It Didn’t Have to Be CS

I chose to get my degree in Computer Science on a whim. I was lazing about at home one Sunday morning, probably playing games on my computer. When my dad called me downstairs to talk with a neighbor who was visiting. The neighbor in question was a man named Rob Dillman. My dad and Rob spoke for a while when the conversation arrived at what Rob did for work. As it turns out Rob was the Vice President of Admissions for a technical college called Neumont. We had talked for a while about what made the school so different from other colleges, and I was convinced on the spot that I would be going to this school. I had no experience in computer science, so I had no idea if it was my thing. But I did know that I loved computers and games, so I figured it wouldn’t hurt to give it a try.

Fast forward six months and there I was, sitting in my first day of class. A few weeks went by, and I realized how much I loved computer science, every day I spent in class validated my decision to spontaneously drop everything and come to Neumont. Computer science, like math, just worked with my brain. Yet still, I was challenged every single day with the accelerated courses, and new concepts, and it was thrilling. Never in the past was school adjusted to a pace that would genuinely challenge me.

Jump ahead again to today and I come to ask myself. Why computer science, more specifically, why BSCS (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science)? Why not game development or software engineering for example? I believe that I chose computer science because of how broad of a subject it is, as well as its recognizability. In computer science, I was not restricted by having to take an enormous number of required classes, unlike other degrees. I could choose to take any class I want assuming I meet the prerequisite(s). This is to say, I am free to build my education however I want, and that freedom is reassuring, to say the least. With that freedom, I can choose to diversify my skill set to appeal to a wide variety of companies after graduation. I may even be able to start my own company with enough hard work and dedication. These are a few of my main motivations, but I would say my number one motivation is that computer science is something that I became extremely passionate about during my time at Neumont. Being able to turn your passion into a career is what many people dream of doing, and unfortunately are not able to due to various circumstances. I’m just fortunate enough to have my passion be a skill that is highly coveted by many people worldwide.

Okay, but information is so readily available on the internet. Why would you spend so much money getting a degree when you could just learn everything online? There are many reasons that I can think of that you should pursue a degree rather than becoming self-taught. One is that you become more valuable in interviews for computer science positions. Hypothetically, if I were interviewing two people where one had a degree and maybe six months of experience, and the other had no degree but a year of experience. I would lean a lot further in the direction of the individual with the degree, even though the other person had more experience. Another reason why you should get a degree rather than learn online is because you are forced to be held accountable for your learning. I have deadlines to meet and that forces me to keep up with learning the material. If I was self-taught, no one would hold me accountable to learn anything besides myself, and ultimately, I may never learn anything.

Now why would I want to pursue computer science at all? Frankly put, it’s been my dream since I was very young to leave my mark on the world. I don’t want to die a nameless nobody. Technology is the future, but it isn’t the only place I can leave my mark. I could’ve picked something like medicine and studied unsolved mysteries like curing cancer. I could have studied mathematics or more traditional sciences like physics for example. There are plenty of options, it didn’t have to be computer science. Yet, on a random Sunday morning computer science is what I chose.

To wrap things up, I spontaneously decided to go to Neumont where I would learn to value the pace and challenge of the education there. I’ve also come to understand the value of getting an actual degree as opposed to teaching myself the content. My choice to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science was driven by many factors. Some of those were the freedom to sculpt my education, the chance to make technology that can change the world, and most importantly, because it’s something that I developed a passion for.

*Checked for grammar and punctuation by Grammarly (2024).*