

Questionnaire for Christopher Thomas  
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## General Questions

### **What are your goals for the next 5 years?**

Over the next five years I'd like to continue building myself. I've enjoyed working in small teams thus far and would like to continue doing so as I gain more advanced skills. I have an interest in web application development and systems administration and would like to continue to hone those skills. I'm excited to learn Rails and better code structuring techniques, but I also have an interest in learning more about AngularJS and similar client-side libraries/frameworks.

### **What is your reason for leaving your previous position, or why do you want to leave your current position (if applicable)? What do you hope to get out of this position?**

I worked for one of the IT departments on the campus at Montana State University. Once I graduated, I came back home to Washington. I hope to gain a lot of experience in working with a development team. I look forward to the prospect of learning new technologies and better software engineering processes that I'm sure will be useful in future jobs.

### **We are primarily a Rails shop. What are your feelings about using Rails, particularly if your background isn't in it?**

While I haven't used Rails in any large capacity, I am more than willing to learn to use it. I anticipate that it will not be too difficult to pick up. I've worked extensively with other MVC frameworks like Laravel (<https://laravel.com/>) which is one of the major alternatives to Rails. I am confident that my experience with the framework will be very useful in understanding Rails. In addition, I am not a complete stranger to Ruby and have been exposed to it when I worked with Sinatra in my most recent web consulting work.

### **Can you share your biggest professional or academic accomplishment? Can you share your biggest professional or academic failure?**

I am quite happy with some of the work I've done for the university. I built an internal web application to tie into the university's web help desk. The system could perform a variety of tasks which included:

- automatically adding notes to tickets
- allowing technicians to send text messages to students when their devices were repaired
- allowing technicians to automatically find information from copyright tickets generated when a company sent us a copyright complaint
- helping automate the search through the network's switch and router information to associate IP addresses from the copyright complaints to ports and users
- managing lab computer guest accounts and passwords

My biggest mistake during college was not immediately starting in computer science even though I was most interested in it. I changed majors from electrical and computer engineering more than two years into my degree. I had a lot of difficulties in this major and did not enjoy it as much as I anticipated and my GPA suffered as a result. Once I switched to computer science I never looked back and maintained a near 4.0 GPA every semester since. I was able to graduate on-time with honors but I obviously ended up paying significantly more for college and had a lower GPA than I otherwise would have had. However, due to this mistake I do have a heavier math and physics background than most people with my degree.

**What would your peers say are your strengths & weaknesses?**

I am extremely good at programming and picturing larger application designs. I've often lead teams in groupwork and people tend to enjoy working with me. I'm always ready to offer my assistance to team members and help ensure that a project meets all of the requirements.

However, I noticed I can sometimes confuse people. Particularly on larger scale projects, some people had trouble following along with an architecture or design of a program until later when it starts to materialize. I know I can improve with regards to explaining things to team members and involving people more in the design of a project so that they can make better-informed decisions when working with me.

**What websites do you use for your job search? For each website, what do you like/dislike about them? What feature suggestions/improvements would you make?**

I used Craigslist to find this job opportunity but have also used Indeed. Craigslist has the issue of being very plain. While it is easy to use not much effort was put into design. In addition, I would prefer that there would not be separate applications for cities – each on their own subdomain. A single unified application would be more intuitive.

While Indeed has a better design, it has some usability issues. It has a feature made to automatically read a person's resume and populate a digital resume. It tends to do a terrible job at this, and often mangles the person's resume, requiring them to go and fix most of it. I would either continue to improve it until issues like this are rare, or at least make it optional.