Rudra Aggarwal: Internship Journey

Hi everyone,

When I first started my internship, I was full of excitement and a bit of nervousness. The thought of working with cutting-edge technologies like Large Language Models, which I had only read about in research papers, was thrilling. But I also wondered if my skills would be enough to meet the challenges ahead.

As I began, I quickly realized that while the work was indeed challenging, I was part of an incredibly supportive team. They were always willing to explain concepts and help me learn. This made a huge difference in my growth and confidence.

One project that stands out to me was developing a question-answering system using our LLM and a Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) system. We aimed to create a tool that could effectively answer questions about our company's vast AWS cloud data. What made this project special was that I got to work on every part of the pipeline – from processing the data to fine-tuning the LLM, to implementing the retrieval system. I even used FastAPI to create a simple API for the service. Seeing it all come together during a company-wide demo was incredibly rewarding.

One of the things I loved most about the company's culture was the emphasis on curiosity and continuous learning. It wasn't just about completing assigned tasks; we were encouraged to explore new ideas and technologies. This openness led me to dive into areas I hadn't initially considered, like Docker for containerization and Apache Spark for big data processing. These experiences expanded my horizons and helped me see how different technologies work together in real-world AI systems.

This internship has profoundly shaped my career aspirations. Initially, I was mostly interested in the theoretical aspects of AI and thought I might want to pursue a career in research. But now, I'm much more excited about the practical applications of AI in industry. I've realized that I love the process of taking an AI model from research to a real-world product. Moving forward, I plan to develop my skills in areas like cloud computing and software architecture to complement my AI knowledge and become a well-rounded engineer.

The mentorship I received during this internship was invaluable. My mentor didn't just help me solve technical problems; they also provided deep insights into the industry as a whole. They encouraged me to think beyond just the algorithms and consider the broader

business impact of our work. This guidance helped me see the bigger picture and understand how my contributions fit into the company's goals.

Looking back, if there's one thing I wish I had known earlier, it's the importance of software engineering best practices, like writing clean, well-documented code. In the beginning, I was so focused on the AI algorithms that I sometimes overlooked these aspects. As a result, there were some initial difficulties when I handed over my work.

In conclusion, this internship has been a transformative experience. I've not only developed my technical skills but also gained a deeper understanding of how to apply them in a real-world setting. I'm grateful for the support and opportunities I've received, and I'm excited to continue my journey in this field.

Thank you.

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