



Chris Ward

# Chris Ward - The MAD Scientist; M- making, A-a, D-difference

Learning something new every day is beneficial, and the value of the continuous pursuit of knowledge cannot be overemphasised. Instead of doing the same thing repeatedly, being open to new experiences, and being introduced to new verticals of knowledge results in effective learning processes. Every individual has their best form of learning, which could be through visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic. But there are people with exceptional abilities, to combine all the VARK models; who are sometimes called, Genius and others nickname them, Mad Scientist.

They have developed the capacity to pick something positive, insightful, and different from each day's event, including incidents; in most

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cases, they end up coming up with inventions that change the world. Some of these inventions may not be accepted or appreciated in their initial days, but when they do, it tends to create a permanent impact on people's lives.

But how far can we go in creating new knowledge paths, inventing new technologies, and igniting the evolution of creativity? While some people may get tired of trying to improve through innovations, for maybe the fear of societal rejection, limitations due to government-set rules, or even personal health challenges –Life Is Too Short; there is Chris Ward, a man who thinks that, indeed, anything is possible, as long as we are open to learning, admitting our apex abilities and being willing to go the extra mile to do better.

Chris Ward, a Senior Programmer at IBM has 40+ years of experience in the research industry. He is currently working on software development for the next generation of the IBM Cloud, which is the current growth business. His contributions have been as a development engineer in a research laboratory and as a research scientist in a development laboratory. Tasked with lengths of ventures to manage and bring great results, Chris derives strength from his past experiences and is determinedly heads-on to achieve success in all.

**IBM has six patents with Chris Ward's name as an inventor on them. Though they are expired at this point, that shows his ability to invent new things.**

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*There are many new inventions to learn about, develop and understand further having the name of Chris Ward. So, let's get started:*

**Kindly brief us about you and your professional journey since the beginning of your career. Tell us about your academic and professional milestones; the major achievements, accolades, and recognition you have earned in your career so far.**

I joined IBM in 1982 with an Engineering degree from Cambridge University as a development engineer, when IBM was developing and marketing hard disks. In 1985 I was assigned from the UK to San Jose, USA to help with a development topic and to learn more about the technology. I returned to the UK at the end of 1986. A few years after that IBM ceased developing hard disks in the UK and I moved to software development.

In 1996 or so two research scientists came to teach us about fingerprint matching and I was part of the team that developed a fingerprint matcher. This led to my association with IBM Research; in 2001 I went with my family to Yorktown Heights to develop an application that would exploit the BlueGene supercomputer that IBM developed. I returned from the USA to the UK in 2003 but have remained part of IBM Research since then. IBM won the contract to deliver a successor to BlueGene to the US Government but lost the contract to deliver the next successor to

that machine, so I am now developing software for use in the next generation of the IBM Cloud, which is the current growth business.

**In short, tell us about your Role as Senior Programmer at Red Hat, and the solutions/services/products of the company. Your achievements since you started working in this company?**

I am working for IBM rather than for Red Hat, but we have a joint venture for the way SSDs are connected to cloud systems where IBM provides the research seed and Red Hat provides the larger engineering development effort.

This gives me the ability to post open-source software for public download on <https://people.redhat.com/chward/> (<https://people.redhat.com/chward/>), where IBM only allows certain types of open-source software in places like <https://github.com/IBM/BlueMatter> (<https://github.com/IBM/BlueMatter>) (that is my team's contribution to software for the BlueGene supercomputer). Not all software that IBM writes is published as open source, but as non-open-source software saturates its market much is.

**How will you describe yourself in one word or Quote?**

A 'Mad Scientist'

**Being a prominent leader in a leading company such as IBM as a Senior**

**Programmer, what has been your significant contribution to the company's growth, the department you worked in and how has your role in IBM helped your growth?**

My contribution has been as a development engineer working in a research laboratory, and now working as a research scientist in a development laboratory. IBM has 6 patents with my name on them as an inventor, most so old that they have expired and anyone can use the inventions; but they all show that I can invent new things. IBM provides a fantastic set of resources, some 300000 people who are willing to follow a lead as the business is steadily reinvented.

**What are the major challenges you faced in your careers; academic, and professional, and how has it helped you to become who you are today?**

At university I worked hard, resulting in a first-class honors degree. Throughout my IBM career, I have found managers who supported what I wanted to do. The major challenges were probably the two international assignments which were quite an upheaval to my personal life, especially the second one which was an upheaval for my wife and three children as well.

The international assignments led to promotions and were financially worthwhile; the first paid off the mortgage on the house I owned at the time, and the second paid much of the school fees for 2 of my children who went to private school.

## **How do you keep yourself motivated and inspired during the long hours of coding, and extra work hours in IBM and Red Hat?**

I tend to burn out if I work extra hours, and IBM pays senior people only 10% of their base hourly salary for working overtime; so extra work hours are only for engineers in the first few years of their careers where they are paid 150% of salary for overtime. ***I am motivated by seeing the tasks I work on become the base for something that customer businesses can use.***

## **As a leading figure in the computer programming world, what would be your message to students worldwide, aspiring programmers, and entrepreneurs in the technology sector?**

Find a growth market and deliver products or services to it. High growth tends to mean high prices, and high prices mean stable employment and high wages.

## **What are your next steps, moves, or ventures in 2023 and the coming years?**

I have been with IBM for 40 years, and it seems likely that I will be with IBM Research until I retire. The venture of interest for my part of Research at the moment is improving Kubernetes for deployment in the IBM Cloud; as we complete the research on that and it transitions to Red Hat for development, I will pick or be assigned another

project from the list of business imperatives that IBM Research keeps so that I continue to do valuable work.

**Please provide a few testimonials of your friends, colleagues, or clients who you have helped or worked with in the past and in the organizations where you have worked.**

- Pick a few items from my patents, articles, and papers in my portfolio at <http://tjcw.freeshell.org/> (<http://tjcw.freeshell.org/>).
- Also this <http://tjcw.freeshell.org/Portfolio/Testemonials/19940908-DB-IS.pdf> (<http://tjcw.freeshell.org/Portfolio/Testemonials/19940908-DB-IS.pdf>)

As a side project, back in 2005, I figured out how to run Linux as a screensaver for Microsoft Windows. That was published as an article in IBM Developerworks the same week that IBM OS/2 was withdrawn from marketing; OS/2 had saturated its market and was sold off (with some parts, such as the journalling file system and the REXX interpreter, being published as open source).

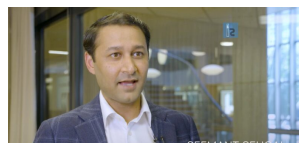
Microsoft recommended switching to Windows and IBM recommended switching to Linux, and it is still the same today. Currently, Microsoft Windows does not run on any brand of IBM server, whereas Linux can run on all of them; you would have to ask Microsoft if you want to know why this should be. IBM never published the screensavers themselves, and no one else took up the mantle

to publish them.

Now that I am part of Red Hat I can publish them myself; I updated the screensavers in respect of developments between 2005 and 2021, there is a getting-started guide published by the Linux Foundation here

- <https://www.linux.com/featured/linux-as-a-screensaver-for-windows-the-gift-of-open-source-games-and-sboms-for-the-holidays/> (<https://www.linux.com/featured/linux-as-a-screensaver-for-windows-the-gift-of-open-source-games-and-sboms-for-the-holidays/>)
- and the screensavers are available from Red Hat at no charge here <https://people.redhat.com/chward/QemuSaverOpen/> (<https://people.redhat.com/chward/QemuSaverOpen/> )

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