

Reflection on Internship Program with Doxadvisors

Alvis Chan

College of Engineering and Computer Sciences, Australian National University

COMP3820: Computing Internship

Dr Anne Ozdowska

June 9, 2023

Introduction

During my internship at Doxadvisors, which took place from February to June 2023, I was part of the Document Migration Team. It was an exciting opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a professional workplace and apply the theoretical knowledge I acquired during my studies. Before starting my internship, I had several objectives and expectations. Firstly, I aimed to deepen my understanding of software developing strategies and tactics in a real-world setting. I wanted to learn how to collaborate development, develop maintainable code parts, and measure their consistency through peer review and testing kits. Additionally, I expected to enhance my workplace communication skills and acquaint myself with the proper etiquette necessary in the data analytics and cloud computing fields.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my internship was the chance to work on client projects. These projects allowed me to apply my skills in a practical context, analyse real-world challenges, and actively propose solutions. Collaborating with fellow interns, we tackled complex problems, utilizing our collective knowledge and expertise to deliver impactful results. From conceptualizing ideas to executing the projects, I witnessed firsthand the transformation from initial input to final output, gaining a deep appreciation for the importance of teamwork and effective communication.

However, this journey was not without obstacles, I encountered challenges that tested my adaptability, time management, and conversational skills. Whether it was meeting high expectations or navigating unfamiliar complexities, I learnt to embrace these challenges as opportunities for professional development. Overcoming these hurdles not only strengthened my resilience but also enhanced my ability to collaborate and accomplish tasks beyond personal capabilities.

As I reflect on my internship experience, I am grateful for the professional and personal guidance it has given to me. The lessons learnt, the relationships built, and the knowledge gained have undoubtedly shaped me into a more confident and capable professional. This reflection serves as a testament to the transformative power of internships and the immense value they hold in preparing individuals for successful careers in their chosen fields.

Reflection 1

At the onset of my internship, I was assigned a collaborative task alongside Anthony, another intern. Our objective was to document the operations of PowerShell scripts and transcribe specific sections of the code into SQL.

The collaboration with Anthony proved to be a valuable learning experience for me. While I already understood the importance of collaboration, I initially underestimated the scale of the task and lacked experience in collaborating in a workplace setting. However, as we individually analyzed the PowerShell scripts, comprehended their purpose, and identified the relevant sections to be transcribed into SQL, it reaffirmed my knowledge of why collaboration is necessary.

Transcribing sections of PowerShell code into SQL posed its own set of challenges. Although Anthony and I were proficient in SQL, our knowledge of PowerShell was restricted. As a result, we familiarized ourselves with PowerShell syntax and data types as we progressed. Nevertheless, these challenges presented valuable opportunities for problem-solving and further enhancing our technical skills. We conducted research, experimented with various techniques, and strived to ensure accurate code translation while adhering to SQL conventions.

Reflecting on the experience, effective and comfortable communication emerged as a crucial aspect of our success. We regularly communicated our progress, clarified doubts, and shared insights to enhance the quality and efficiency of our work. Open and transparent communication enabled us to align our efforts, streamline the process, and ultimately achieve the desired objectives. I observed Anthony's professionalism in terms of progress reporting and fine-tuning task details with our supervisor, which served as a benchmark for me to strive towards.

This collaborative endeavour strengthened my understanding of the importance of teamwork and effective communication in achieving project goals. Working with Anthony allowed me to recognize my shortcomings in fundamental workplace communication and professionalism. Thus setting a higher standard for my own performance, motivating me to strive for excellence in future collaborative endeavours.

Reflection 2

In late March, our supervisor scheduled a meeting for the interns to display the complete set of procedures for client migration processing. I viewed this as a chance to advance my knowledge and display a professional demeanour.

During the meeting, I actively listened to the discussions and took detailed notes to ensure a thorough understanding of the key points and objectives. I saw this as an opportunity to contribute meaningful insights and engage in productive discussions when appropriate.

However, I encountered challenges that affected my overall engagement. One particular challenge was my misconception regarding the importance of being visible on camera and actively participating. Previously, I had viewed business meetings in a similar light to university lectures, where it was acceptable to have the camera off and remain muted.

It was only after receiving feedback from my supervisor that I realized how this approach could be perceived as disengaged. This feedback provided me with a new perspective and highlighted the need for active participation and engagement during meetings.

Moving forward, I aim to enhance my level of engagement and maintain stronger presence in meetings ensure others recognize my active involvement and understanding of the meeting's objectives.

Another challenge I faced was a hesitation in expressing my opinions and ideas. Although I actively listened and absorbed the discussion points, I realized that I missed several opportunities to deliver unique insights and inquiries. This hesitation stemmed from a lack of confidence in the validity of my ideas and a fear of potential judgment. To overcome this challenge, I will work on building self-assurance and actively voicing my thoughts during meetings, recognizing that my perspectives can bring value to the discussions.

This meeting experience taught me valuable lessons that will shape my future engagement in similar settings. Firstly, proactive engagement is crucial to maintain an uplifting and enthusiastic meeting environment. Secondly, I recognized the significance of self-confidence in active participation during discussions. Therefore, I aim to embrace my viewpoints, recognizing they hold merit in bringing clarity and personal involvement.

Reflection 3

During the start of April, Anthony and I were given my first assignment in handling client data and import them into the database. Additionally, we were to demonstrate the process to Spike, a fellow internee, and resolve ambiguity in the process.

Together, we exhibited a keen attitude to understand and a collaborative approach to problem-solving. We actively raised questions, shared interpretations, and engaged in discussions to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the task. However, our attention to detail was slightly off-focus as the continuous deep analysis without rest affected our ability to maintain consistent focus.

Technologically, we had access to the necessary tools and a smooth internet connection, enabling seamless video and audio communication. In a collaborative setting, we maintained communication through regular discussion, rotating roles, and screen sharing to facilitate guidance and support whenever required. Regarding our clarity of task, we encountered some challenges. Firstly, we were unsure of the specific resources we should be utilizing for the given workload, as it deviated from conventional approaches. Additionally, there was ambiguity regarding how far we were expected to operate, as evident resources for progression were missing. Despite these uncertainties, we made a conscious effort to understand the significance and importance of the majority of steps involved. However, certain decisions, such as version key decisions, required intrinsic knowledge of the document management system, which we lacked.

Looking back, I became aware of my inadequate preparation and missed opportunity to take on a leadership role. Although our collaboration and working environment were well-established, we acknowledge that our lack of familiarity with the protocol hindered our progress. We inadvertently used some information that should not have been referenced, which impacted our approach. To address this, we recognize the need to revise specific aspects, particularly the handling of versioning of documents, by leveraging the provided training resources. Furthermore, I realized the need to be proactive and confident in expressing my opinions and ideas.

Reflection 4

In May I was assigned to collaborate with the funder to pioneer the migration process for legacy documents. It was a significant undertaking that not only provided valuable insights and learning opportunities. It also provided an opportunity to assess my personal growth and improvement in addressing issues aforementioned in previous experiences.

One of the initial challenges was navigating the complexities of the legacy document systems. This involved understanding the structure, formats, and metadata of the existing documents required extensive research and collaboration with subject matter experts. For this task, I ensured that I had a solid foundation knowledge through comprehensive research and preparation outside work hours so I could provide valuable suggestions for the development.

Similar to other reflections, effective communication and collaboration played a crucial role. Regular meetings with the funder allowed for the exchange of ideas, clarification of requirements, and alignment of expectations. This time, I took crucial note to engage in meetings visually and verbally. Furthermore, clear lines of communication were established to ensure I had a clear understanding of my role and expectations.

Together we successfully establish regular feedback loops, which encouraged continuous improvement and ensured the desired outcomes were met. This process reinforced the importance of apparent engagement, through improvised communication methods I was able to present my resilience and care for the desired result. It also highlighted the significance of thorough documentation. Comprehensive documentation of the legacy document systems and migration workflows proved invaluable prior and during developing the process. The documentation for the legacy process will also serve as a valuable resource for training new team members and ensuring consistency in the migration process.

Furthermore, I learnt that flexibility and adaptability are essential traits in technological development. The discovery of unforeseen challenges and unexpected changes required agile problem-solving and quick decision-making. Adapting to these changes while maintaining a focus on the end goal was crucial for the successful development and implementation of the migration process.

Conclusion

This internship experience have shaped my professional growth, providing a solid foundation for continued improvement and success in collaborative projects, meetings, and complex development processes.

From the collaborative task of transcribing PowerShell scripts into SQL with Anthony, I learnt the value of teamwork, effective communication, and knowledge sharing. Building upon this event, I applied the lessons learnt to improve my meeting performance. Through self-reflection, I identified strengths in active listening and maintaining professionalism, as well as areas for improvement in time management and confidently expressing ideas.

Considering these insights, I approached subsequent meetings with a heightened sense of awareness and proactive engagement. I actively listened and focused on the conveyed information to ensure that crucial contexts were duly recorded. However, I overlooked the importance of displaying engagement and providing instantaneous responses. This can be attributed to a lack of self-confidence and a tendency to be overly passive. Therefore, I intended to foster a sense of independence so I could succinctly express my ideas, recognize the value of my unique perspectives and contribute to the team.

Applying the lessons learnt, I embarked on the development of the legacy processes. This undertaking allowed me to display the growth achieved in teamwork, adaptability, and meticulous planning. By overcoming challenges, fostering effective communication, and employing a phased approach, I successfully executed the development process.

From the collaborative task to handling client files, I learnt the importance of teamwork and effective communication, the significance of being proactive and the necessity of self-confidence in conversations. While there were noticeable improvements in the development of legacy processes, I acknowledge that there are still lingering traces of dependency that cannot be easily altered in the short term. Inspired and supported by my peers and supervisor, I am eager to embark on journeys to foreign countries alone, aiming to cultivate a stronger voice and foster a sense of independence. By incorporating the valuable lessons and experiences gained during this program into my future endeavours, I anticipate to reach new heights in my ability to navigate challenges, earn trust, and achieve effective communication.