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CS Assignment 1

The technology sector is booming! CompTIA, the Computer Technology Industry Association can back up this claim with surprising figures. In 2017 alone, the tech sector employed approximately 7.2 million Americans, resulting in a direct contribution of about $1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy (CompTIA). These figures grow larger every year as companies continue to innovate, expand, and recruit new professionals. Because of the highly competitive nature surrounding the tech industry, career-seeking professionals must take an honest inventory of their skills to develop themselves into successful candidates. As one of those career-seeking professionals, I find it imperative to rise above my peers by developing both soft skills and technical expertise to enable success for my future.

Interestingly, many of the qualities employers are seeking within a candidate are not directly related to computer science. First and foremost, employers are seeking employees that can communicate effectively. Being able to communicate a problem and brainstorm a solution as part of a team is a massive asset to employers. Hiring managers are also looking for decisive candidates that are confident in their skills. Thankfully, as a former infantry squad leader, many of these soft skills have been wholly developed by the US Army. Although, we can always be better communicators and leaders, it will not be my priority in my professional development.

Effective communication alone will not be able to qualify me for the jobs I am seeking.

It is important to develop the technical skills needed to even be noticed by hiring managers. It is important to note that employers aren’t looking for the most gifted programmers, or network wizards, but rather for candidates that possess inter-disciplinary skill sets. These hard-technical skills take time to develop and thus, it is a high priority of mine to learn these skills. Throughout my schooling, I will continue to participate in extra-curricular activities to help rise above of the rest when it comes to technical expertise.

My immediate priority for my career path however, isn’t developing technical skills but rather, developing a professional network of mentors and peers. Finding a mentor to help guide my career decisions is especially important to me. My primary resource for creating this professional network is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network, with over 530 million users worldwide (LinkedIn). They allow users to create a professional profile as well as follow leaders in the tech industry. In turn, leaders can simultaneously mentor junior professionals that follow them by posting articles, taking surveys or by teaching classes. My second resource is GitHub, an amazing open community of developers. It allows me to follow and research open source projects and learn how developers write code and even request to assist in the project. It is also a great place to share projects I’ve created and develop a legitimate professional portfolio for future employers to assess.

In summary, the best candidate isn’t the genius programmer but rather the well-rounded professional. We must continue to develop our soft skills like communication and teamwork alongside our technical skills. Using GitHub and LinkedIn can greatly enhance our skills by collaborating with professionals across the globe whilst growing our professional network. By taking advantage of these resources while I pursue my degree in Computer Science, I know that I can be fully prepared to enter the tech industry as a professional.

Works Cited

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