

So You Want to be a Programmer

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github.com/Kashomon/to-be-a-programmer

Updated: May 17, 2017

So, you want to be programmer? This guide is intended to give you some places to start!

Getting Started

- *Get a Computer!:* First you need a computer! It doesn't necessarily need to be super fast, but you do need your own. Ideally, it would be installed with Linux or MacOS operating systems, but Windows is ok too.
There are lots of places that sell refurbished computers for cheap. For example, check out Green PC in Tacoma, InterConnection in Seattle, and FreeGeek in Seattle.
- *Learn the Tools:* Programmers must develop expertise at both coding and the tools they use.
 - Choose a Language. Python, JavaScript, Go, Ruby, and Java are all good options. Prefer a language that's commonly used
 - Choose an editor. I use Vim, but there are lots of awesome editors out there including Emacs, Sublime, IntelliJ, etc. Prefer an editor that is capable at many different languages.
 - Learn about version control and choose one for your projects. The most common is Git followed by Mercurial. Try using Github (<https://github.com>) or BitBucket <https://bitbucket.org/>.
- *Read:* Reddit's guide to learning how to program: https://www.reddit.com/r/learnprogramming/wiki/faq#wiki_how_do_i_get_started_with_programming
- *Read:* Teach yourself to Program in 10 Years by Peter Norvig: <http://norvig.com/21-days.html>
- *Read:* The posts in the Learning to Program topic on Quora: <https://www.quora.com/topic/Learning-to-Program>
- *Read:* Erik Trautman's "Why is Learning to Code so Damn Hard": <https://www.vikingcodeschool.com/posts/why-learning-to-code-is-so-damn-hard>
- *Online Schools:* There are lots online schools out there that will help get you started.
 - *MIT Open Course Ware* has dozens of excellent free lectures on Computer Science. <https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/electrical-engineering-and-computer-science/>
 - *CodeAcademy* (Mostly Free) has tons of awesome lessons and interactive tutorials. <https://www.codecademy.com/learn/all>

What Next?

At this point, you're getting comfortable doing simple tasks with your programming language, you have a go-to editor, and you maybe even have some code on Github. Not only that, but you've got a good idea about what the whole programming thing is about and maybe even ideas about how you would put together something that could actually be useful, like a web site or mobile app! **What next?**

- *Practice:* Keep honing your skills! Try doing programming competitions and practice problems at CodeChef, TopCoder, and Google CodeJam.
- *Find a Project!:* Find a project that sparks your interest! It could be a hobby project, or app, or a website.
- *Find People!:* It's always more fun and rewarding to work with a team. If you're still in school, check out clubs in your university. If you're out of school, try Meetups, or Facebook groups.