Outposts

The Rise of Site Reliability Engineering in 2024

Reliability has turned into a huge priority. Customers expect apps and services to just work — no delays or downtime. Even small issues frustrate users and hurt brand reputation these days.

At the same time, software systems behind the scenes are more complex than ever. The shift to cloud computing has enabled incredible scale but also introduced intricacy. Microservices and distributed computing give more flexibility yet multiply failure points.

SRE practices are focused on keeping websites, apps, and other digital services up and running smoothly. SRE teams build and operate the technology infrastructure that powers these services behind the scenes.

For example, when you open Facebook or shop from an online store, there are complex software systems running 24/7 in data centers to make that possible. These software systems need to work reliably, even with huge numbers of users. That's what SRE teams do — make sure technology works as it should so the services used by customers, employees, and others don't fail or slow down.

However, what then is the role of DevOps? While both approaches leverage monitoring, metrics, logs, as well as stable software delivery and performance, let's imagine what DevOps without SRE would look like.

There's no doubt DevOps is great in terms of breaking down barriers between teams and accelerating release cycles. However, in the days before SRE was part of the process, reliability was still an afterthought. Teams pushed out new features without considering what could fail down the road. And when smth eventually failed, they hurried to fix issues, even if those quick fixes accumulated technical debt over time.

Without SRE involvement, DevOps teams can suffer from short-term thinking. While quick updates might feel productive, without anyone owning resilience from an architectural perspective, the pace of change can lead to brittle systems and code!

Essentially, DevOps needs that reliability counterpart to balance out its speed.

Of course, implementing SRE isn’t easy. It requires executive buy-in, cooperation across teams, new processes and tools, and overcoming cultural inertia. But as leaders recognize the link between system reliability, velocity, and innovation, we think they’ll invest more in this discipline.

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