This summer, I interned at Fidelity Investments as a software development intern.

Organization/Program:

-What are the organization's goals and mission?

Fidelity (technically, Fidelity Investments) is a financial services corporation. The core of its business involves managing mutual funds, but it also advises clients on how to invest their assets, how to plan for retirement, and generally how to manage their money.

-What is your perception of its strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths:

I feel that one of Fidelity's greatest strengths as a company is its commitment to its

customers. Every company pays lip service to how much it cares about its customers, of course, but I was surprised at the degree to which my coworkers were committed to ensuring Fidelity's customers were taken care of. I also think that Fidelity does a good job of investing in its employees; they offer great benefits and are investing large amounts of time and money in recruiting young talent, which is always a good sign.

Weaknesses:

Because Fidelity is so large, it's hard to institute any kind of company-wide change. This issue is compounded by the fact that Fidelity is a conservative company in many ways, and so is somewhat resistant to change by nature. The result is that anyone who wants to make a change ends up fighting against a huge amount of inertia. I know that my boss in particular found this issue frustrating. Before I arrived, she instituted a new workflow methodology called agile for the teams that worked under her, but when she tried to sell its benefits to other manager, she faced pushback, because generally, the other managers preferred to do things the way they'd always been done in the past.

-What is the culture of the organization?

Fidelity's culture is surprisingly laid-back, given that it's a massive financial institution. No one clocks in or out; employees can take breaks throughout the day as they see fit and are trusted to accurately report the time they spent working at the end of the week. The dress code was also more lax than I expected -- for the duration of the summer, all employees could wear jeans and t-shirts to work. In the department directly above where I worked, it was even common to wear flip-flops and shorts to work, which I would never have expected at Fidelity. All that said, some of the relaxed culture was specific to my department, because I worked for an IT department, and the tech departments within Fidelity have a more relaxed atmosphere than their financially focused counterparts.

Learning Objectives:

-Describe the challenges you faced while accomplishing your personal objectives.

The challenges I had to overcome in order to complete my first two personal objectives (write a certain number of MARS operations and write a user interface to test those operations) were similar. In both cases, I had to learn a new technology: Spring JDBC for the MARS operations, and AngularJS for user interface. In both cases, I had to make sure to write code that was both functional and also well-structured enough that it could be understood once I left. And in both cases, I had to write effective tests to make sure that everything was functioning properly. The challenges I faced in the process of completing my third objective, writing a white paper on EZPaaS, were different, but not completely dissimilar. EZPaaS is a proprietary service developed internally at Fidelity to help different departments standardize their workflow and the tools they use for projects. My team had a goal of beginning to use EZPaaS in the near future, but because it was developed by a different department, no one on my team was familiar with the tool or how it worked. My job was, by writing a paper on the service, to help my boss understand exactly how EZPaas worked and the changes that would necessary to begin using it.

-Explain specific outcomes for each objective, including any necessary changes.

Personal Development:

-What skills did you develop during this experience?

Over the course of the summer, I was able to develop both "hard" (i.e. technical) skills, as well as "soft", or more interpersonal skills. On the technical side, I gained valuable experience writing enterprise-level Java and JavaScript code. I also learned a lot about the how large projects are structured, and about how to construct a workflow that allows dozens of people to work on one project simultaneously. On the less technical side, I gave several presentations, which gave me an opportunity to work on my public speaking skills. I also learned about how to comport myself professionally, especially from Alan, the project manager who I sat next to.

-Were you challenged?

The first few weeks of my internship were extremely challenging. I was simultaneously learning several new technologies, getting up to speed on the project I was going to work on, and trying to understand the overall structure of Fidelity. As I progressed towards the middle and latter stages of my internship, the challenge decreased to a more manageable level. The biggest shift in difficulty came in early/mid-July, when I had several breakthroughs in my understanding of the MARS project. From that point on, my core work was significantly easier, though I still learned a lot in the second half of the summer.

-Comment on the extent of your personal growth.

-Also comment on specific contributions you made to the organization

My most significant contribution to Fidelity was the

Evaluation:

-Evaluate your overall experience.

On the whole, my experience at Fidelity was a positive one. My coworkers were friendly and understanding, which I really appreciated as an intern who didn't know up from down for the first few weeks. I especially enjoyed working with my boss, who took a very hands-off approach and gave me the time and space to teach myself the things I needed to know. She also assigned me work that was very similar to what I'll be doing once I graduate, as opposed to giving me make-work to just kill time. I'm thankful for that.

-Did it meet your expectations?

On the whole, my experience was in line with my expectations. As I mentioned before, the culture was slightly more relaxed than I expected, but that's a fairly minor difference. Other than that, Fidelity was similar to what I expected: a large, traditional company staffed by talented professionals.

-what insights into the work world have you gained from this experience?

-How does this experience relate to your future?

-Describe how this experience might be integrated into future courses.

I actually feel like the computer science department has already done a good job of integrating topics that I came across in my work into the curriculum. Specifically, the