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TL;DR

A short journey through my experiences with hardware, software, programming and project management. Too bad I could not add the topics 'hacking' and 'education', as I have a goal to fit everything on a single page.

Hardware

Around 2010 I had to fix a broken desktop PC, which gave me an immense insight into how computers work. I had no one to ask technical questions, so I did all the research myself: which is better for long-term data storage - 12v 3.5 HDD or 5v 2.5 SSD? can a 90W power supply be enough for a Radeon 2Gb graphics card? why are DDR3 pins incompatible with DDR4? what is NX-bit and memory leak? Why is L1, L2 and L3 cache important? What is the maximum amperage of a USB A port and how many USB drives can I connect in parallel? What are north-south bridges on a motherboard? Does the BIOS clock rely on a single 2032 battery for years?

At the same time, I cracked open every electronic device I could get my hands on: where is the GPS antenna on the phone? And the proximity sensor? How does the hard reset button on the e-book work? Why can't I use the stylus on the capacitive touchscreen when I can on the resistive one?

Later, I also worked in a microelectronics company where I had to solder resistors onto the PCB using a microscope, test capacitors and detect faulty SMT components. It was an eye-opening experience for a hardware hobbyist to witness the debugging process of a modern circuit board.

Software

Back in 2006 I tried to create my own OS based on Kubutnu.
It did not turn out to be a proper OS, but I ended up with a solid idea of how OS components fit together, what a kernel is, and how drivers work.

After that came a long road of trying out different Linux distros, including Fedora, Puppy Linux and Kali Linux, hacking neighbours' Wi-Fi passwords, just to see if I was good enough.
Meanwhile, I also tinkered with Windows: removing and reinstalling critical XP drivers on an old PC, installing hacked software on hacked Windows 7 and modifying the Windows 8.1 registry directly. I even had a Mac mini as my main PC for a some time.
In general, I have had a different main OS every two years or so, some of them dual-booted from the main disc and a few times using Windows To Go and DriveDroid as well.
On the mobile side I have tried custom Android ROMs, Resurrection OS and LineageOS have saved my 2 phones from recycling, but at the cost of sleepless nights trying to boot into TWRP custom recovery and flash G apps. I also had Android x86 as my main OS for a while.

In short: I just love software.

Programming

My first exposure to programming was in 2003 with Turbo Pascal, which I don't remember much more than variables and function declarations, but it made me think in terms of universal programming concepts like variable assignment, function declaration, loop/Boolean and memory allocation.

Then, in 2012, I created visual projects with Processing; it was fun and very motivating to see mathematics translated into beautiful visual objects on the screen.
(Then I studied BlueJ, but I don't remember much more than wrestling with Java syntax in there).
By 2015, I knew the basic concepts of object-oriented programming and had done some simple Python projects with TKinter.

Around 2019 I jumped into the web and learned frontend with HTML/CSS/JavaScript. Then in 2021 I built a medium-sized frontend application without any framework and since then half of my hair has turned gray, so I decided to learn React. Although I don't consider myself a frontend developer at the moment.

Meanwhile, I've gotten into back-end and ops - PHP, Laravel, SQL, deployment, testing, networking, CI/CD, AWS, GitHub Actions and Docker containers. That's where I feel most comfortable.

Project management

I have recently had to take on more responsibility than just writing code. I was brought in to manage some projects because of the combination of my hard and soft skills for this job.

And as I have no formal training in project management, all my knowledge comes from hard-earned experience after working on some failed and some successful projects.

For me, everything that's important in project management boils down to two main points:
1. A motivated individual developer delivers more value than an unmotivated team. The project manager must do everything possible to keep individual contributors motivated.
2. Planning ahead, structuring the development process, defining roles and reporting, delegating tasks and managing time is already half the job done. A project manager must be well organized in order to organize others.

I know there are many more cornerstone ideas that I need to explore within the PM field, but these two points shape the way I think about project management.