Marisa Ortiz   1

SWEN 101

Sandhu

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Interview Paper

What is software engineering? Looking back I should have been able to answer that question before I applied to the software engineering program at RIT. SWEN 101, luckily helped me learn the answer to this and give me more confidence in my decision. One of the opportunities provided to me through this class was the assignment to interview someone currently in the software engineering field. For this assignment I chose to interview James Harkins who is currently working as a full stack software engineer for Archcare. He is also a recent RIT alum and just received his degree in game design and development. Even though he has only been at his current company for six months his answer still provided a new perspective on software engineering.

At Arccare James works with a small group of four people on call systems which assists patients with contacting doctors and nurses. In order to do this they use a very diverse tech stack. Including C for backend work and then when it comes to front end work they use PHP, bootstrap, and occasionally javascript for other miscellaneous tasks. His team also tends to use slack as their main form of communication. Their cubicles are also all next to each other so they communicate in person consistently but since they all tend to come into the office as needed and many work from home they rely heavily on digital communication as well. When it comes to working processes he stated that they don't really use any traditional native processes in their workflow attributing this to the fact that they are such a small team. Their processes are very unofficial; they get their lists of tasks and do them as they need to. On the typical week he tends

to go into the office around three times a week the other days working from home. He said whether or not he goes in depends if he wakes up on time. Since he's new he tends to only go to a few meetings per week where he listens to the others and states what he is currently up to. James said that he doesn't have too much on his schedule right now since he is still very new to the company and he is not a part of many projects just yet.

James said that he works a lot better in the office since it allows him to easily ask questions to those around him and gives him a quiet setting to dial in and focus. On the personal side though he said that he does enjoy working from home and appreciates that he has the ability to do so. When asked what the most important skill he uses was simply the ability to find answers himself. He stated that while asking questions was important, being able to find answers yourself was also a very important skill. Being able to dig around in your code and able to be self-sufficient is very important. When asked about ethics in his job he stated that the largest ethical thing they face is patient information. If they manage to release patient information by accident it would be a very large issue for everyone involved. The largest challenge so far for him has been his transition from school to work. With school assignments everything has an end date and you know if you like a project it'll be over eventually. But when it comes to work projects it's completely up to you what languages will be used, how problems will be solved, and when a project is complete. His biggest advice for finding jobs is to not be afraid to apply and to really get yourself out there. He said that he could apply to jobs and make his portfolio and resume as diverse as possible.

Overall I feel as if this interview gave me a deeper, more in depth understanding of what the workfield is like. The struggles of finding a job, working in groups, making yourself available and finding out how you work best.

Appendix

Interview Video Link -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1681KJNEsuUf1AqGf0dxVaFU19K_qIRLC/view?usp=sharing

Interview Notes -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k-VKwVVO7n3NNeinfeADbaOcxRXdTnYxdb4OWTP_z
Gk/edit?usp=sharing