

**Akshar Koulaev** (You can call me Alex, and it's not KOVALEV.)

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## Covering Letter (skip straight to CV)

Resumes lie... That's what an HR manager of The Bank of Montreal once told at the information session I was lucky to attend. He said – he never read resumes. Only covering letters. He said – they contain more of a personality. So I will try to put as much of mine here, as I can.

I am presently employed with MGI – it's been 10 years. MGI makes video hardware. And I test drivers for that hardware. On Linux platform. I write scripts, install different distros of Linux, run various applications in many resolutions and pixel depths, mostly in multi screen environment. And often in multi adaptor. I have 3 – 10 systems under test at a time, so I switch a lot. All my systems are multiboot with up to 9 distributions installed. Systems are mostly new models from HP, Compaq and other, not so well known manufacturers, but those are mostly thinclients. I am part of a small team of 7 people – 5 developers and 2 testers. We've got our second tester only recently – a year ago. It was my job to get him up and running.

Our team is given 2-3 students a year. Those are students doing coop programs. Normally it's one at a time, we've had two simultaneously only once. It is my job to educate them and make sure – they become actually productive in 4-5 weeks. I also provide techsupport to many corporate clients – this consists of looking at the logs they send me and most of the times just writing a correct XF86Config (xorg.conf) for them. Or clearing up other configuration issues. Conference calls happen once every week or two. And I am often busy educating people who need to work in connection with Linux – mostly remote desktop testers from our SQA lab. I am also responsible for our internal web portal where we put testing related info, drivers, test logs, howtos for people from other departments and various tables with info on our products. This involves HTML coding with CSS, quite a bit of JavaScript and some graphics – I have to follow pretty strict corporate style. We also use GForge so I know just as much of PHP as it takes to customize GForge to suite our needs.

Before I started in Linux group I had worked in SQA. More or less the same work, but no tech. support, no trainees, and all on Microsoft platforms. I was mostly responsible for applications so I became quite an adept in many. Especially graphic editors. Office apps too. I wrote batch files to automate certain things and macros to run robustness tests. (To ensure that system doesn't crash when running CPU-intensive office app overnight). About that time we started to use Winbench and Winstone test suites. And many others.

Briefly – I feel comfortable in advanced using and tuning of Windows and Linux. I also feel comfortable with PCs and related hardware. I can assemble a PC with my eyes closed, but this, I guess, every third person in our SQA lab could do.

I am very good at Photoshop. Feel comfortable with Corel Draw and Photopaint. Used Adobe Illustrator. Used Linux based graphics editors a lot – Gimp and Inkscape (vector graphics editor). Most of my graphic projects were graphics for my web pages, concert ad posters, wallpapers and t-shirt transfers.

Intermediate level of video editing – mostly home videos editing and publishing (to DVD) and advanced level of sound editing – apps used – Adobe Audition, SoundForge, FL Studio and Reason. Recorded my own songs with tracks for back vocal, drums and bass.

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I worked as an electrician for more than a year. My experience with that is also based on years of employment in geology where I had to do with drilling equipment, so I got familiar with electric motors, transformers, control panels and high-voltage wiring. I don't have a Canadian/Quebec license though.

I worked as a stone-mason for 3 years. In fact we did almost any renovation related work including plumbing and carpentry, but 80% of time it was stone. Me and my friend started a company where I was a painter/plasterer and he was a stone-mason. As it went on we had to switch, both gained from each-other experiences and became equally adept in stone working and painting which we did much less. We did mostly stairs, porches, walls, columns and graves. Faced them with stone – that is. Graves faced with stone may sound weird, but that's how people do it in our part of Russia. Marble most often. Sometimes granite. We owned a stone-cutting machine with 50 cm. disk and 1x2 meters table. This was more than 10 years ago, but recently I had to rebrick one of the walls of my house – it got pregnant, and I did so in 8 days. Took it apart, cleaned old bricks, laid them back with new anchors. All alone with part of the wall 15x8 feet with two windows in it. Not that I expect to get hired as a stone-mason. Just to show that I had to deal directly with customers and most of the times they were happy. Otherwise I'd have to change occupation.

I worked in geological prospecting for 7 years. I started as a general worker while taking courses in university. In a year I had my security clearance and exam and became a blaster. We worked high in the mountains of Northern Caucasus, in an unpredictable environment, constantly watching out for something to happen. We looked for rare-earth and colored metals. Manually drilled holes, charged them with explosives, blasted them up and took samples for the lab. All that mostly 3000 meters and more above sea level. In winters, when there was no field work for blasters, I worked as a driller on rotary core drilling, looking for the same set of elements. In 500 meters range. There was one year when I worked as an industrial blaster – demolished two bridges, an old mill and countless foundations for all kinds of buildings. Unlike with the previous paragraph I hadn't had a chance to blow something up for a long time. But I am pretty sure I can still do it.

And last, but not least on this long list of my experiences is my parenting. I am a father of 3 sons. They grow up smart and strong. Knowing to respect others. Knowing discipline and love. Or should I have put love first? Maybe... I am putting this here as a proof of my managerial, teaching and people skills – believe it or not, that's what it takes to run the family in your own house. Not that I really want to be a manager per se. I would like to try being a teacher though. Since my wife runs a home daycare and I help her at times – this can be added to my experiences. But I will not put it on my CV.

Just to add some finishing to the above image - as I type this – September, 2009 – I am 43. 186 cm, 86 kilos, green eyes, shaved head, including chin and upper lip. Glasses. Pretty physical and healthy – I use my bike to get to work and back – 15 km. each way. Is that more detail than you wanted? Sorry!

When asked – what is my main asset for an employer – I always say – adaptability. I easily adapt to any environment. So in any of those environments listed above, I'll be happy to continue. And my expectations – well managed business with a strong head, solid team (if I'll have to work in a team), lots of work to do, paid overtime, base salary starting at 55K (depending on occupation). Benefits – group insurance and such. And I'll do my part in ensuring that this business stays well and gets better.

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## EDUCATION

- 2000 – 2001**                      **Center for Continuing education, Concordia University**  
Montreal  
Software development for the World Wide Web  
Unfinished(6 courses out of 10)
- 1997 – 1998**                      **Vainer College**  
Montreal  
Attestation of Collegial Studies in Microcomputer Techniques.
- 1983 - 1989**                      **North Caucasian Mining and Smelting Institute**  
Vladikavkas, Russia.  
Ore Mineral Prospection (University level)

## EMPLOYMENT

- 2000 March –**                      **SQA Technician**  
**Present**                              Matrox Graphics  
1055 St-Regis Boulevard, Dorval, Quebec

### **Win2K – XP environment:**

- Hardware and software compatibility testing on pre-released versions of OEM PCs.
- Developed several testing utilities in DHTML and C. Was responsible for driver CD release testing.
- Wrote boot manager for multilingual Windows installation (batch file)
- Testing of Matrox frame grabbing hardware and software on MS Operating systems,
- Working with different kinds of digital and analog security cameras – color and black and white.
- Working knowledge (advanced user/pro level) of Adobe Photoshop, Corel Photopaint, Office apps (Microsoft, IBM, Corel, Sun), HTML editors, sound editors. Some experience with video editors.

### **Linux environment:**

- Testing of graphics driver on numerous MGI videocards including special cards for medicine, IP cards for servers, air traffic monitoring and railroad control. Mostly multiscreen environment.
- Testing software packages – GPL and proprietary. Gimp, OpenOffice, Blender, Inkscape, VMWare - to name a few.
- Testing thinclients with rdesktop. All of the above on all major distributions RedHat (RHEL and Fedora), SuSE(SLES), Mandrake – Mandriva, Ubuntu, Gentoo, Slackware and Debian), having several releases under testing – kernel versions 2.4.18 to 2.6.31, X versions 4.3.0 to 1.6.2
- Writing shell scripts to automate testing on multiple systems, quickly change X settings, run robustness tests.
- Creating custom modelines.
- Providing tech. support to corporate clients, training students.
- SSH, NFS, Samba.

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## **EMPLOYMENT (cont-d)**

**1999** December –

**2000** March

### **Field Technician**

Optimal Robotics (U-Scan)

Montreal, Quebec

Intensive travelling to the US. Main responsibilities: installation and start up of self-checkout (U-Scan) terminals in chain stores like Wal-Mart, Meijer, Kroeger, Bi-Lo, A&P, etc. Installation and start up consists of setting up five NT workstations with numerous peripherals (like bill acceptors, bill dispensers, coin acceptors and dispensers, two types of scales, scanner, video camera) on two networks – internal network for given cluster (four customer stations and operator station) and store network Unix or IBM 4680-90. Troubleshooting hardware in NT environment – DigiBoard (ISA and PCI), DigiBox, VideoMUX board, multiple network adapters (two per station), sound and video adapters. Troubleshooting network in multi platform environment. Techsupport during startup. (Reason for leaving – constantly on the road instead of 40% of time that was on the contract.)

**1999**

March – December

### **SQA Technician**

Matrox Graphics

Dorval, Quebec

Installation and reinstallation of different video sound and network adapters, making sure that there is no conflict with chipset and existing peripherals. Installation and employment of different software (mostly graphics related – like CorelDraw, Adobe Illustrator, Bryce, Ulead, DVD players, games, various benchmarks like ZD Winbench99, Bapco, Winstone, etc.) and testing if driver and accompanying diagnostic software work fine with all that software installed. Installation and reinstallation of Windows95-98, NT 4, RedHat Linux 6.0 mostly in multy boot environment, setting up network, printers, sound devices, etc. Filling in numerous checklists as well as documenting bugs in database. Almost all the machines I dealt with were the latest pre-released samples from leading OEMs like HP, IBM, Compaq and Gateway.

**1998**

September-December

### **Computer Technician** (practical semester after the college)

Henry Birks & Sons

Montreal, Quebec.

Installation and setup of modems, network cards, soundboards, CD ROMS, RAM, HDDs, ZIP, JAZZ and other external and internal peripherals. Setting up computers on the three-platform network – NT, Novel and AS400. NT administering. AS400 administration and maintenance. Design and development of Access database for company PC inventory. Participation in development of Outlook application that automates coordination between help desk and technicians who provide an actual help(documenting, forwarding and archiving each call).

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## **EMPLOYMENT (cont-d)**

**1996 – 1997**

### **Electrician**

Ferro Technique Ltd.

Montreal, Quebec

Integrated with a group of electricians in the fabrication of control panels, and wiring of state of the art wire handling machinery. Was involved in PLC programming, motor drives programming and setup, wiring of control panels, AC, DC and servomotors, encoders and tachogenerators. Installed electrical/electronic components on the frames of the machines and performed quality control, start-up and troubleshooting at a customer site. Took an active part in redoing the workshop main wiring (600 W)

**1995 – 1996**

### **Maintenance technician**

Healthy Tradition Bakeries

Montreal, Quebec

Performed technical support of equipment (ovens, mixers, dosers etc.) shipped and received merchandise, trained new staff.

**1992 – 1995**

### **Stonemason**

Russia

Co-owned small construction business.

**1986 – 1992**

### **Mineral Prospecting Technician**

North-Ossetian Geological Expedition, Vladikavkaz, Russia

As a member of the prospecting group worked in mountain areas performing rock drilling and blasting on the day surface and underground. Was promoted in six months to a technician, and in two years to master technician. Constantly dealt with unpredictable and dangerous situations concerning the safety of people and the environment.

**1984 – 1986**

### **Pointer**

Military service, anti-aircraft short range.

## **LANGUAGES**

English, French, Russian.

## **HOBBIES**

biking, music, martial arts, reading, website creation, graphic design, troubleshooting computer hardware and software.

## **REFERENCES**

Upon request