The Technical Interview

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The (usual) process

(1) **Chat** - often with HR or a recruiter (who may be working exclusively for that company), over Zoom

(2) The **Culture & Values Interview** (aka the Competency Interview, "Tell me about time when…")

(3) The **Technical Interview**

(sometimes steps 2 & 3 switch about)

Why do companies have technical testing?

- Jeff Atwood (American dev, co-founder Stack Overflow) writes a blog called 'Coding Horror'
- 2007 wrote a viral blog post called *Why Can't Programmers…Program?*
- Articulated an issue with Computer Science teaching at universities
- Industry began to accept that a qualification does not mean someone can code
- In many companies, false negatives are acceptable, if hiring enough good people
- Want to avoid: false positives
- Testing helps them achieve this

Who will be there?

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…usually a handful of people (commonly 2 or 3)

- HR/People
- Technical person
- Technical person/Product Owner/other member of Dev team

Tips

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- Do not assume that the technical person will be a man
- Try not to assume that your tech lead will be a man
- If possible, speak to and make eye-contact with everyone in the room (if in person)
- They WILL look at your GitHub

Tips for remote interviews

- Camera on…even if they have theirs off (🚩)
- Background!
- Desktop
- Watch out for Slack & notifications
- Screen sharing settings (practise!)
- Check which application: Zoom (🙏), Teams, Google Hangouts, Webex, etc
- Headphones/earphones (minimum), with mic (preferred)

Some Common Formats

🏠 Take Home Test 🏠

- Typically revealed 1-2 weeks before interview
- Larger project, sometimes with start code
- Can be fair
- Can be tricky
- Often considerable time commitment
- Sometimes you can choose the language*

*If you have a choice of language, choose the one you are most comfortable with, rather than the language most widely used at that company

Some Common Formats (cont'd)

🙋 **Demo a Project** 💁

- "Talk us through a project you've made"
- Make sure you know your project!
- BNTA presentations are great practise
- Be prepared for questions - don't be defensive!
- Don't blag the technical aspect
- Practise your presentation with a non-technical person

Some Common Formats (cont'd)

🧑🏿‍💻 **On-the-spot Test** 🧑‍💻

- Usually a choice of language and editor
- 1-2 hours
- Often a paired programming exercise
- Algorithmic type problem (think Parentheses Tracker)
- Use Pseudocode
- Read your tests
- If there are no tests, write them
- Use the technical person in the room

What now?

- Take the opportunities we give you at BNTA to talk about your code
- The first time is the hardest, especially if you think your solution doesn't work well
- Embrace paired programming/group work
- **Practise!**
  - CodeWars
  - Exercism
  - LeetCode
  - HackerRank
- Stories from the trenches…

Some Job Hunting Tips

- Loads of job hunting tips and software - have a look
- Keep a spreadsheet - track process - log interactions
- Treat it as a project and recognise the investment in time you are committing to
- If you're a junior dev don't be shy, you are at the table BECAUSE you're a junior
- Don't be ashamed of any previous experience
- Focus on 'this round', try not to fret about future rounds
- What are your personal wants/desires?
- Possible to try it and see!