Cracking GSoC Wide Open

**3323** words in probably **12 min**, read **492**times

Just like the selfie trend caught up in India like a wild fire in no time, there is the new trend in NITH that's emerging really fast. But the unlike selfie trend, this one comes with a lot of money and a lot of experience ( and potential fame in the programmers' community ). *This is the trend of clearing* [**GSoC**](https://www.google-melange.com/archive/gsoc)**(Google Summer of Code)**. The list of famous personalities on campus most definitely includes all the GSoCers. GSoC is an internship program that is funded by Google**.** It gives students a chance to spend their summer ( 3 months or so ) coding and get paid for it a whopping**5500$.** Before you underestimate that figure, it equals to **3, 80, 000 Rs**. This is equal to 12 PS4s or 2534 nail paints. I think I've got your attention now. It is widely rumored that the guys who have cleared GSoC ( yes there are no girls! ) are the Coders who have worked day and night for this. Let us bust this rumor, it is not so. They are just regular guys who had set their priorities straight.

So what is Google Summer of Code hype anyway ? : Open this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVnN34YGz8s) and start finding out for yourself!

So what happens ( in real brevity ) is that Google partners with a bunch of [open source](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tyd0FO0tko8) organizations, whose list one can see [here](https://www.google-melange.com/archive/gsoc/2015). You get to work with them directly. There are many names which wouldn't be very famous for you right now ( in fact most of them ). But slowly and steadily ( a little faster if you get yourself to talk to previous GSoCers ), you'll find the importance of every organization and the worth of privilege of working with them ( especially if you are an ECE or CSE student, *but don't worry!*[*People from all disciplines have successfully completed GSoC before!*](http://write.flossmanuals.net/gsocstudentguide/am-i-good-enough/)). So at the end of the GSoC term, you'd have actually contributed a significant part in that software or technology!

GSoC's coding session starts from May, 25th and ends on August, 25th. During this time all the selected students will be assigned a mentor ( who'll work remotely from their respective countries ) to guide them throughout the whole 3 months contribution time. The project that a student has to work on is proposed ( one can send up to 5 proposals, i.e to 5 different organizations ) by the student himself ( isn't that cool! ). Students are expected to give atleast 40 hrs a week during GSoC. You receive an initial payment of 500$ on 30th May, 2250$ on 25th June after the mid-term evaluation and 2750$ after the successful completion. The performance of the student is judged by the mentor.

Apart from giving buckets worth of money, GSoC also gives some things that people only get to appreciate later.

* **Contacts -** The contacts that you make during GSoC can help you land a high paying job in, for example, a foreign country, very easily. Also if your organization happens to have mentors that are professors they might give you a LoR ( Letter of Recommendation ) for your MS ( Masters in Science ) directly! All you'd need then is a passport, a good GRE score and you'd be set to go!
* **Experience** - It is not a surprise that the GSoCers are the **highest placed** guys of their branch. The reason is very simple, a tag of Google on your resume and the valuable real world open source experience that you get from working on a project in GSoC is more than enough to clear the interviews that are taken at NITH.



* **Foreign Trip** - No need to envy those guys whose pointers are more than the number of fingers on your hands and are chilling in US or Germany ( during their internship period, mostly after 3rd year ). If you are lucky and your organization organizes a post GSoC meet up / conference, then you might just get a tour to a foreign country.  
  *Pro Tip***:** Avoid choosing organizations of Nepal for this reason, unless you want to see Mount Everest.

Still want more motivation! If yes here is a picture saying a thousand words.



**TAILOR MADE TIMELINE GUIDANCE**

**What should I do till October**

**Chill!** Yes that's exactly what you should do. Roam around the campus, get saturated by the natural beauty of the college. While you are having this awesome time, you should also be getting a good doze of learning and having good knowledge about a language ( a programming language of course ). The best way to do this is to read/watch the tutorials and then build something a little challenging using it. Try to finish it ( your self taken project on the programming language you are learning ) completely and polish it. Also you should have basic knowledge of git **( git is like google drive or dropbox, but instead of saving files by dragging and dropping them, git helps you stores *different versions of a file ( when you save it ),* so that even if you have to go back to previous version, you could ;)**. So it would be better to put the project that you are working on Github ( **github is the actual place where those *versioned* code files live ( just like drive and dropbox )**) and commit ( *fancy word for making a new version of a code file after making changes*) there. Also get a good experience of working with some editor ( **not notepad**), like Eclipse for Java / C++, Sublime or Atom for others. Vi, Nano, Emacs etc. if you are really the "Russian Hacker" kind of guy.

**What should I do till mid November**

Now is the time to choose an organization. This is the part where your decision making should be at its best, but in the end it also depends on luck. Look for the organizations that were selected to be a part of GSoC last year ( you'll find this info easily, just google it ). First, filter the organization based on the programming language you know. Then try to select an organization that has been consistently selected for past 2-3 years with about 4-5 students. If it has more students then there would be a lot of competition and the results might be a surprise catering to your selection). If there had been only 1-2 student with that organization before, those might be the guys that have been working before and might get selected again this time ( so beware of that ). Another filtering criteria is the community of those organizations. See whose community is more active. To measure this go through the github page of the organization, visit their forums, etc. The organization in which issues keep opening or PRs (**Pull Request**, *pull request is when, for example, I've taken someone else's code and found a fix for a problem, or added a new feature, and I want the original owner(s) of the code / software to add it to their main code, for others to use the better version of it* ) are made or questions are asked/answered on forums, is generally active. Now there would be about 4-5 organizations left after all this filtering. Now comes the most important step that you should perform very carefully.

* **2 organizations left** - Toss a coin
* **6 organizations left** - Roll a dice

**What should I do till November end**

Now that you have finalized the organization it is time to let loose the money-hungry ( read, knowledge hungry ) coder inside you. This might be the most difficult step in the whole process, so have a little patience. Go through the organization's website, forum and github page. There will most probably be a link on**How to Contribute**. Go through that in detail. Build the code ( *building the code, for now, is essentially****running and executing****it on your computer after downloading that code from****github (****where all the code is stored, like****google drive,****remember?****)***) of the organization using the instructions that are given. Introduce yourself to the community on forums or IRC ( **Internet Relay Chat**, it's where the **real** programmers chat with their funky nick names **;)**) or any chat room ( for example on [gitter](https://gitter.im/) ) that they might have. State directly that you are willing to contribute and are a GSoC 20xx ( xxxx, if this guide happens to be existing for centuries to come ) aspirant. Ask for their help, in any problems that you face while building the (right now, you haven't actually started coding yourself yet ) code. This step is important **before** actually applying for GSoC because, GSoC isn't a *apply and get selected* kind of internship. You've got to show that you love open source and you have passion to contribute to the project that you've ( now ) selected. It's highly unlikely that you'll get selected to contribute to that particular organization if you aren't a contributor from before ( even a small but persistent way of contributing counts ). So you're with us till now?

**What should I do till December end**

This would be the month of the end of semester(s). You guys will be very busy and **hence** dedicating most of your time watching [Prison Break](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Prison_Break), [Game of Thrones](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Game_of_Thrones) or [Friends](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Friends), or **The Dark Knight's PC** ( you'll get to know what that is sooner or later. For now, hold your horses ). So I would recommend buying [*this*](https://www.amazon.co.uk/CHEAT-PEN-EXAMS-NOTES-CHEATING/dp/B0044M0RUI) pen and like a sincere student go through all the seasons of whatever series you'd happen to be watching. On a serious note, study to the brink of the night and do not flunk, otherwise it would be an overhead to your efforts of getting selected for GSoC.

**What should I do till January end**

Now is the time to get serious. It would be better if you could skip that long walk that you took to Gate 1 to have **Chai**. Just start reading through the code. At first you wouldn't understand a thing. But some super wise people have said that *It keeps getting easier with time and*[*perseverance*](https://www.quora.com/Daily-Life-What-is-the-most-valuable-skill-a-person-can-have-for-their-entire-life/answer/Nelson-Wang-2?ref=fb_page). Don't give up! Try to change something and what changed / broke in the output. Now as your confidence start growing ( slowly and steadily, hang in there buddy! ) try to fix something. Something as simple as a spelling mistake in a README file, would do for your first [commit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-Cll9jEnnM). Also a good commit might be adding documentation to a function as that also shows that you understood the code. This commit doesn't improve your chances of your selecting much but at least you would be on your way familiarizing yourself with the process. Now comes the second commit. Go through the issues of the organization. Select a simple one. Try to reproduce it and find the code that is responsible for it. Once you have done this, its just a simple matter of fixing it. Don't be afraid to ask the members of the community if you get stuck anywhere or are not able to find the cause of the issue. You should at least submit and gotten 2 pull requests merged at this point of time. ( *If you are unfamiliar with git, learn it*). Also find and report any issue that you might find about the software / project to the organization, no their github page. There are a lot of bugs in every software so finding one is just a matter of testing rigorously.

**What should I do will February end**

Push more commits to the organization try to push one every 3 days. Interact a lot with the community. Be responsive on the comments made on your PR's. Also, Google releases the list of selected students at the end of February.

* **Your organization is selected** - Congrats! The road is easier for you now. You would see a lot students entering your organization and the mailing list will be full of introductions. But you are already the Rajnikant of your organization. Let the kids play among themselves. You just have to keep doing what you were. Make the number of patches ( *fancy word for fixes / adding small features*) so huge that no one could reject your proposal
* **Your organization is not selected** - Congrats! Now you have the chance to contribute to another organization ( better for the resume ). DON'T GIVE UP NOW! Select a new organization within a couple of days and start repeating the steps. You already are quite familiar with the process so you know the path to follow now, just walk on it.

**What should I do till March end**

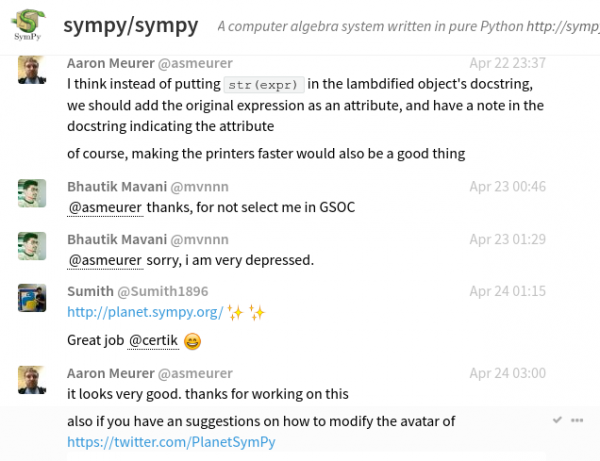
Google requires you to submit a proposal. Most of the organizations already have a list of ideas that they want to implement during the summer (called ***the roadmap***). You just have to get DIBS on that. Your proposal should contain the current implementation of the feature ( if it exists ), description about what you would do and how you would do that feature enhancement / add that new feature of whatever that you've in mind to submit in the proposal, introductions about yourself, the time-line that you would follow (your personal ***roadmap***), number of hours that you would dedicate ( 40/week is the minimum required ), the links of all the Pull Requests and Issues that you have opened in all the open-source organizations till date. Make this proposal ASAP and send it to the big guns in your organization to review first (this is the reason why you'd want to start contributing to open source way before actually submitting proposals to Google. You get help/advice/suggestions/feedback from the experienced! ). They would propose some modifications, do that and once they are satisfied submit the final proposal. A simple search would give you many templates for the articles. But remember your contributions matter a lot than how you write about them ( though presenting them is important, even if you are not able to write properly, the big guns, your friends in the open source organization(s) you'd be contributing to, would help a lot )

Also this would be the time for mid-semester. So again, you have to focus all your energy on F.R.I.E.N.D.S. But don't stop the contributions keep them coming. Even after you have submitted the proposal keep contributing. Every contribution matters.

**What should I do till April**

Keep contributing! The results are going to be announced so this would be the best time to take that long pending trip to Kalinjadi. You are going to require it, no matter what type of result comes.

* **You are selected** - Congratulations! Now get ready for the GPL/BPL that your friends are going to do. But the pain would be less when your body parts are numb ( Remember this advice, even if you don't know what GPL/BPL means, you soon would, trust me ).
* **You are not selected** - Hard luck! Still you are at-least at the right place to deal with this. Don't give up buddy, all that you have learned during this will still be very useful and relevant. Try again next year. Look for some other good internship opportunity now. People will be more than happy to keep a open-source contributor as a intern. Use your profile to apply for these internships.  
  Pro Tip -> The following is not a good idea!



**What should I do till May**

**Chill!** Just relax enjoy the fame that is coming. Convince yourself that you are going to become rich! Make plans as to what you are going to buy. Start those walks to Gate 1 for that **Chai** again. Who knows you might get better reasons to visit ;) . Keep talking to your mentor once a week. Get to know him/her, communicate with them . Receive your first payment of 500$, though most of it would go into parties. Also you might have to convince your parents that your are earning this by legal means, since they might be baffled about the amount their **kid** is making.

**What should I do during GSoC**

Most of this will be dictated by the mentor you've been assigned. If you got a chill dude/dudie ( mentor ), you are very lucky as you might have to work like 10 hrs/week only. But this is totally situation dependent.

**What should I do after GSoC**

I think you know what I am going to say here but still **Chill!** You would already be in the college. You would have earned the reputation of a "Coder". Now is the time to live up to the reputation that you have earned. Look for freelancing projects and get involved in those. These give you some cool projects to add to your resume and also some extra cash to spend on what/who you want.