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The code I'm still ashamed of



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some point in your career, someone will ask you to code something a little deceitful – if not outright unethical.

This happened to me back in the year 2000. And it's something I'll never be able to forget.

I wrote my first line of code at 6 years old. I'm no prodigy though. I had a lot of help from my dad at the time. But I was hooked. I loved it.

By the time I was 15, I was working part-time for my dad's consulting firm. I built websites and coded small components for business apps on weekends and in the summer.

I was woefully underpaid. But as my dad still likes to point out, I got free room and board, and some pretty valuable work experience.

Later, I managed to help fund a part of my education through a few freelance coding gigs. I built a couple of early e-commerce sites for some local small businesses.

By age 21, I managed to land a full-time coding job with an interactive marketing firm in Toronto, Canada.

The firm had been founded by a medical doctor and many of its clients were large pharmaceutical companies.

In Canada, there are strict limits on how pharmaceutical companies

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meant to address. Then, if a visitor could prove they had a prescription, they were given access to a patient portal with more specific info about the drug.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Canadian Erectile Dysfunction Resource Centre. The header features a circular image of an elderly couple smiling, with a red maple leaf overlaid. Below the image is a navigation bar with the text: CONSUMERS | PATIENTS | MEDIA | PHYSICIANS | PHARMACISTS | FRANÇAIS. The main title is "The Canadian Erectile Dysfunction Resource Centre". Below this is the Pfizer logo. The text states: "The products discussed herein may have different product labelling in different countries." and "The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. All decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider and consider the unique characteristics of each patient." The footer includes: "Copyright © 1999 Pfizer Inc. All rights reserved".

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The Canadian
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