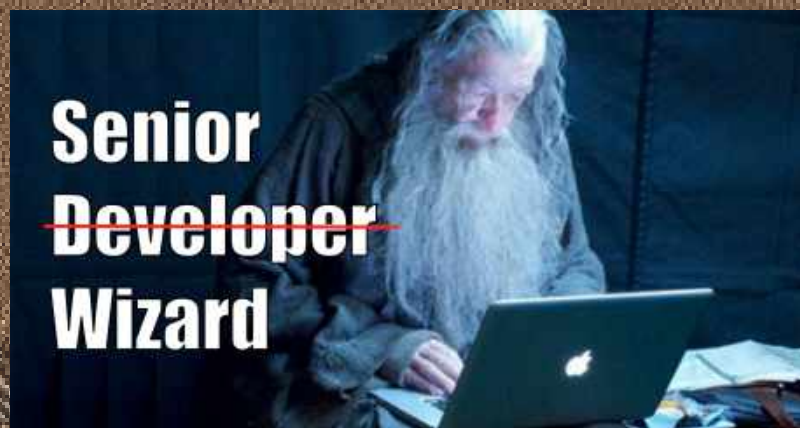


# Software Engineer D&D Classes (v0.1.1)

Ever suspected that software development is more like a big, poorly structured RPG than anyone admits at interviews? You're going to enjoy this, then...



# INTRODUCTION



Product Manager and Semi-Professional Nerd. Those are my main two calling cards. As such, when the idea hit me (inspired by the tweet quoted in the Barbarian class) to create a D&D class system for software engineers, I had to run with it. It was fun to create this, and I hope it is fun for you to read.

This isn't intended as a working game system, alas – some of the classes and abilities are clearly insanely OP. But you can certainly find yourself amongst the descriptions and have fun classifying your friends and colleagues. Maybe an activity for your next retro?

This is still a work in progress (eternal beta ethos and all that), so if you have any feedback or suggestions I'd love to hear them. Best way to get in touch is to [send me a Twitter message](#).

## CLASSES LIST

<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>
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Barbarian	Barbarians fly unflinchingly into the fray, bravely facing down all obstacles and enemies they encounter.
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Bard	A bard embodies the importance of communication: spoken, written and the infinite subtleties of non-verbal exchange.
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Cleric	Clerics are stalwart defenders of the weak and guardians of the sacred.
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Druid	Druids' power comes from attunement to primal forces, meaning that they often come from a computer science background.
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Fighter	Fighters are patient, reliable team members who will get the job done with their solid general skills and key specialities.
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Monk	Figures who look and act like they don't quite belong in this universe, monks sometimes give the impression of having been borrowed wholesale from a higher plane of existence.
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Paladin	Paladins: the last hope for humanity in a fallen world of shoddy code and hacky patches. That's their story, at least.
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Ranger	Alone in the wild, fending off dark denizens, rangers keep the world safe for the unknowing innocents, refactoring and killing off potentially deadly bugs before they cause problems.
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Rogue	Rogues live in the shadows, considering social conventions and constraints to be mere suggestions.
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Sorcerer	Raw elemental power courses through sorcerers' veins, allowing them to pull off feats that lesser mortals could only dream of.
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Warlock	Warlocks have made a pact with a powerful entity as their source of power – their IDE.
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Wizard	Coding wizards, like all wizards, are subtle and quick to anger.
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## CHANGELOG

v0.1.1: added credit for Paladin picture



# CLASSES

## BARBARIAN

Barbarians fly unflinchingly into the fray, bravely facing down all obstacles and enemies they encounter. They laugh at the idea of safety, knowing and embracing that programming is a dangerous activity. Their gung-ho attitude can sometimes get them into trouble, however...

Probably has an impressive beard, if male, or short-cropped hair, if female.

Do not go gently into that good weekend; push to production on Friday afternoon!

Switches directly from energy drinks to beer at 4pm.

### SAFETY? PAH!

"Unit tests give you a false sense of safety. coding should never feel safe. every line of code you write should give you anxiety about how it'll destroy the rest of the program. ride fiercely into that dark abyss."

– [Katerina Borodina](#)

## RECKLESS CODING FRENZY

Doubly productive, double the chance of bug creation.

## EPIC LEVEL: MARATHON

Can hack for 24 hours straight with no reduction in output, but must immediately take a double long rest following this or suffer two levels of exhaustion.

## WEAKNESSES

Documentation

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Backend Engineer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: RAGE

Disable all unit tests to gain +3 Wisdom and resistance to all production error damage.



## BARD

A bard embodies the importance of communication: spoken, written and the infinite subtleties of non-verbal exchange. They change the course of history and leave their mark on the world primarily by influencing other people, although they also have a few tricks of their own to contribute. Careless bards risk ending up stuck in perpetual meetings.

Can push regrettable code, make barely adequate wireframes, write passable copy.

Mostly useful outside of combat.

Very good for getting the talking done and spreading the word about the party's heroic deeds.

### CUTTING WORDS

Reduce the scope of all current tickets to give all party members +2 to the ability score of their choice for the duration of the sprint.

### EPIC LEVEL: OWED FAVOURS

Once per day, you can call in a favour owed to you by a friendly NPC, who must aid in some way that is non-harmful to their interests.

### WEAKNESSES

Focused work, quarterly planning

### LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Product Manager

### SPECIAL ABILITY: ROADMAP

You unfurl a document (can be paper-based or electronic, your choice) that envelops a single enemy of your choice and leaves them incapacitated until the start of your next turn.





## CLERIC

Clerics are stalwart defenders of the weak and guardians of the sacred. They patiently mop up the mess from the rest of the party, after the fifth time this week that someone deployed to production with inadequate test coverage. They have a deep devotion to one particular figure or group, be it the spirit of Linus Torvalds or the hive mind deity formed from the Haskell community.

Proudly displays their deity's symbols everywhere: the Linux penguin adorns their laptop, shirt, bag, and probably underwear.

Can miraculously find a StackOverflow post that explains how to solve this exact case.

### DIVINE INTERVENTION

If the party is stuck on a certain task or problem, you may gain +5 to an Investigation or Lore check to see if you can find a solution from the arcane knowledge in the dusty corners of the internet. You can't use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

### EPIC LEVEL: SUPREME HEALING

Once per day you may rollback the codebase to an earlier state, causing all party members to return to the HP and spell slots they had at that point.

### WEAKNESSES

Completely novel problems

### LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Quality Engineer

#### SPECIAL ABILITY: HOTFIX

All party members immediately gain 1d4 + 1 HP and any damaged equipment is instantly repaired, but you must skip your next turn.



# DRUID

Eschewing as a harmful modern disease the stereotypical programmer's addiction to energy drinks, druids work best under natural conditions: a keto diet, intermittent fasting, and something called 'bulletproof coffee'. Or so they keep telling everyone. Druids' power comes from attunement to primal forces, meaning that they often come from a computer science background. They are at their best when the line between planning and executing is blurred, putting the 'flow' back into 'workflow'.

A good tank candidate: will stride into danger to absorb damage and protect the rest of the party.

Most likely to be obsessed with keto, organic food, gut bacteria, etc.

## SHAPESHIFTING

As a bonus action, you can shapeshift into a designer, product manager or data analyst of the same level and alignment as your character. You may stay in this form for up to 8 hours, at which point you automatically switch back to your normal form. All of your equipment transforms with you, except your software all becomes appropriate to the new form.

## EPIC LEVEL: ARCHDRUID

When you shapeshift into a different form, you also retain your other skills, allowing you to code and design simultaneously, for example.

## WEAKNESSES

Waterfall methodology

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Frontend developer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: SHIFT POSTURE

As a bonus action, you may switch your desk between standing and seated mode, gaining advantage on Constitution saves until the start of your next turn.





## FIGHTER

Fighters are patient, reliable team members who will get the job done with their solid general skills and key specialities. They are typically slow and steady, with no flashy spells or divine inspiration, but they are most people's first choice of ally in a tough situation. They often fall into a role as the quiet leader of the group, providing guidance and support.

Can dual-wield programming languages.

Tends to be dismissive of other classes as being all sizzle and no steak.

Over-equipped: three monitors, mechanical keyboard, gaming mouse, ergonomic everything.

### WEAPON SPECIALISATION

You deal +2 extra damage with code written in the language in which you specialise. At levels 6, 12 and 18 you may choose an additional language specialisation.

### EPIC LEVEL: BATTLE COMMANDER

If you choose to remove yourself from the battle as a combatant and instead concentrate on offering guidance and support, all allies gain +2 on their attack rolls and deal an extra 1d4 damage.

### WEAKNESSES

Talking publicly about the party's great deeds

### LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Full-stack Developer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: CYBORG MODE

Once per day, you may merge your consciousness with your elaborate setup to overclock your abilities and gain +2 to all skill checks. At the DM's discretion, however, overuse of this feature may have long-term side-effects such as loss of humanity...



# MONK

Figures who look and act like they don't quite belong in this universe, monks sometimes give the impression of having been borrowed wholesale from a higher plane of existence. They are experts at using their opponents' strength against them, with the motto: don't push against the problem, flow around it. A constant stream of wise-sounding platitudes emanates from them, but you're not sure if what they say is utterly meaningless, or if you're just inadequately enlightened to understand.

Two words: Coding katas.

## MIND LIKE WATER

You are immune to distractions. Meetings only cause you half of the normal productivity loss; at level 12 they cause you no productivity loss at all. You also take no damage from eating carb-heavy lunches.

## EPIC LEVEL: HOLISTIC TRANSCENDENCE

You have resistance to all sonic and psychic damage from open office plans. Once per day you can also extend this benefit to up to five friendly creatures within 30ft of you, for one hour.

## WEAKNESSES

Sometimes needs to Google basic syntax

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Engineering Manager

### SPECIAL ABILITY: RETROSPECTIVE

Once per day, you may cast [Tiny Hut](#) as a bonus action. The duration is only 1 hour rather than 8, but any friendly creatures inside the hut have all their limited abilities and spell slots restored.





# PALADIN

Paladins: the last hope for humanity in a fallen world of shoddy code and hacky patches. That's their story, at least. Others might see them more as stiff-necked ideologues who are unwilling to compromise. Regardless of your position, it's clear that paladins stand for quality and purity, for better or worse. And they won't be shy about spreading the good word, either – to their credit, they want the whole world to level up with them.

Choose your deity: Android and Linux are popular choices.

Zealous about languages, frameworks, and whether to use tabs or spaces.

Non-ironically retweeted the original '10x Engineer' thread.

## TURN UNDEAD

You may choose tech debt up to half of your level (round down) and force it to retreat. This effect ends after eight hours or if anyone touches the source of the tech debt.

## EPIC LEVEL: VENGEANCE

Any time a bug is discovered, you may mark it as a personal enemy and double your damage for any attacks made on it.

## WEAKNESSES

Prone to offending other people

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Site Reliability Engineer, Security Engineer (white hat)

### SPECIAL ABILITY: BANISH CODE

You may activate your sixth sense for obsolete modules to find and remove unneeded chunks of code. If you are successful, every member of the party may immediately move up to their speed without provoking opportunity attacks.



# RANGER

Alone in the wild, fending off dark denizens, rangers keep the world safe for the unknowing innocents, refactoring and killing off potentially deadly bugs before they cause problems. They are no stranger to the deep wildernesses where others fear to tread, and can hunt down even the thorniest of issues. All this comes at a cost, though: they are typically lone wolves and sometimes find it difficult to collaborate. They also tend to look startled whenever anyone talks to them.

Ranged weapons: cloud computing expert.

Animal companion: either brings their dog to work or is obsessed with other colleagues' dogs.

## SPECIAL ABILITY: CAMOUFLAGE

As a bonus action, you may blend into the shadows (or the warm embrace of a deep beanbag), gaining +5 to Stealth checks.

## SOLO PATHFINDING

If you are working alone, you gain +2 to Wisdom and reduce the length of time you need to rest by 25%.

## EPIC LEVEL: EXPERT HUNTER

If you have encountered an enemy or problem before, you double your damage rolls in future fights against that enemy.

## WEAKNESSES

Pair programming

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

DevOps





## ROGUE

Rogues live in the shadows, considering social conventions and constraints to be mere suggestions. They are masters at finding ways to circumvent a problem rather than dealing with it head-on. While fun to have in the party, rogues can sometimes be a little unreliable, mysteriously disappearing when it's time for regression testing, for example. They also have loose definitions of private property: don't leave your favourite mug sitting around idly if you have a rogue in your team.

Lockpicking: write a five-line script to get around a thorny problem.

Complains about glare on their monitor, even when it is pitch black in the office.

### DETECT TRAPS

Before the party enacts a given plan, you may use this ability to get an intuitive sense for whether there are unanticipated perils and how great the danger is (e.g. a gaping hole in the codebase that will consume the rest of the sprint). It is up to your DM as to how much information you glean from this.

### EPIC LEVEL: PRETERNATURALLY LUCKY DECISIONS

Whenever you have a coding decision you are not sure about, roll a d20. On a result of 10+, whichever option you choose will turn out to have been the correct one, as if by DM fiat. On a result of 9 or below, you are no worse off but you gain no benefit. You regain the use of this ability at the next full moon.

### WEAKNESSES

Regression testing

### LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Security Engineer (black/grey hat)

### SPECIAL ABILITY: SENSE WEAKNESS

Your next attack has advantage, as you target exactly the right spot to make it hurt. Maybe a SQL injection will do the trick?



# SORCERER

Raw elemental power courses through sorcerers' veins, allowing them to pull off feats that lesser mortals could only dream of. They draw their power from their innate abilities, having been coding since almost before they could read. As such, they are simultaneously dismissive and slightly envious of the 'book smarts' possessed by other classes. They are typically confident and charismatic, but may also come across as arrogant.

## METAMAGIC

The small army of keyboard shortcuts, scripts, and text expansions that you have assembled over the years makes you ridiculously efficient, giving you +2 to Intelligence.

## EPIC LEVEL: PRIMAL POWER

Your intuitive grasp of the systems you deal with means that sometimes you can solve adjacent problems almost by accident: whenever you deal damage to an enemy that drops it below 0 HP, you may apply the additional damage to a second enemy within range.

## WEAKNESSES

Lower-level programming languages

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Python programmer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: LIVE DATABASE ACCESS

You immerse yourself fully in the raw flow of live data, tapping the power directly. Gain +5 to your spell attacks but lose 1 HP per turn as it slowly drains your life force.





# WARLOCK

Warlocks have made a pact with a powerful entity as their source of power – their IDE. While this grants them speed and unearthly abilities, it means that without it they are rendered all but useless. They are also bonded to a familiar: they might surreptitiously keep a rat in their desk, or be growing some new form of life in their hair. Warlocks should be treated with respect and caution, due to the volatile nature of the power at their fingertips.

## PACT BOOK

At level 3, you may choose an IDE. While you have this IDE on your computer, it grants you +2 to all Wisdom ability checks and attack rolls. However, if it is ever removed from your computer or if you are forced to code on a machine without it installed, you suffer -2 to Wisdom.

## EPIC LEVEL: CONSCIOUSNESS MERGE

You have grown so attuned to your IDE that it almost feels like part of your brain now. Your bonus when using it is doubled to +4.

## WEAKNESSES

The command interface

## LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Data Engineer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: CLEAN INSTALL

You wipe your hard disk and reinstall the entire OS and IDE settings using a script you have saved in five different places. Restore all your HP, but you forget what has happened in the last five minutes.



## WIZARD

Coding wizards, like all wizards, are subtle and quick to anger. They typically studied software engineering at university, where they picked up their bad habit of being easily sucked into pointless but heated academic debates. They know a lot of arcane lore but must frequently recharge – they will typically be the first to go to lunch, and require the most caffeine to continue running. They lean into the trope of the absent-minded academic, somehow managing to be late to every single standup.

Text editors of choice: Vim and emacs.

Studied software engineering at university.

Knows a lot but must recharge often.

Easily knocked unconscious: keep them away from dangerous, unknown situations.

### LORE MASTER

If you are facing an enemy of higher level than you are, then you may spend 10 minutes searching and make an Investigation check to try to find pertinent information in one of the tomes you have access to. If your check is successful and you are not interrupted during your search, you may add +5 to all rolls made while facing this enemy.

### EPIC LEVEL: COMMUNE WITH MASTERS

Once per day, you may attempt to telepathically (or via email) contact your former instructors to ask them for guidance. Their response is up to the DM, but it will always be either helpful or neutral in nature, never directly harmful. However, if you misinterpret their message and lead yourself into danger, that is your own problem!

### WEAKNESSES

Bad at prioritising where to spend their time

### LIKELY PROFESSIONS

Backend Engineer

### SPECIAL ABILITY: OVERCHANNEL

You temporarily forget all material concerns as you become irretrievably immersed in a problem. Gain +2 to all ability scores for 1d4 hours, but after this time you suffer two levels of exhaustion.





# CREDITS

## FORMATTING

Document created using [Homebrewery](#).

## IMAGES

I couldn't find original artists for all of the images used in this document – please let me know if you can help with that by [messaging me on Twitter](#).

Barbarian picture: ?

Bard picture: ?

Cleric picture: [Bob Kehl](#)

Druid picture: ?

Fighter picture: ?

Monk picture: ?

Paladin picture: Richard, a LARPer from Germany, participating in [Conquest of Mythodea](#). H/T [GruenerT!](#)

Ranger picture: ?

Rogue picture: ?

Sorcerer picture: ?

Warlock picture: ?

Wizard picture: ?