Creators
The story of
Jeremy Nagel
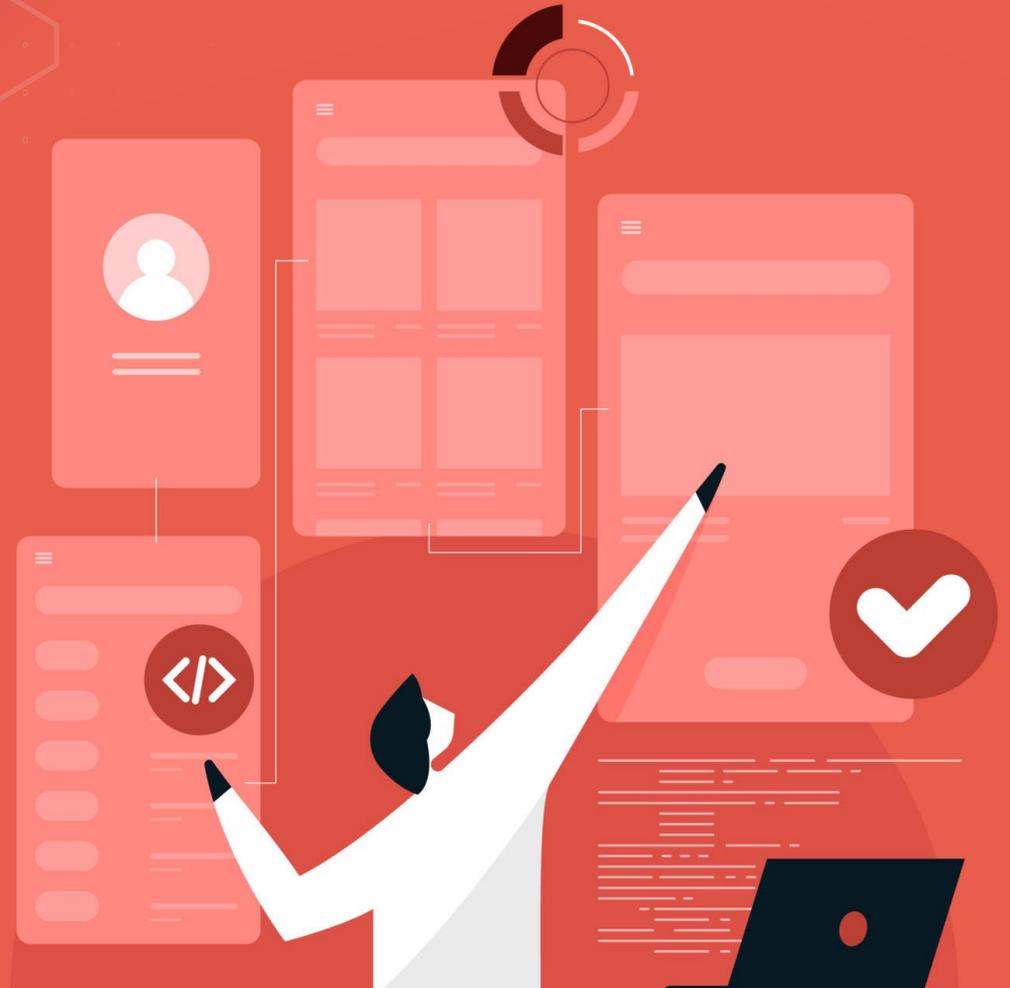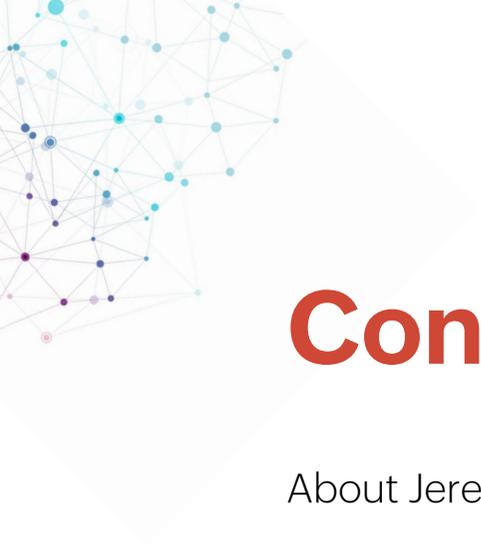
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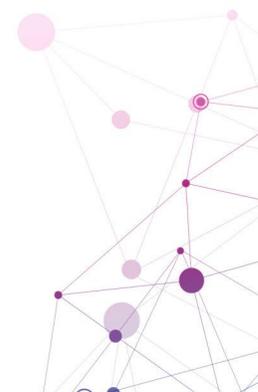
Zoho Creator was an excellent way to enter the software development world for me. The low-code approach makes it easy to get started, and newer features like widgets allow you to achieve almost anything. As I've learned other programming languages, I continue to be impressed by how quickly you can build a working app in Zoho Creator. It's the perfect match for internal tools. 🙶

About Jeremy

Jeremy is a self-taught full-stack developer with over ten years of experience working with Zoho Creator. Since completing his bachelor's in Environmental Science from the University of Monash, he's held positions at multiple firms in the energy and nonprofit industries.

Read this ebook to learn how Jeremy went from being a development volunteer to starting his own software development agency—Nuanced—to leading software development at a major renewable energy firm in Australia.

Key Skills

Deluge script
Ten years experience writing custom functions in Creator/CRM and now Zoho Marketplace extensions.

JavaScript
Nine years experience, currently using React and Node.js to build CRM extensions for Zoho Marketplace.

Python
Four years experience using Python for data processing in the backend experimenting with machine learning.
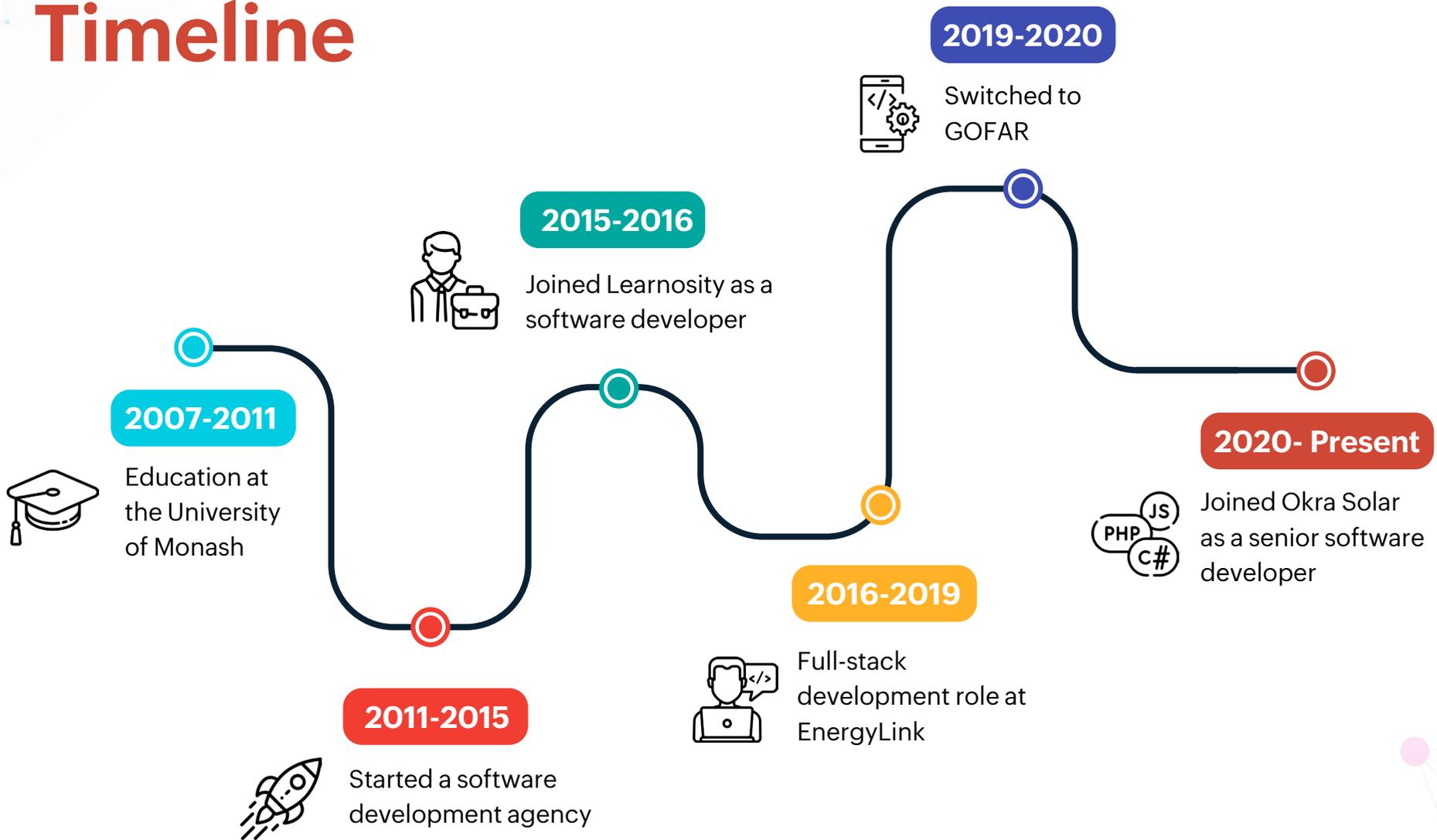
Team leadership
Eight years experience hiring many people and currently leading a team of 9 developers who help with Marketplace apps and Zoho consulting.

Content marketing
Years of experience creating Youtube videos and Udemy courses on topics related to Zoho.

Timeline

2007-2011

Education at the University of Monash

2011-2015

Started a software development agency

2015-2016

Joined Learnosity as a software developer

2016-2019

Full-stack development role at EnergyLink

2019-2020

Switched to GOFAR

2020- Present

Joined Okra Solar as a senior software developer

Early career

Jeremy earned his bachelor's from the University of Monash in 2011. He majored in Environmental Science with a focus on bio-informatics and data mining.

In 2009, while pursuing his first degree, Jeremy picked up a second bachelor's course from the Open University of Australia, specializing in computer engineering. But around 2011, he realized that he could learn programming much faster by doing real projects. He decided to drop out.

> When I graduated with my Environmental Science degree in 2011, it was a tough job market for greenies. I ended up stumbling into a freelance gig building a database for a parental research institute. The deadline was short, and my database skills were pretty immature (I had done a little bit in high school and university), so I googled for options and found Zoho Creator.

Jeremy Nagel

Starting his Zoho journey

Jeremy is a self-taught programmer. He started his career by learning languages such as Java, but came across Zoho Creator when he was looking for new technologies that could help him take care of the data layer in his solutions.

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I had built desktop apps with Java, before using Zoho Creator. The result was often clunky and took hundreds of hours for me to develop. I marveled at the speed of development with Creator. It had a similar drag-and-drop UI-building approach that I was used to building Swing apps in Java, but the data access layer was much more manageable. Rather than spending tens of hours setting up databases and persistence code, Zoho Creator automatically took care of the data layer for me, in the background.

Jeremy Nagel

He got his first real job at a nonprofit firm where he'd been volunteering for a while. The firm needed a database solution built, and Jeremy decided to use Zoho Creator to make it for them. The solution far exceeded the expectations of the firm, and they ended up paying Jeremy for it.

Jeremy leveraged this development experience and started building his portfolio, which helped him get freelancing jobs from platforms such as Upwork.

Around this time, Jeremy started his software development agency, Nuanced, where he worked with clients from varied backgrounds.

I advertised my Zoho development services on Upwork and was able to find a series of clients around the world who wanted my help with Zoho Creator and CRM. Sometimes I reached the limits of what Creator was capable of and started playing around with JavaScript and PHP.

At first, he only picked up projects that could be solved with Zoho Creator, but he trained himself by learning full-stack development around JavaScript and Python over the years. Going full-stack allowed him to pick up much more complex projects.

He pursued his business till 2015, when he switched to a full-time software development role at Learnosity. Since then, he's held various development roles at firms such as EnergyLink, GOFAR, and his current role at Okra Solar.

Jeremy now works part-time for Okra Solar and spends the other half of his week working on Zoho Marketplace extensions (such as **Smooth Messenger**).

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After a few years of freelancing, that tinkering and my experience working with clients allowed me to get a "real job" as a software developer. I would never have been able to break into the industry with my Environmental Science degree alone, so I'm very grateful to Zoho Creator for making entry barriers low. These days, I still use Zoho and marvel at what's possible as the platform grows and matures.

Jeremy Nagel

Why Zoho Creator?

Automatic database builder
I was amazed at how fast I was able to build a nice-looking front-end for the database. The previous apps I'd built in Java would've taken weeks to create what I was able to achieve in days with Zoho Creator. From that point on, I was hooked.

Speed of development
Compared to building a user interface in HTML and CSS/React (my usual front-end stack), Zoho Creator is an order of magnitude faster. I have built apps in 1 hour, which would've taken a good 20 hours of effort had I written the code from scratch.

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Thanks to Zoho Creator, I have been able to quickly build bespoke apps for clients who otherwise would have been stuck with off-the-shelf tools that didn't quite fit them.

Drag -and -drop UI

The drag-and-drop interface is quite different from the way I normally needed to hand code CSS and JavaScript. Data access is far easier than writing SQL.

Community

Other than getting consulting clients, I've benefited from the Zoho Marketplace ecosystem. I've launched several solutions on Zoho's marketplace, and am grateful that Zoho has opened up opportunities for developers to sell complementary solutions in the Marketplace.
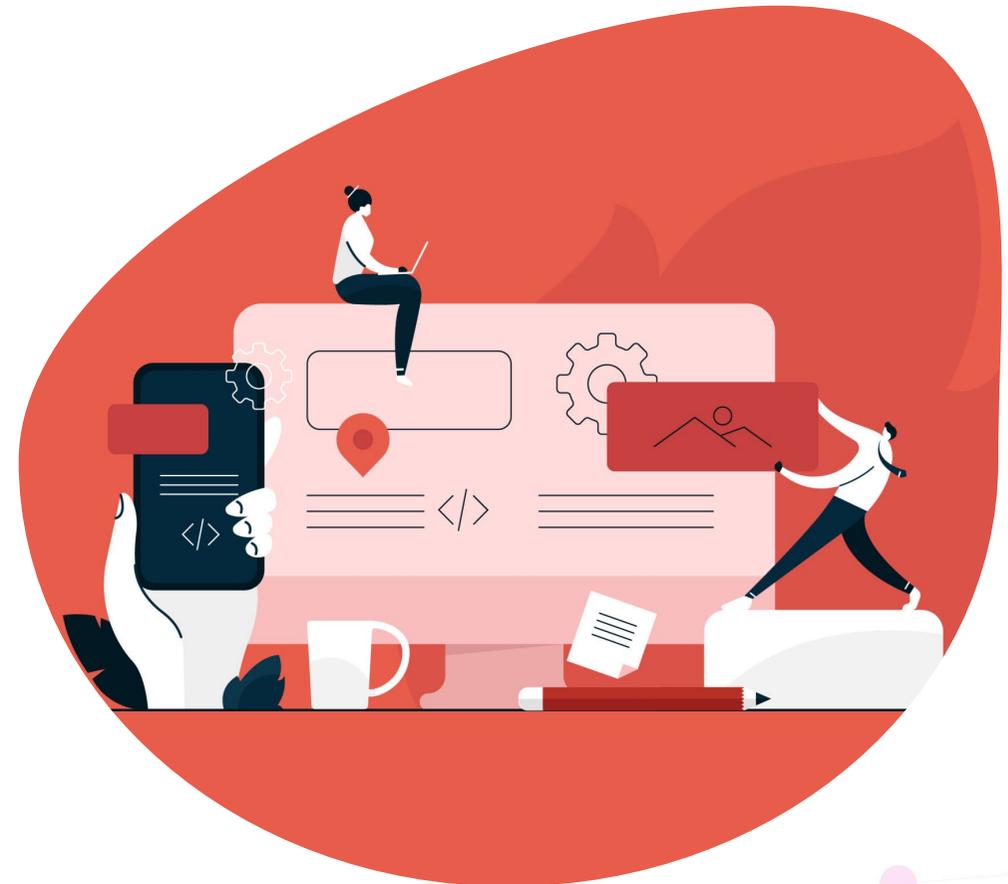
Projects with Creator

Client 1

**Industry – Education**
Solution – Enrollment system

This client is an Australia-wide training provider. Before Creator, the client was using PDF enrollment forms which often got lost, which made billing difficult. Jeremy built an enrollment system which allowed students to confirm the date and time of their training session and agree to the terms. The form was integrated with Zoho CRM so that students didn't have to reenter redundant information.

Client 2

Industry - Emergency services
## Solution - Training management system

This client is a local unit of a volunteer emergency services organization with over 100 volunteers. The team runs regular training courses. Jeremy built a system using Zoho Creator that allowed volunteers to nominate courses, allowed managers to approve nominations, and automatically sent nominations in the required PDF format to headquarters. The system sent Slack notifications to remind the training team to follow up with managers prior to the due date.
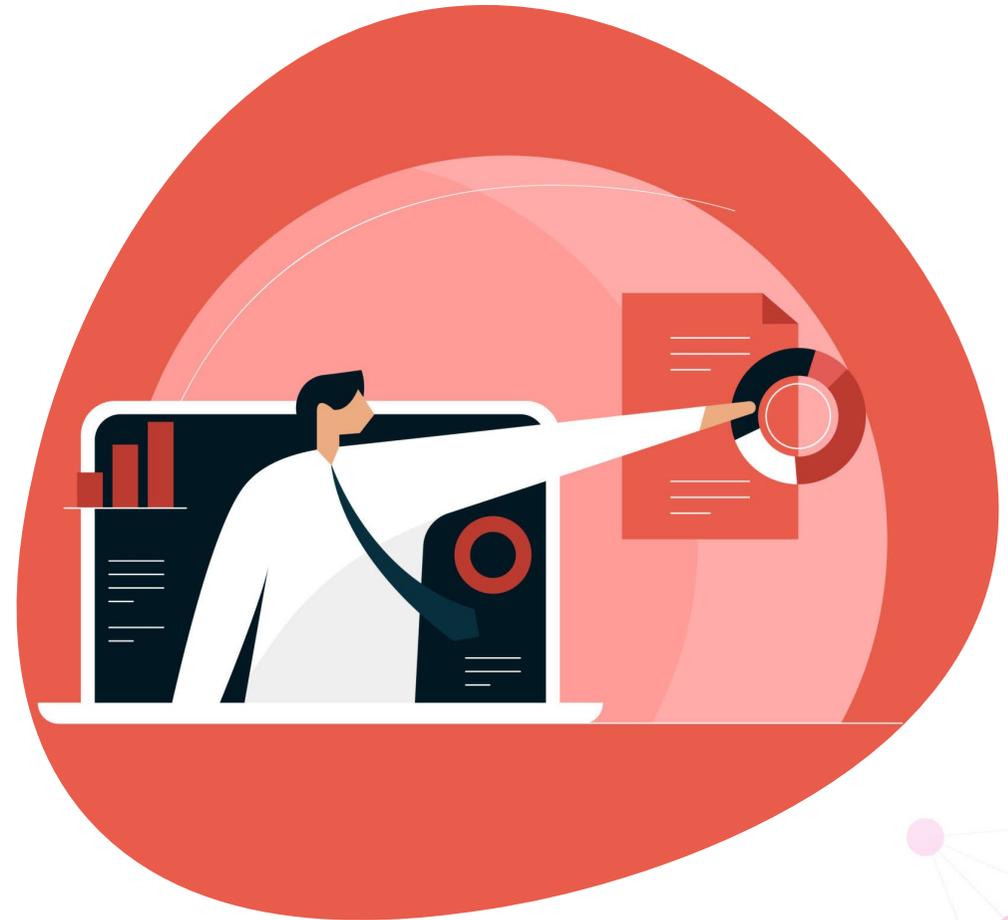
Thoughts on the forums

"For the first project I worked on, I built a viable app within two days. I read the documentation, searched through the forums, and played around until I got it working. It was very straightforward. For people without a programming background, there are some solid learning resources out there, like https://deluge.zoho.com/.
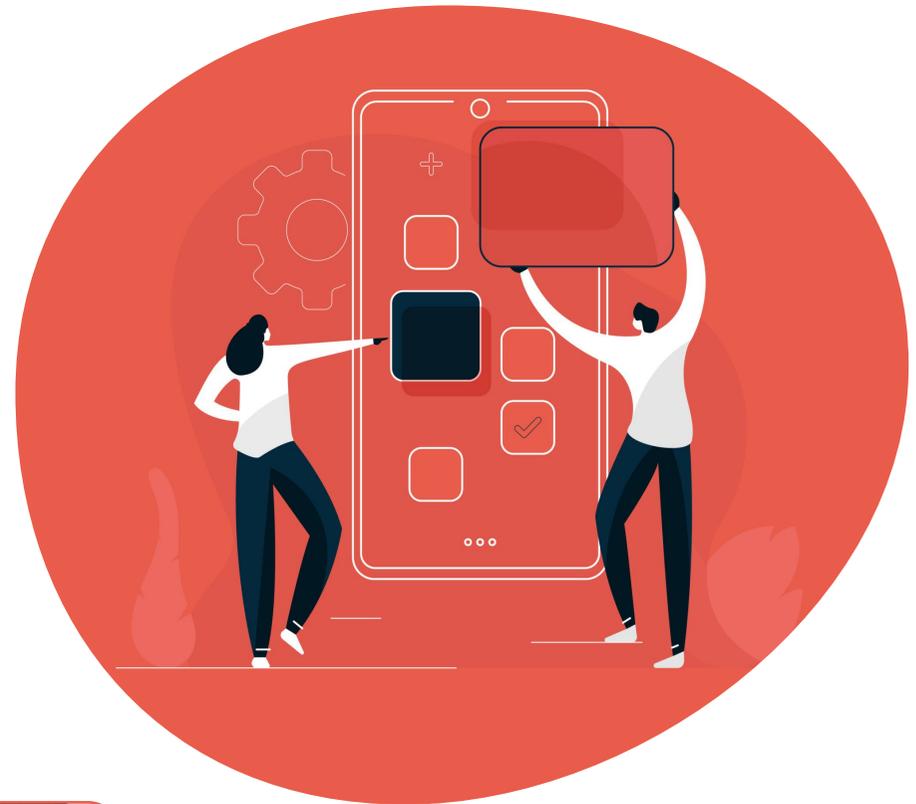
Jeremy Nagel

Advice to new developers

- Have a concrete project to build, otherwise it's hard to motivate yourself to learn.

- Do the **https://deluge.zoho.com/learndeluge course!**

- Ask live chat for help if you need it.

About
Zoho Creator

Running a business is no mean feat, and we believe we can help. Rapidly build custom applications that are a perfect fit for your business, or choose from our extensive range of pre built apps and modify them. The best part? You don't have to be a programmer. Just sign up, pick a plan, and start building!
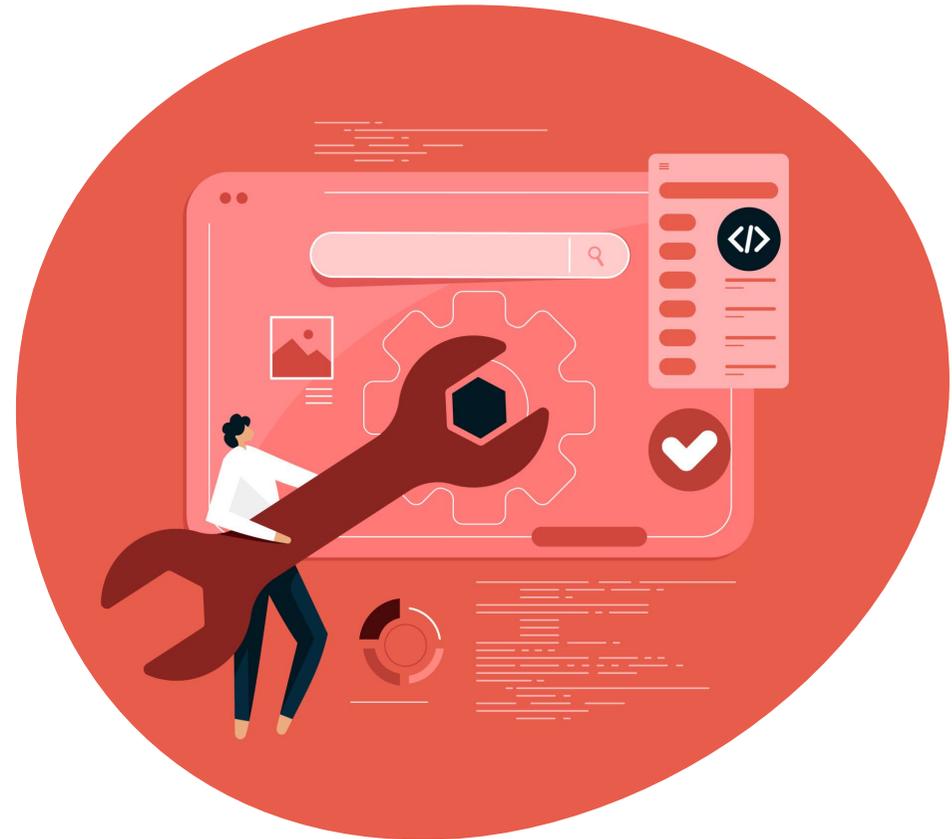
ZOHO Creator

www.zoho.com/creator

We'd love to talk! Reach out to us at:

hello@zohocreator.com