
Subject: Acceptable Rates for PHP Programmers
Posted by [ramsey](#) on Tue, 20 Jun 2006 19:25:11 GMT
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This topic came up after a meeting a few months ago, and I've also been asked the same question several times since then. So, what exactly is an acceptable rate for a PHP programmer?

To one person, I answered within the scope of the Java world (since the person has more familiarity with Java programmers). I recommended that PHP programmers receive pay comparable to Java programmers. To another person, I recommended that, as a freelancer, he not accept a job for any less than a specific rate comparable to that of Java programmers.

I want to see PHP programmers paid well for the work they do. Let's face it: anyone can call themselves a PHP programmer, but not everyone programs in PHP well. You should be paid for your skills as an excellent PHP programmer.

However, the problem with paying a PHP programmer occurs when there is a market full of newbie PHP programmers who will work for peanuts, so everyone hires them. After all, why pay more when you can pay less, right? Wrong!

If someone is charging a lower-than-standard rate, it's most likely a red flag that they don't know what they're doing, and you'll end up wasting money on an application that is very poorly designed and full of vulnerabilities. It's best to pay for the better programmer one time around rather than go through 4 or 5 different programmers to get the job done.

Am I wrong here? What do you think? What is a good pay rate for a PHP programmer?

NOTE: As someone pointed out in a comment on my blog (I cross-posted this there), my mentioning of rates "smacks of collusion/trusts." This is not my intention at all, and my opinions expressed here do not represent an official position endorsed by Atlanta PHP or its community. Acknowledging my leadership role in Atlanta PHP, I've since removed the rates mentioned to avoid any issues that may arise in the future.

Subject: Re: Acceptable Rates for PHP Programmers
Posted by [hasin](#) on Wed, 21 Jun 2006 02:51:58 GMT
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Hi
Payscale is also relevant to the geographical area you are working in. For example, If you work in some developing countries in third world and want to charge \$40-\$50, well, I doubt you will hardly get any work. Instead, PHP programmers should be paid well as like as a Java programmer paid

in that region. The payment shouldn't be language centric.

I agree with rest of the points you mentioned here.

Regards
Hasin Hayder
Zend Certified Engineer
<http://hasin.wordpress.com>

Subject: Re: Acceptable Rates for PHP Programmers
Posted by [Xanthis](#) on Wed, 21 Jun 2006 21:28:08 GMT
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When I used to hire people for my previously employer for IT positions, I came across a lot of resumes posted via Monster.com. Out of the 20 or so resumes, only 2 maybe worth a call back. The problem was many dabbled in PHP code and for what it's worth, to be competitive, they need to know more than just PHP. This includes CSS, JS, and JS DOM. These are the same skills a JAVA programmer programming who writes JSP should know. PHP developers should be making at least what JSP or ASP.NET guys are making.

If you ask me, I personally think they should be paid more. The reason, is that PHP developers can build faster prototypes, easily debug code, and probably can help the company make a quicker return on investment than JSP, Ruby, or ASP.NET

Not only that, the company already saves on licensing and hardware by just using PHP. So why not take that money and give the guy a bonus :) --- they'll work even harder, trust me.

As for a suggested base rate, I believe good PHP developers in Atlanta should make around 70K-80K. By good, I mean they can write CSS code (not necessary layout), write JS code, and understand the JS DOM. I know ASP.NET guys in ATL making 80K and rarely mess with FE or BE code.

I consider expert developers (80K-90K) if they know how to properly bench their applications, building the product to scale in a clustered environment, knows the difference between i10n and l18n when building their application (heck that's a good topic for a future meeting), and knows how to use the *NIX environment to do more.

I'm basing my estimates on my current compensation package of 100K for a company in CA. Although I believe what they paid me is fair, I did get a notion that they would have paid more if I played hardball with the recruiter. Oh well, I'm happy :)

**** Update ****

Ikes, I realized the discussion was on freelancers. If you want to outsource a project and stay under budget, test the guy with a small 1 week project that includes CSS and JS.

Subject: Re: Acceptable Rates for PHP Programmers
Posted by [ramsey](#) on Wed, 21 Jun 2006 21:49:35 GMT
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Xanthis wrote on Wed, 21 June 2006 17:28 Ikes, I realized the discussion was on freelancers. If you want to outsource a project and stay under budget, test the guy with a small 1 week project that includes CSS and JS.

No problem. I had the feeling that "Freelance Advice" pigeon-holed this forum too much. I've just changed it to "Career Advice" so that it has a much broader range.

Subject: Re: Acceptable Rates for PHP Programmers
Posted by [masonbarge](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2006 15:53:57 GMT
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hasin wrote on Tue, 20 June 2006 22:51 Hi
Payscale is also relevant to the geological area you are working in.

I agree. I'd discount a bill 20% for working in a sedimentary breccia. :lol:
