

Peter creates the digital marketing platform of the future

Peter Lindgren is an IT Architect Lead with Marketing Services Global Product Development (MS GPD) in Schaumburg, Illinois, USA. Here Peter describes how Experian is a workplace that encourages creativity and innovation, as shown most recently by Project Nimbus, designed to make Experian competitive in the dynamic field of digital and multi-channel marketing.

Looking back on my 15 years with Experian Marketing Services, I have witnessed many changes in both technology and marketing. In 1987, I joined Direct Marketing Technology, a marketing service bureau acquired by Experian in 1997, as a software developer. As a member of the Research and Development group, my job was to write programs for direct marketing by mail. Twenty-five years ago, we worked solely with IBM-style mainframes, and I developed many of the processes, such as “merge-purge” (combining data sets while eliminating duplicates and errors) that are still used today in our marketing database programs.

The freedom to invent is the hallmark of my working life. I became a software developer because it’s not only a job, it’s a craft. Creating a new software program is like a form of art. There is unexpected beauty in the creative act of fashioning a program; it’s like music, as elegant in its precision as a complex mathematical equation.

As a software developer, I just don’t write code—I invent programs, develop, design, and write documentation. Today, while my job title is IT Architect Lead, I am doing the same kind of varied work, but at a higher level. In my career here, Experian has evolved a great deal, and I have never had a boring day.

One of things I love about working at Experian is the fact that invention is encouraged here, and we feel empowered. We are encouraged to be creative, innovative, and experimental—because that’s how you gain competitive advantage, by devising great new products. In spring 2010, I started thinking about how we might migrate off the mainframe, because mainframe computing is very expensive, and mainframes are unable to handle today’s gigantic marketing databases.

Then, last year, Jeremy Lehman, Global Head of MS GPD, initiated Project Nimbus to migrate off the mainframe and enable clients to use customer databases for sophisticated marketing purposes in the digital space. Through Nimbus, instead of using mainframes, we’re processing client data through an expandable network of linked servers, using a new open-source technology platform called Hadoop that is faster, better, cheaper, and more interactive. I was one of the first placed on the project, and now I am helping to lead the mainframe migration effort, acting as an architect designing, writing code, working with the vendor, and liaising with

service delivery teams. Nimbus is a team effort, with members all over the world working closely together.

Experian has also afforded me and other members of the Nimbus team the opportunity to learn the Hadoop technology platform. It is very exciting to be learning something that's cutting edge, and it is great that we are investing in our people.

In a creative field like software development, you need inspiration—there has to be a spark. I have found a place in Experian where I am able to brainstorm and originate new ideas. That is what makes Experian special to me.

Yahoo! is already employing Nimbus' Cross Channel Identity Resolution (CCIR) feature that assembles a clear picture of a customer from disparate pieces of data so marketing campaigns can target customers precisely; other major organizations have expressed keen interest. Thanks to Nimbus, Yahoo! has reduced its marketing campaign management time from days to minutes, shortened an eight-week identity resolution update to less than a week (while processing over 1.5 billion records), and increased its addressable audience by over 20%. A host of other products are in the works via Nimbus. To learn more about Nimbus, please read this [article](#). With its data expertise and commitment to technology, Experian is an industry pioneer in applying sophisticated technology to digital database marketing.