Cracking the Coding Interview – Review

Before starting to read the book "*Cracking the Coding Interview*" by Gayle Laakmann, I did no have too many expectations, but not because I though it was going to be a boring or bad book, but because I did not know what to expect, at the end I truly enjoyed the book it delivers more than I could have expected. I want to let you know that this review is incomplete, because I could not go through the entire list of problems that come after what would be consider the theorical part of the book.

It will sound obvious, but I highly recommend the book if you are planning on getting into a tech company as a software developer, at the beginning it gives you an overlook on why things are done this why and I want to say I agree that companies should have a technical and practical interview, because this way you can put on trial the skills of a candidate and it is easier to compare people by results. Although in the contrary I know it puts more stress on candidates as they never know what specific questions to expect, but you just have to study before an interview, there is no short path.

The book tells you the entire process before taking an interview and how you should build experience before getting interviewed, because as we recent graduates hate it, we should have some experience in order for us to look great on our resumes. This process is not something you do in a week, you could or should be preparing for your first interview for months.

One topic I struggle with the most are behavioral questions, which is the time you have to sell yourself to the company, and I struggle on knowing myself, I am not able to say what my strengths are, and I am scared to say my weaknesses because I feel I am just going to tell the company not to hire me. I liked that the book gives you examples of every situation and it was easier for me to start thinking on my own answers, after seeing what is considered to be a right response.

It is not only about tips and hints, but the author also gives you an introduction into Big O, which is a big topic everyone needs to understand, because it is what a lot of the questions are based on, from algorithms, data structures and coding problems. For me this chapter was useful in a lot of ways, as I did not know about Big O before this and gave an introduction to the topic and most important examples to understand faster and easier.

Finally, it talks about the technical and coding problems part, it goes through what topics someone could expect from a technical interview, this gives you a start on what to investigate on, this is helpful as most of the times someone does not know where to start. Then it goes deeply into how to approach a coding problem and gives you tips on how you can solve it with the best possible solution. This one of the parts I found more useful, because now I have been doing a lot of coding problems, and I have used techniques like going through every data structure and looking for the best one, using de BUD technique, searching bottlenecks, unnecessary work, and duplicated work. Although you have to get used to thinking about these, so it comes more easily when you are actually in an interview.

I found the book tremendously helpful and what I like the most is that is not a book you read once, but you should go through it before every interview you could have in the future, as this will help you polish you interview skills once more and remind you things you could have forgotten, of course there could be chapters you can skip, but most of them are worth a reread.