

8 May 2008

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When Lego Ninja Attack...
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When Microsoft Ninjas Attack

They will much rather throw a few lines of C# at you than a shuriken

No, Microsoft ninjas are not a secret project, a new solution, application or service. They are just employees on the payroll, walking the hallways of Microsoft buildings on a daily basis. Ninjas are normally not among standard personal in an IT company, and the Redmond giant makes by no means an exception to this rule. But this is not to say that the impossible can't happen, and loyal to the slogan "never say never," Microsoft has more ninjas than it knows what to do with. The only catch is that all of them would much rather throw a few lines of C# at you than a shuriken. [Josh Poley](#), now with the Zune testing team, is an illustrative example of a fully-fledge Microsoft ninja (via [James Senior](#)).

"If a fellow employee looks me up in the address book, he will be informed that my title is "EMULATION NINJA". Regardless to say, this continues to evoke the common 'what's with your title?' questions, especially since the original lore around this topic is quickly fading into obscurity. Interestingly, I've been getting this question a lot recently," Poley said.

Apparently, it all started a while back when Microsoft was still building the Xbox 360 console. One of the critical tasks of the development team was to make Xbox 360 backwards compatible. "Unfortunately, the Xbox 360 is wildly different in its hardware compared to the first console. This means that it becomes a very difficult task to enable this functionality," Poley added.

As a direct consequence, some of the top developers on the Xbox 360 building team were assigned to deal with the technical challenges of making the latest version of the console backwards compatible. But by the official launch of the Xbox 360, Microsoft had ensured that the console was fully compatible with approximately 200 Original Xbox games.

"On Wednesday, November 16, 2005 (at 3:47 PM) J Allard sent an email to 16 individuals thanking the team for their work and tireless efforts over the past long months," Poley recalled. "Near the bottom of this email, he goes on to say (in his standard non-capitalized prose): 'you are each officially promoted to the rank of 'emulation ninja' in my book. thanks and congratulations.' Then several days later, the titles started to appear in the corporate address book. At that instant in time, developers, testers, PMs, and even a marketing guy all became unified under one (very cool) title; except, that is, for the dev lead who had the one and only "Lead Emulation Ninja" title.