a lot (mostly weight from his home-made breads, but also my first immersion in Unix).

After the Horizon debacle, I became an implementation manager for the product formerly known as Marquis, where I had the opportunity to work with Indiana U, U Chicago and Princeton as they struggled to implement the system. I will never forget the look on the faces of the Indiana University staff when we touted that we could import bib data (from diskettes!) at a rate of approximately 70k per week.

I wisely moved to a programming job, initially a skunk-works project to rewrite Modula2 code in C++. It definitely stunk as a project, but I learned C++ and moved to the RSAS project, an ILL application that Alan Manifold at Purdue wittily memorialized (<https://mashiyyat.net/poetry.notis/rsas.html>). The product was renamed soon after.

Through this project I learned about many international standards, served as Ameritech's representative to NISO, and (a professional highlight) served on the NCIP standard committee.

But not all good things last forever, and in 2003 I was fired from (what was then) Dynix. Looking back, that was a good thing, because it quickly brought me to Fretwell-Downing, and another group of dynamic, creative individuals. I was once again working on a market-leading product, VDX.

So market-leading that we were eventually bought by OCLC, where I have now worked for the past 17 years, first on an NCIP-based application gateway for VDX, and eventually on the WorldShare ILL product

As to my personal life:

As many know, Marcia and I married in 1990 (we stopped by the office for a celebration!). This has been one of the good things that has lasted forever.

We volunteered most Saturdays at Lincoln Park Zoo for 23 years, even after we bought a house in Brookfield (literally across the street from the “other” Chicago Zoo). When we bought the house I wanted a yard and Marcia wanted an island in the kitchen. We ended up with a small, island-less kitchen and a yard that I quickly learned I didn’t want to mow. In the years we’ve lived here the yard has been annually reduced in favor of wonderful gardens.

Notably, I’ve had the good fortune to almost-fulfill one of Marcia’s dreams: to stand on the shores of every ocean - only the Arctic Ocean remains to be trod. I still play guitar (something that Randy and Allison inspired me to pick up again in the 90s). My two brothers and I meet semi-regularly via Skype to discuss philosophy and drink beer.

Joining NOTIS was very good for me; it more than paid for the suits.