

[The art of the takeoff: technology blogging for enabling experimentation](#)

In the world of technology, it can never be said that there is a shortage of things to learn. With that said, I wanted to highlight what I find particularly cool about the technology communities and what bloggers can do for the larger audience.

Think Globally, Act Locally: Technology Edition

You've probably heard the phrase "Think Globally, Act Locally" which referred to the idea of thinking of the bigger picture, but taking action in your own nearby ecosystem. The heart of the message was about preserving the greater good by local action. Enabling greater ideas through introducing small local changes.

With what our technology communities are doing these days, we see the same thing. Great authors, architects, thought leaders, and technologists are providing the tools to the greater community. We have the opportunity to see lots of live demos of products that are fully in action, but there is a something missing when we just see the product fully operational but only by seeing someone else doing the driving.

The Art of the Takeoff



I've flown a plane and a helicopter in my life. The disclaimer here, and an important point is that I'm not a pilot. But the point of is that I have taken the stick while in-flight in a Cessna 172 and Bell Helicopter (a 407 I believe) which was actually really easy...and lots of fun!

I could never say that I am a pilot despite operating these big machines during a flight, I didn't do any of the difficult work. Just like getting the live demo of some really cool product though, we can't really say we experienced it until we held the stick ourselves.

The point of what I am saying here is that by providing me with a working model (aka flying object), I was able to take part in the active use of it without going through the really tricky first steps. This is the heart of what we need to do as bloggers and technology leaders: enable experimentation.uct, I won't ever really have a good comprehension of this unless I learn the takeoff. However I was able to try out the process safely without the massive investment up front.

It is all about sharing the important portion of the product or technology, which is the build section. By enabling the reader to get right to the flight portion, we can really increase the chance of adoption of the technology and increase the excitement among the user community.

Enabling by Coaching the First Steps

A great example of what I'm talking about is here in an article penned by Scott Lowe (@Scott_Lowe): <http://blog.scottlowe.org/2013/11/25/a-brief-introduction-to-linux-containers-with-lxc> which is a nice introduction into using LXC (Linux Containers). The article is succinct, and provides the steps to get an immediate result.

I've spent a significant amount of time working with OpenStack lately, and I can tell you that the takeoff part of the adventure is very certainly the most difficult part. Luckily, we have a lot of great resources to enable those first steps with build scripts, packaged VMs, and much more being shared out in the blogger ecosystem.

Kenneth Hui shared a great article which provides an OpenStack Havana deployment using Vagrant and Chef to deliver the Rackspace Private Cloud edition: <http://cloudarchitectmusings.com/2013/12/01/deploy-openstack-havana-on-your-laptop-using-vagrant-and-chef/> and I can tell you that this is a massive time saver.

Getting you to the Start Line

The goal of these "Getting Started" posts is really to get you past the point of yak shaving in order to have an environment to work in and really test drive the technology. Plus, using the same information being shared in the scripts and toolkits that provide these packaged builds, you can reverse engineer a lot of the process to learn how to do the same thing yourself. But the value is immediate because you are able to have a working product with limited intervention.

✘ So your goal should be to pick a topic that may seem slightly out of reach, and do a little bit of searching for someone who has written a "getting started with..." post to save you the first steps. Think of it like training wheels for the first part of your test drive with a product. It's sometimes hard to get the machine rolling, but with the help of the great community contributions by our technology blogger community, we will do what we can to get you underway.

If you have had success with getting some new technology or process working, it is definitely encouraged to share your story and your experiences. This is how we got to where we are today with so many products and processes.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any technology that you are looking to test drive that I can help with, and I will do whatever I can to connect you with the right resources. In our social ecosystems we have great people who would love to help you out! Make sure to send out a Tweet or +1 to the authors, because the feedback you give provides the fuel for more great info sharing like this in the future.