What I learned – Open Source Phase – Week 1

We are starting a new phase which is all about giving back to the libraries we sometimes use in our daily basis. I wasn't fully aware of what open source projects were, I thought there were just free resources people could take advantage of them. I never thought I would be able to contribute to them, now that I know I just assumed that only people who were extremely good at coding could participate in this type of projects. Now that we have to contribute to two or more projects of our choice, it is impressive to me, because I always saw that too far away for me to comprehend or be able to bring something helpful to them, which makes me excited to see what this phase brings.

Since this is the first week of the phase I haven't gone into resolving an issue on an open source (OS) project yet, as our task for this week was to answer 3 code related questions, which you can see them resolved here on my page as well. Although I won't talk about the questions, I will share some general things I learned. While resolving one I wanted to try it physically (code it) other than just researching and reading documentation about it (Apache Hive) and for this instead of downloading the service, I made use of online playgrounds, which are environments that anyone can you use to write code using the program. This made it faster for me and easier to try it and experiment with it. This also helped me realize that some things you won't be able to get the full grasp on them until you try them by yourself.

Something else I learned was that most of the time we keep coding with the same format while using certain commands or functions available with the programming language, this tends to be our comfort zone. I think sometimes we don't like to change these "templates", which of course are good, because they function properly or fulfill our needs, but I think in most cases there are multiple ways you can code it differently that could be better or prettier, and we won't know about them until we give it a chance or go back and learn again by reading some documentation or posts from other people using them.

Although I haven't got into an OS issue yet, I have been wandering through a lot of OS projects to find some, where I could be able to contribute. In these last days I have been able to find some, mainly based on JS, but I still need to find one in another stack which I am inclined to go for Python. I have chosen these stacks, because are the ones I am more familiar with.

Since I have been browsing I've got to know OS projects that exist for a lot of things like validating strings, formatting numbers, games, helpers for testing, and even found out that you could contribute to projects like Bootstrap, React, Chrome, numPy, Pandas or Angular which I though they were too big to be open source. Something else I learned while reading through issues, is that the community is really understanding and helpful for people like me, who are just starting on contributing to OS projects, this eased my head, because I was getting worried about me not being able to solve an issue, but now I know that I can just ask for help and I will get help from anybody in the community, of course I know that I have an entire company (Encora) which I could ask for help as well.

This next week I will be focusing on getting an issue resolved, I have already written in some issues and I am waiting for a reply to start looking into a problem. As I mentioned, I look forward to this phase and all the new things I will learn.