SF BEN

SALESFORCE DEVELOPER SURVEY

2024 INSIGHTS

salesforceben.com

CONTENTS

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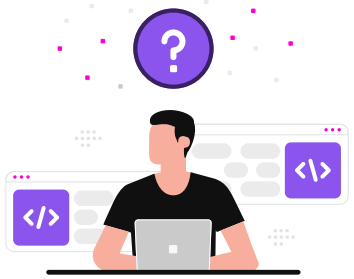
FOREWORD

A few months ago, I found myself wanting to understand how Salesforce Developers think.

I was working for a Salesforce DevOps product company where we would regularly discuss how to bring software engineering practices to the world of Salesforce development. The thing is, many software engineering practices are about culture and how developers see themselves and their work.

Do Salesforce Developers see themselves as craftspeople, or is their work simply a means to an end? The answer to this simple question has deep repercussions for the ecosystem and the quality of work we produce.



How do you learn how Salesforce Developers think? I was (and still am to some extent) a Salesforce Developer for years, but extrapolating my own perceptions would be arrogant and naive; we needed something more robust and accurate. There have been some efforts to understand at scale how developers think. An infamous example is the 2015 Stack Overflow Developer Survey, where a supposed 73% dreaded working with Salesforce, and Salesforce was the most dreaded technology to work with.

There's been a lot of debate about whether that survey is accurate; the general consensus is that it isn't accurate, and that those who completed it were not actually Salesforce Developers. Instead, they could have been "traditional" software developers who found themselves (probably unwillingly) working with the platform.

Other surveys are owned by vendors of different products, which one needs to take with a grain of salt as you can expect them to omit details that don't fit their marketing efforts; this is pretty normal in the software industry and I'm not passing judgment on this practice.

And finally, there's Salesforce, who also have their own developer survey. Salesforce has done a pretty good job at being transparent, with the IdeaExchange being an industry-standard example of letting the community give feedback in public. Another example is the True to the Core sessions at Dreamforce and TDX, where just about anyone can grill the Salesforce Product Managers and ask for updates on their most requested features.

The question remains: who can give us a 100% unbiased and accurate representation of the state of mind of the modern Salesforce Developer? That's when I thought of Salesforce Ben. For years, Salesforce Ben has been delivering content to the ecosystem, and Ben and his team are not shy about saying things the way they are, even if not everyone wants to hear them. I decided to give it a try and reached out to Ben to ask if he wanted to collaborate on creating the best developer survey the ecosystem has ever seen. One that can truly help us move forward and make the right decisions.

Since you are reading this document, it's clear the answer was a resounding *yes*. And so, alongside Ben and his team, I started putting together what we wanted to be the most comprehensive survey that has ever existed. Now that I see the results, I'm happy that I didn't let go of my desire to truly understand how Salesforce Developers think. Some of the metrics in here are surprising, while others confirm beliefs I've held for years but simply couldn't prove.

But no survey can truly tell you how developers think. The only true answer to that question is within yourself. Whether you are already a Salesforce Developer, you're aspiring to become one, or you're someone who interacts with Salesforce Developers, you will find value in this survey. I hope you can use it to reflect on your own journey, and that it inspires you to grow out of your comfort zone.

Pablo Gonzalez
Director of Product Management, AutoRABIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the very first large-scale report produced by the team at Salesforce Ben: the first edition of our annual Salesforce Developer Survey. We've been thrilled at the response to this survey, so firstly, thank you to everyone who made this possible.

The Salesforce ecosystem is entering an interesting time, after growing from a $4 billion company in 2014 to producing just under $35B in revenue in FY24, the Salesforce economy has truly boomed. We have seen a huge increase in the number of people entering the ecosystem, with Salesforce continuing to acquire and integrate products into their already dominant tech stack, and they have changed the way we build applications on the platform.

Many of us will be able to list off the benefits of the Salesforce platform with ease, however, these boom years have also created several challenges that seem to be ubiquitous across all survey respondents. Whilst these challenges won't be new to many, we hope that the results of this survey will shine a light on them for the whole ecosystem, and ultimately, lead to some solutions being provisioned in some form or another.

Whilst many Salesforce professionals struggle with challenges both on the platform and within their own companies, artificial intelligence is hanging over the tech world like a transformative sword of Damocles. It's clear from the responses that AI is already having a big impact on the work lives of developers using these tools to boost productivity. However, people are also very concerned about security, and they are not sure if Salesforce's trust principles alleviate these concerns.

But AI developer tools are only one piece of the puzzle; the much larger transformative wave of AI is going to come in the form of augmenting Salesforce users' daily lives with functionality built into Salesforce.

In this survey, we will cover five key sections: **Demographics**, **Knowledge & Skills**, **DevOps**, **AI**, and **Tooling & Coding**. We hope this survey will help you feel more connected to the Salesforce ecosystem by sharing the challenges, solutions, and feelings that hundreds of developers have towards the platform and the ecosystem itself. Enjoy!

Ben McCarthy
Founder and CEO, SF Ben

ABOUT SALESFORCE DEVELOPERS

Key Insights

- Who has taken this survey? **43% of our respondents** identify as a Salesforce Developer, 12% as an Architect, and 11% as an Engineer.
- We have a near-equal split of respondents employed as end users versus consultancies, with **45% and 44.5% respectively**. 7% work as contractors, 2.5% for ISVs, and 0.3% for Salesforce.
- **62% of respondents** have worked in a Salesforce role between 3-10 years – meaning that the vast majority of developers joined the ecosystem between 2014 and 2021.
- **43.3% of respondents** have 11-15+ years of experience in the tech industry, showing that many respondents have switched careers and moved over to Salesforce.
- **86% of Salesforce Developers** come from North America, Europe, or India. Architects are primarily based in Europe and North America, with roughly 88% of roles around in these regions. India sees more Salesforce Admins and Technical Consultants.
- A total of **76% of respondents** are male, with 20% being female, 1% identifying as non-binary, and 3% omitting results. 44.4% of female developers are between the ages of 25-34, showing an encouraging trend amongst younger professionals (the same result for males is 35%).
- **65% of respondents** work in Salesforce teams of between 1-9, whilst 10% have between 50-100+ in their team.
- **52% of developers** work remotely, 33% have hybrid privileges, and 14.7% are in the office full-time.
- **50% of respondents** state that their team is mostly made up of developers with a few admins, 25% state it's mostly admins with a few developers, and 25% have an equal mix of both roles.
- **The top five** industries Salesforce Developers work in are as follows: Technology, Financial Services, Professional Services, Healthcare, and Consumer Goods.
- **53% of respondents** have between 1-5 certifications. Although there are more than 40 certifications available today, no matter how long you have worked in the industry, the average tends to be 1-5 certifications.

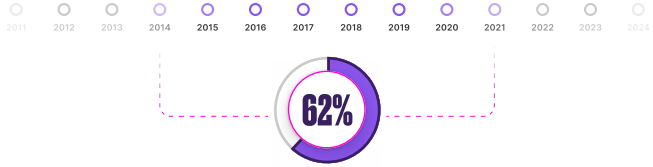
Deep Dive

To quickly summarize some of the main attributes of our respondents, the vast majority of Salesforce Developers are based in North America, Mainland Europe, and the UK. An overwhelming majority (52%) identified as senior in their roles, with 35% being intermediate, and just 12% being junior.

The varied demographics of those who completed our survey really shows the breadth of roles involved in Salesforce development. Whilst the overwhelming majority identified as Salesforce Developers, we also saw Technical, Solution, and stand-alone Architects, as well as Engineers, Admins, Technical Consultants, and more.

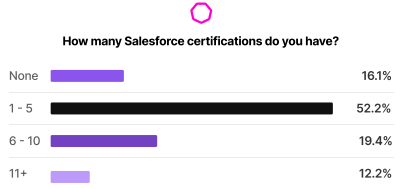
The fact that 8% identified as Salesforce Admins may mean that the "admineloper" role is growing in popularity, as we have previously identified on our website. During a time when budgets are stretched, employers may want more *bang for their buck* by employing a hybrid role that can take on many responsibilities.

As mentioned, Salesforce has seen tremendous growth over the past 10 years, and it's clear that the vast majority of developers joined the ecosystem between 2014-2021, with 62% of respondents answering that they have 3-10 years of experience. But the ecosystem is still bringing in new developers, with 13% joining 1-2 years ago, and 5% joining less than a year ago.



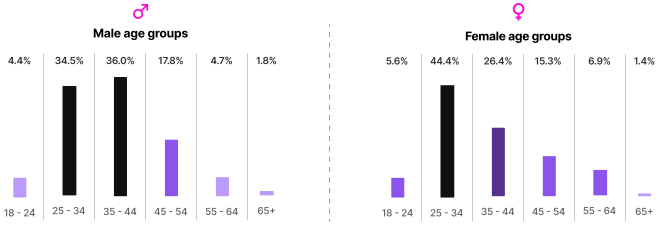
The vast majority (85%) of people are employed under full-time contracts with equal amounts of people under part-time or freelance/contractor arrangements. It's clear from speaking to recruiters and job seekers in the industry, that demand for contractors is down in recent times. Whilst there have been some optimistic signals, the lack of new projects due to Salesforce's stunted growth compared with previous years is probably the reason why.

Certifications and the value they bring always make for a highly debated topic in the Salesforce ecosystem. Whilst there are now over 40 Salesforce certifications across nearly every product, role, and discipline, 52% of respondents have between 1-5 certifications. This also correlates across most role levels, meaning that more certifications doesn't necessarily mean you are going to be more senior.



It's not surprising to see that the majority (76%) of respondents are male, with 20% female, 1% non-binary, and 3% preferring not to disclose their gender. Whilst the statistics do show that the tech industry as a whole needs to do more to make tech careers more accessible to women, some of the statistics look like we are moving in the right direction.

Whilst 35% of male developers fit into the 25-34 age bracket, this percentage increases to 45% for female developers. In addition, 4.4% of males fit into the 18-24 category, whilst this increases to 5.6% for females.



Another interesting finding of note is that female developers are more likely to work remotely, with 58% working fully remote, versus 51% for their male counterparts. The results show that males work in full-time office roles 17% of the time, whilst females only hold these roles 6% of the time.

> Entry-level roles can be fiercely competitive – it's vitally important to develop the next generation of talent. I would love to see more accessible developer courses, mentorship, and programs such as RAD Woman and Clicked, to empower folks to take the leap from clicks to code.
>
> Evelyn Maguire
> Senior Salesforce Developer and Coach

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Key Insights

- **The top non-core** Salesforce certifications tend to be Scrum, Slack, Tableau, MuleSoft, Project Management Certifications, AWS, and ITIL.
- The top four areas Salesforce professionals feel **most confident** in are Apex, general Salesforce architecture, declarative development, and integrations with other platforms.
- The top four areas Salesforce professionals feel **least confident** in are LWC and front-end development, DevOps (CLI, SFDX, deployments), integration with other platforms, and advanced Object-Oriented Programming.
- Overall, **54% of respondents** are satisfied with their career in Salesforce, with 35% stating they are neutral, and 11% being unsatisfied.
- Regarding their current skill level on the Salesforce platform, **66% of professionals** say they feel neutral or unsatisfied.
- **The biggest issues** of working with Salesforce development have been identified as: platform limitations and challenges, the learning curve and skills gap, development process and tools, adoption, and governance.
- **The most challenging** things to get right in Salesforce development have been identified as: developing on top of technical debt, gathering the right requirements, balancing decelerative development with code, and deployments.
- **53% of Salesforce professionals** agree that Salesforce is becoming increasingly complex to work with.
- Data, Sales, Service, Marketing, and CPQ have been identified as **the most lucrative** clouds from a career perspective.
- The top three areas that are **holding back development** teams in 2024 have been identified as: resource constraints and management issues, knowledge and training deficiencies, and technical challenges/tooling.

Deep Dive

This section of the report brought a number of trends to light which have been bubbling away under the surface of the Salesforce ecosystem for a while – namely, that the Salesforce platform is becoming too complicated and more difficult to work with.

One of the biggest benefits of cloud platforms like Salesforce is the ability to continue innovating and bringing new features to the platform at speed. However, over the past 10 years or so, we have seen some major shifts in how professionals build on the platform.

This includes moving from Salesforce Classic to Lightning, Visualforce to Aura to LWC, Workflows and Process Builder processes to flows, change sets to DevOps, and an increased number of integrations with the myriad of other products acquired by Salesforce over recent years.

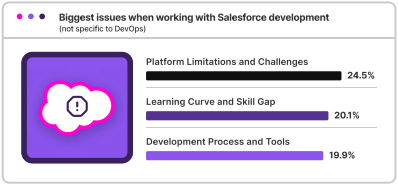
All this innovation has had some negative side effects, such as the increased complexity of the platform. In Salesforce's defense, these have all been very positive changes! The move from Classic to Lightning significantly improved the user interface, and features such as Flow Builder are far more intelligent than Workflow Rules.

53% of our survey respondents agreed that Salesforce is becoming increasingly complex to work with, 34% were unsure, and 13% disagreed with this sentiment.

Whilst there were quite a few areas that developers identified as being challenging to get right in Salesforce, 27% responded that developing on top of years of technical debt was their main challenge. Technical debt is a challenge for almost every Salesforce org, and the boom years of Salesforce over the past 10 years or so, with all the major changes to the platform, could be the cause.

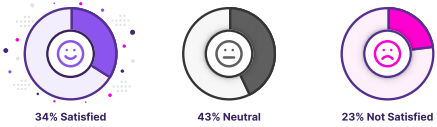
There are numerous factors that can influence technical debt – for example, the relatively frequent turnover of admins and developers, the influx of junior developers, and the rise of "adminelopers" who may be less proficient in code when it comes to best practice standards.

Developers also identified platform limitations and challenges (25%) as one of the biggest issues working with the Salesforce platform, alongside a learning curve and skill gap (20%), and development processes and tools (20%).



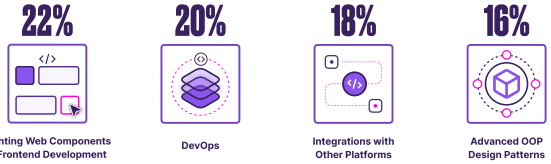
With the scale of the platform, the complexity of individual Salesforce orgs, and new features being released all the time, it's not surprising that 20% of the total respondents feel one of the biggest issues of working with the platform is a gap in skill.

When asked "how satisfied are you with your current skill level?", 34% answered satisfied, with 43% feeling neutral, and 23% not satisfied at all.



This is backed up further by the question: "What do you think is holding your team back in 2024?" 28% cited training deficiencies, but this was eclipsed by 44% of respondents answering that it was due to resource constraints and management issues – possibly a result of budget cuts and layoffs over the past 18 months.

There are also some clear trends when it comes to the specific areas that developers feel less confident in, with 22% of developers answering Lighting Web Components and front-end development, followed closely by DevOps at 20%, integrations with other platforms at 18%, and advanced OOP design patterns at 16%.



Although developers have identified some clear areas for improvement with the platform, 54% answered that they are satisfied with their career, with 35% feeling neutral, and 11% not satisfied.

I think it's also important to note that it does feel like the Salesforce platform is somewhat reaching a level of maturity. We haven't seen as many major changes in recent releases, and tools such as Flow seem to be becoming increasingly easier to work with. Now it's just a matter of cleaning up that technical debt and sorting out DevOps processes!

> The Salesforce ecosystem is one of constant change and development, and with only 34% of respondents feeling satisfied with their skill level, this is evident. Widespread changes in how developers are expected to work, such as the advent of LWC and a continuous push towards using SFDX and the Salesforce CLI, have likely contributed to this dissatisfaction. While these changes might seem daunting, those confident in their core Salesforce skills should grasp the opportunity to learn these new concepts. Doing so will set them apart in an increasingly competitive industry, and will help address some of the other issues they face.
>
> Alex Crisp
> CTO, Seven20

DEVOPS

Key Insights

- **The top three** version control systems are GitHub (58%), Bitbucket (27%), and Azure Repos (10.5%).
- **39% of respondents** say they know how to use basic Git commands, 26% know the system very well, and 36% are not hands-on with Git. Very similar percentages are also relevant for knowledge around SFDX CLI.
- **41% of respondents** currently use SFDX and CI jobs with version control to deploy changes to production, whilst 23% use a third-party vendor (Copado, Gearset, AutoRabit, etc.), and 23% are using change sets (6% of respondents are using DevOps Center).
- Whilst on the sandbox seeding and masking side, **46% create test data manually**, 25% use a data factory Apex class, and 14% of people use a third-party vendor (Gearset, Own Backup, etc.), and the same amount use SFDX scripts.
- **The top four challenges** involved with deployments are as follows: sandboxes being out of sync, having to ensure people follow the right process, merge conflicts, and rolling back deployments.
- What would professionals change with current deployment tooling? They would like tools to be **easier for admins to use**, with **fewer manual steps**, and they want tooling to **be faster**, **more flexible**, and **less expensive.**
- **51% of developers** deploy their own changes, whilst 41% have a dedicated release management. 8% of people don't know who deploys the changes.
- **31% of respondents** identify DevOps and release management as a top area of development in 2024.
- **41% of respondents** said they are planning to implement DevOps tools this year.

Deep Dive

Salesforce DevOps has seen a huge rise in popularity over the past 10 years, which ties in nicely with the boom years of Salesforce. AutoRABIT, Gearset, Copado, and Flosum, four of the largest Salesforce DevOps providers, were founded between 2013 and 2015, and now dominate the market.

Gearset autorabit COPADO Flosum

Back in 2015, in Stack Overflow's annual developer survey, Salesforce was rated the most dreaded platform to work with by Salesforce Developers (ahead of Visual Basic and WordPress). This probably gave Salesforce some concern, so it wasn't much of a coincidence that Salesforce announced DX (or Developer Experience) in 2016, which was subsequently released as an open beta in the summer of 2017. Salesforce DX includes various tools and features such as scratch orgs, Salesforce CLI, and version control integration. Fast forward to today, and this now includes the DevOps Center.

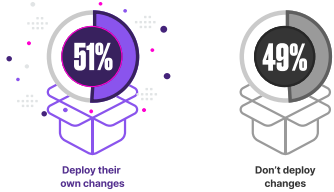
DevOps processes and tools could very well be an answer to many of the issues working with the platform, and it's encouraging to see in the data that DevOps is well on its way to being adopted across the entire ecosystem.

In fact, a total of 70% of respondents are using some kind of DevOps tool, with the biggest majority (41%) using SFDX and CI jobs with a version control system. 23% are using a third-party vendor (such as those mentioned above), and 6% are using the Salesforce DevOps Center. Only 23% of those surveyed are using change sets, and 6% don't know what they use!

At 20% of respondents, DevOps was one of the largest skill gaps identified by developers in the previous section. However, it's encouraging to see that 39% of developers know how to use basic Git commands, and 37% know how to use basic commands with SFDX CLI, with roughly 25% of respondents knowing both tools very well.

Sandbox seeding and masking is a relatively new concept that some ISVs (such as Own Company and Gearset) have been focussing on in recent years – that is, enabling test data to be automatically populated in a sandbox, and sensitive data to be masked. 46% of developers answered that they create test data manually, as needed, with 25% utilizing a purpose-built data factory Apex class, 14% using third-party vendors, and 14% utilizing SFDX scripts.

When developers were asked who on the team takes care of deployments, 51% said they deploy their own changes, which leaves 49% of people not deploying changes. These changes are either done by the release manager or someone else. The smaller the company, the more likely that developers will deploy their own changes, whereas larger companies tend to introduce dedicated release managers.



Of course, DevOps tools and deployment processes are far from perfect. Developers would like DevOps tools to be easier for admins to use (24%) and to require fewer manual steps (21%), whilst being faster, more flexible, and less expensive to run.

Overall, issues with deployments include sandboxes being out of sync (19%), process issues (17%), merge conflicts (15%), and rolling back deployments (14%).

> The report revealed valuable insights, particularly the low self-reported confidence levels in LWC and DevOps frameworks. These findings present opportunities to bridge skill gaps and cultivate a more well-rounded developer skill set.
>
> Edith Valencia Martínez
> Senior Salesforce Developer

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Key Insights

- **30% of survey respondents** are using AI tools on a daily or regular basis, 41% are using it now and again, and 28% aren't using it at all.
- Of those using AI, **48% agree** that it is making them more productive, with 38% unsure, and 14% disagreeing that it makes them more productive.
- **The top AI tools** used amongst Salesforce professionals are ChatGPT, GitHub Copilot, Google Gemini, Einstein for Developers, Microsoft Azure.
- Of the benefits respondents are seeing from AI, **68% state** that it makes them more productive, with 56% saying that it allows them to learn faster, and 51% agreeing that it provides them with better efficiency in coding. It also allows developers to write tests faster and provide greater accuracy in coding.
- **52% of respondents** agree that they have serious concerns about AI and security.
- **37% said** that they feel that Salesforce's trusted AI principles alleviate their concerns, whilst 42% were not sure, and 21% didn't agree.
- There is a clear correlation between company size and those who use AI regularly. With **45% of employees** from the smallest segment of companies using AI daily, compared with only 18.9% of employees from the largest companies.
- It's also true **that those who use AI** on a regular basis are also the most concerned about security.
- AI and AI development tools are the largest focus for Salesforce respondents in 2024, with **46.8% stating** that they want to develop in this area.

Deep Dive

Now we come to the most popular flavor of the past 18 months: artificial intelligence. However, it's clear (in my humble opinion) that the hype from AI is starting to die down, and it will be a while until we see truly transformative solutions for businesses hitting the market.

One group where this technology has been an instant hit? Developers. This was immediately obvious when ChatGPT was released, as developers questioned whether they would soon be out of a job! But as we all quickly realized, AI is far from perfect, and it's a tool among many others.

For something that was released roughly 18 months ago, it's incredible to see that 30% of developers are using generative AI tools on a daily or regular basis, with 41% using it on an ad-hoc basis. It's the minority, sitting at 28%, that haven't used it at all.

ChatGPT (83%) is the clear winner when it comes to the tools being used, with GitHub Copilot sitting at 27%. We haven't distinguished between the free version of ChatGPT and ChatGPT Plus (an oversight on our part), but the fact that GitHub Copilot is a paid product and already enjoying a quarter of the market share is impressive. Google Gemini (23%), Einstein for Developers (17%), and Microsoft Azure (12%) are also amongst the most popular tools.

We explored matching up company size with the seniority of developers and the types of tools being used, but there didn't seem to be any patterns of note within this analysis.

The benefits of AI are clear, with 68% of respondents reporting increased productivity, 56% reporting faster learning, and 51% reporting a greater efficiency in coding. Other benefits include writing test scripts and accuracy in coding. Only 1.6% of respondents reported little to no benefit.

Increased Productivity

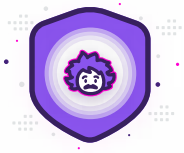
Faster Learning

Greater Efficiency in Coding

It's not surprising then to see that 47% of respondents listed AI and AI tools as the areas of development that are most important in 2024.

Of course, with any new and transformative technology, there will be some concerns; 52.2% of respondents have serious concerns about AI and security, with 36% feeling neutral, and 12% disagreeing with this statement.

It's also true that you are much more likely to use AI on a daily basis if you work for a smaller company, and much more likely to not use AI at all if you work for a far larger company, which could be due to trust concerns.



Whilst Salesforce has placed huge emphasis on building an AI platform that alleviates concerns with their Einstein Trust Layer, this only alleviates concerns for 37% of respondents, with 42% unsure, and 21% answering "no".

As the Einstein Trust Layer is mainly geared towards protecting customer data, and other questions in this section have been around AI tooling (such as GitHub Copilot), we may not be able to draw conclusive data from this answer and relate it to tooling.

> There's no surprise to see that ChatGPT is the leading AI tool amongst developers, it was the first majorly adopted AI tool, and it's mostly free. Although it's the most adopted, this does not necessarily make it the best. It will be interesting to see how the market share of Developer AI tools changes over the years as developers will presumably move to more specialized platforms such as GitHub Copilot.
>
> Andrew Cook
> Salesforce Technical Instructor, SF Ben

TOOLING AND CODING

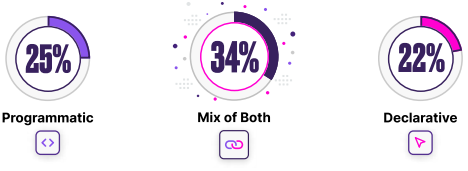
Key Insights

- **59% of respondents** state they are planning to implement new tooling in 2024, whilst 41% are either not sure or said no.
- Of those planning to implement new tools, **41% say that DevOps** is at the top of the priority list, with AI tooling sitting at 37%. Many name tools such as Copado, Gearset, SFDX, and GitHub Copilot.
- Salesforce professionals often come across non-Salesforce technologies, with **66% stating** JavaScript (LWC), 34% coming across AWS, 29% with NodeJS, and 26% with Python.
- The **top five coding languages** that are used by Salesforce Developers (in order) are Apex, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, and Python.
- **78% of respondents** state that they have used Salesforce Flow more in the past year.
- In terms of the ongoing debate of programmatic versus declarative functionality, **34% of respondents** state they use an equal mix of both, followed by 25% using mainly programmatic, and 22% who use mainly declarative.
- Overall, developers love working with both declarative and programmatic functionality on Salesforce, with **74-77% of respondents** giving a four or five star rating out of five.
- Outside Sales and Service Cloud, developers are most likely to work with Experience Cloud, with **55% of respondents** stating so, followed by Marketing Cloud, Slack, CPQ, MuleSoft, and Data Cloud.
- **The top plugins** used by developers are Salesforce Inspector, VS Code Salesforce Extensions, SFDX Extension, Salesforce CLI Integration, GitLens, and Apex PMD.

Deep Dive

In this final section, we will go through some of the most common technologies that Salesforce Developers come across in their daily working lives, as well as the non-core Salesforce products, and dive a bit deeper into the types of tools being used.

Firstly, it's interesting to break the stereotype that admins are declarative and developers are programmatic, as the largest percentage of respondents (34%) report that they use an equal mix of both. This then follows with 25% of developers saying that they use mainly programmatic tools, and 22% reporting that they use mainly declarative (suggesting that they use programmatic or declarative some of the time). Only 9% report using only declarative, with 4% using programmatic only.



This backs up research and articles that have been published on the Salesforce Ben website; ultimately, Apex versus Flow, for example, should be applied on a case-by-case basis depending on what is the best-fit solution.

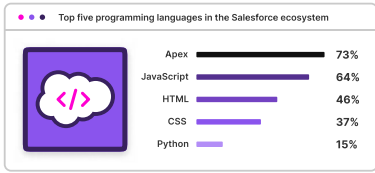
If an organization is over 5,000 employees in size, it is far more likely to use an equal mix of development styles, or be mainly programmatic. However, if you have between 1 and 5,000 employees, there is a good chance that you can get by on either an equal mix, mainly programmatic, or just declarative.

If we had been running this survey over the past few years, it would have been interesting to see these ratios changing, as a whopping 78% of developers now report using Flow more in the past year. Whilst in theory, Flow is meant to speed up development on the Salesforce platform without the need for manual coding, 14% of people have reported using Flow less in the past year. It's not uncommon to hear that some developers prefer Apex to Flow, as it's what they know best.

78% of developers now report using Flow more in the past year.

But overall, it seems that the days of Salesforce being "the most dreaded" platform to work with (from that Stack Overflow survey back in 2015) are far behind us, with 74-77% of developers giving their experience of working with declarative and programmatic functionality four or five stars out of five.

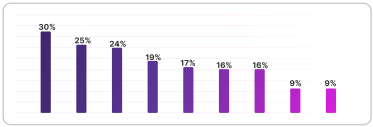
The top five programming languages in the Salesforce ecosystem are Apex (73%), JavaScript (64%), HTML (46%), and CSS (37%), with Python coming in at 15%. Other languages include AI/ML technologies, AMPscript (Marketing Cloud), Tableau, and VizQL.



Other common technologies include AWS (34%), NodeJS (29%), other DevOps technologies such as Docker and Kubernetes (26%), and Java (21%).

We also asked developers which non-core Salesforce products they come across most often. Interestingly, Experience Cloud led the charge with a massive 60% of respondents answering that they work with this in their current role. Personally, I didn't realize that Experience Cloud was so well adopted. But what is clear from these implementations, is that the front-end needs to be very custom for it to feel unique and meet the design specs for the organization.

Experience Cloud was followed by Marketing Cloud (30%), Slack (25%), CPQ (24%), MuleSoft (19%), Data Cloud (17%), Field Service (16%), Vlocity (16%), Commerce (9%), and Tableau (9%).



The products listed above can all be counted as niche skills in the Salesforce ecosystem, and whilst it's interesting to note that many of our respondents have experience in these fields, overall, there is still a general understanding that many of these skills are highly in demand.

Finally, here are some of the top plugins and extensions that Salesforce Developers have identified as being useful in their day-to-day roles:

+ Apex PMD	+ Salesforce Inspector	+ Todo Tree
+ Prettier	+ VS Code Salesforce Extentions	+ SOQL Explorer
+ Git Graph	+ SFDX Extensions	+ Rainbox CSV
+ Salesforce ORGanizer	+ Salesforce CLI Integration	+ Postman
+ Illuminated Cloud	+ GitLens	+ Apex Replay Debugger
+ Package.xml Generator	+ Apex Log Analyzzer	+ Markdown
+ Apex Integerative Debugger		

CONCLUSION

The digital transformation boom of the last 10 years has created household names out of many technology companies, with Salesforce being one of the modern startup success stories of the latest digital era.

These boom years have enabled Salesforce to drive their revenue tenfold, cultivate an ecosystem which is projected to grow six times larger, and create a platform and suite of products that is truly unrivaled.

However, as with any mass adoption of new technology, and with innovation happening so quickly, it's inevitable that problems will arise. Developing on top of technical debt, and the struggle to keep up with innovations on the platform (and the subsequent skills gap) are some of the main concerns. Unfortunately, these are the unintended consequences of innovation, and it's hard to alleviate them without slowing down.

And it's not just the technology that can cause issues; resource constraints, management issues, and gathering the right requirements have also been identified as big causes. That isn't technology; it's people.

Luckily, I feel like we are moving into a time of maturity with the Salesforce platform. Salesforce features and functionality are certainly maturing (instead of changing), allowing professionals to get familiar with how to best implement solutions – Lightning Web Components and Flow come to mind first.

Flow, in particular, seems to be a fan favorite for both admins and developers, with a surprising number of developers stating that they either use a mix of both programmatic and declarative, or simply declarative alone. And with 78% of developers reporting that they've used Flow more in the past year, it's clear that Salesforce has created a truly fantastic low-code tool.

One of the most surprising insights to come out of this report is just how well DevOps has been adopted over the past few years, with the vast majority of people using SFDX or third-party DevOps vendors – another sign that Salesforce, as a platform, is reaching technology standards which have existed in other ecosystem for years.

Finally, and at no surprise to anyone reading this report, AI tools represent one of the fastest adopted technologies in our lifetime, and the benefits are encouraging to see. But with fewer larger businesses using AI, there is a way to go in terms of adoption, as well as in alleviating those valid trust concerns.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our first annual Salesforce Developer Survey. We will be back next year with more insights!

Ben McCarthy
Founder and CEO, SF Ben

SF BEN

Salesforce Ben (SF Ben) is the largest independent media platform in the ecosystem, empowering every Salesforce professional – aspiring starters and seasoned specialists alike – to enjoy a more fulfilling and impactful career.

From interviews with industry experts to practical guides and hands-on tutorials, SF Ben produces trusted, accessible content to help our audience navigate the latest Salesforce news, releases, and certifications.

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This report was created based on the survey responses of over 350 Salesforce Developers. Salesforce Ben retains ownership of this data. If you are a journalist or media outlet and would like to discuss these insights further, please email us at

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