Building Up Your Profile

With Technologies, Projects, Certifications, Activities, Experience

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What is your profile?

- Your profile is the abstract space of all your accomplishments and qualifications for a given field.
- In our field — *Technology* — your profile consists of five key components, however not all of these are treated equally.
- While your profile is abstract, you must also take pains to bring parts of it into reality. Rely on your profile when creating resumes and show off your qualifications on professional sites like github and linkedin.

The Hierarchy Of Profile Components

1. **Experience:** Experience trumps all else: this includes jobs, internships, degrees, and formal education in the field.
2. **Certifications:** Certifications are official distinctions obtained outside of formal education from accredited 3rd parties.
3. **Projects:** Independent application of your technologies to create applications or achieve a goal.
4. **Activities:** Membership in professional organizations or volunteer work involving technology.
5. **Technologies:** Individual technical skills with a certain technology, this can be a programming language, a library, an OS, or physical technical skill.

Technologies

What are Technologies?

- Technologies are skills you have acquired through experience, activities, or independent practice.
- Technologies are the bones of your profile; most other profile components are built on top of the technologies you know.
- Technologies can include but are not limited to:
  - Programming Languages
  - Well-known programming libraries, APIs, and Frameworks
  - Software (IDEs, Git, GitHub, Adobe Cloud, Office, G Suite, Solidworks, etc...)
  - Hardware (Embedded Systems, Oscilloscope, Cameras, Phones, PCs, Machines, etc...)
  - Operating Systems (Windows 10, Mac, Linux Distros)

What Technologies Should be in my Profile?

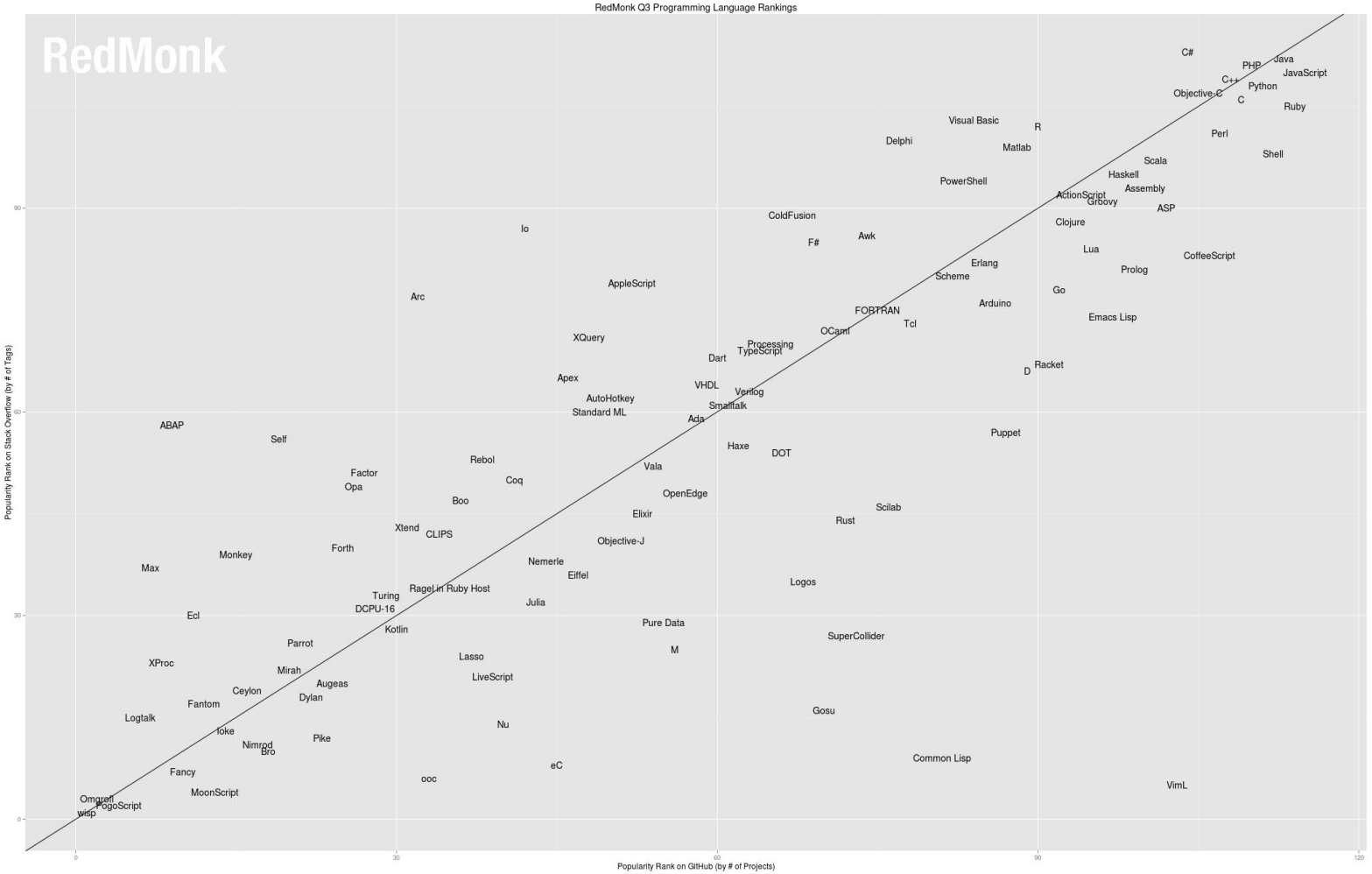
- Most technologies are acquired through experiences, you will be forced to learn them to succeed. This can include things like learning Java to pass ICSI 201 or knowing how to use Windows 10 just by having a Windows PC.
- Some of the time however, you will want to acquire a technology by learning it independently to make yourself a more well-rounded and appealing candidate for a certain area.
- When deciding on a technology to learn, the key is to learn what you will need for a job later on. The more times you will use the technology in the future the more worthwhile it is to learn.

Analyze Trends

When deciding on what technology to learn, you will often find a certain technology is in high demand; the longer you have a technology on your profile, the more likely it is that you will be able to meet the “X years of experience in Y” requirement that so many job listings now contain.

Sometimes these technologies will become oversaturated by people who just want popular technologies on their profile. Keep this in mind, and keep in mind that to succeed in a popular technology, you need all 4 other profile components to back up your skill in the technology.

You know it’s over saturated when: link


RedMonk Q3 Programming Language Rankings
RedMonk
Popularity Rank on Stack Overflow (by # of Tags)
Popularity Rank on GitHub (by # of Projects)
0
30
60
90
120
C#
Java
PHP
JavaScript
C++
Python
Objective-C
C
Ruby
Visual Basic
R
Perl
Delphi
Matlab
Shell
Scala
Haskell
PowerShell
Assembly
ActionScript
Groovy
ASP
ColdFusion
Clojure
Io
F#
Awk
Lua
CoffeeScript
Erlang
Prolog
Scheme
AppleScript
Arc
Go
Arduino
FORTRAN
Emacs Lisp
Tcl
OCaml
XQuery
Processing
TypeScript
Dart
Racket
D
Apex
VHDL
Verilog
AutoHotkey
Smalltalk
Standard ML
Ada
ABAP
Puppet
Self
Haxe
DOT
Rebol
Vala
Factor
Coq
Opa
OpenEdge
Boo
Elixir
Scilab
Rust
Xtend
CLIPS
Objective-J
Forth
Monkey
Nemerle
Max
Eiffel
Logos
Turing
RageLin Ruby Host
DCPU-16
Julia
Ecl
Pure Data
Kotlin
SuperCollider
Parrot
M
XProc
Lasso
Mirah
LiveScript
Augeas
Ceylon
Dylan
Fantom
Gosu
Logtalk
Nu
Ioke
Pike
Nimrod
Bro
Common Lisp
eC
Fancy
ooc
VimL
MoonScript
Omgrel
PogoScript
wisp

Find Niches

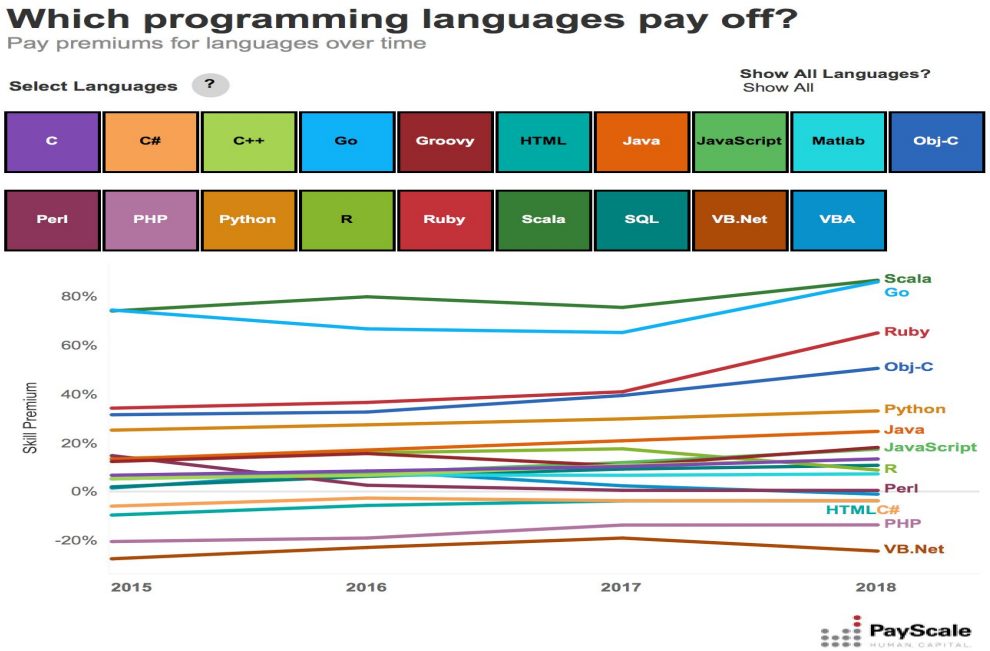
- Working with a novel popular technology that everyone is scrambling to learn due to the high demand is a good short-term strategy, but finding a niche technology and becoming one of the few experts in it can be a good long-term strategy.
- “It’s easier to get a job in the orchestra as a french horn player then as a trumpet player” -Me, 4am
- During the 2020 recession, many state governments found they needed help updating legacy COBOL systems, but no one has used COBOL for 40 years.

NJ Governor Requests Expertise of 6 People Who Still Know COBOL

By Brian Feldman @bafeldman

Niches Pay Off

https://www.payscale.com/data/best-paying-programming-languages



Workshop Activity!!!

- Any questions about Technologies?
- Take a few minutes to write down some technologies that you already know. Break them down into technologies you were forced to learn vs. technologies you have learned in your free time. (You are not forced to share this.)
- You should have learned more in your free time than you have been forced to learn. If this isn’t the case, maybe it’s time to start learning new technologies.
- Make a list of technologies you’ve heard of and want to learn - reach out, ask for resources, we’re here to help you grow.

Projects

What are Projects

- Projects are applications of your technologies towards accomplishing a goal.
- A project can be as simple as a proof of concept, cementing a technology you already know, or an application where you learn new technologies as you go.
- Projects are the #1 way to learn new technologies via hands-on application.
- Projects give you something to show to people - sure you may know a technology like the back of your hand, but how can you prove that?
- Projects don’t have to be solo endeavors - contributing to open source software is also a way to do a project.

How to come up with a Project?

- Many people struggle to come up with an idea for a project, or feel that they don’t have skills to come up with large-scale applications.
- This is the wrong mindset when finding a project. Rather, you should think of something you want, then go all in learning new technologies along the way to reach your goal.
- Believe it or not, you’re not the only one who wants project ideas, people have been in your shoes and come up with some lists to help you out:
- Over 1500 Project Ideas, from beginner to advanced

Where to store projects for maximum impact?

- Projects need to be displayed in the open in order to be effective. Using a repository service like GitHub can help show off your projects but also provide people interested with how often you work on them and what languages you use.
- Other services like youtube are great for cataloging projects, you can make a video showing your project off to a wider audience.
- Learning how and where to store projects are technologies in themselves, which add yet another layer onto how impressive a project is.

Workshop Activity!!!

- Any Questions about Projects?
- Take a moment to list your projects. Write down what technologies you've used for each of them. (Don't feel bad if you don't have any.)
- Create a list of projects you would like to do, think of anything you enjoy and try to brainstorm what technologies you would need to use to get started and make it happen.
- Consider how you're storing your projects - can you adequately show them off? Do you have a platform for them? If not, consider getting one.

Certifications

What are Certifications

- Certifications are proof of your mastery of a technology, offered by either by 3rd party certifying services or companies who develop the technology.
- Certifications are an industry, they consist of a test that costs money as well as test prep and course materials that will be on the certification test.
- Some certifications are marketed to people as a substitute for a college degree to prove ability in a field; these are especially prevalent in IT. This is NOT to say all certifications are useless to people getting degrees. In fact, highly accredited certifications are a great way to stand out in a sea of resumes with degrees.

Research what Certifications you should get!

- Since certifications normally cost money, you want to make sure the certification is actually worth it. Make sure your certification is widely accepted and is more than a degree substitute!
- A good way to gauge how much weight a certification carries is by the name of the company that issued it. Credited big companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft and CISCO should be on your radar as offering highly accredited certifications.

Certifications Pay Off!

Most Valuable IT Certifications, 2020 (Source: Global Knowledge Study, 15 Top-Paying Certifications for 2020)	
Certification	**Annual Salary**
1. Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect	$ 175,761
2. AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Associate	$ 149,446
3. CISM - Certified Information Security Manager	$ 148,622
4. CRISC - Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control	$ 146,480
5. PMI® Project Management Professional	$ 143,493
6. CISSP - Certified Information Systems Security Professional	$ 141,452
7. CISA - Certified Information Systems Auditor	$ 132,278
8. AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner	$ 131,465
9. VCP6-DCV: VMware Certified Professional 6 - Data Center Virtualization	$ 130,226
10. ITIL® Foundation	$ 129,402
11. Microsoft Certified: Azure Fundamentals	$ 126,652
12. Microsoft Certified: Azure Administrator Associate	$ 125,993
13. CCA-N: Citrix Certified Associate – Networking	$ 125,264
14. CCNP Routing and Switching	$ 119,178
15. CCP-V: Citrix Certified Professional – Virtualization	$ 117,069

Workshop Activity!!!

Any questions about certifications?

If you have any certifications, write them down.

Take a few minutes to research certifications within your branch of technology using Google and write a few down. Make sure to look at the following:

- Who’s offering it? Are they a well-regarded certifier?
- How much is the test? The test prep materials?
- Take a look at some of the material on the test, does it look manageable?
- Look at Quora, Reddit, and Blogs to get a feel for how people with the certification are doing. Do they feel it helped them?

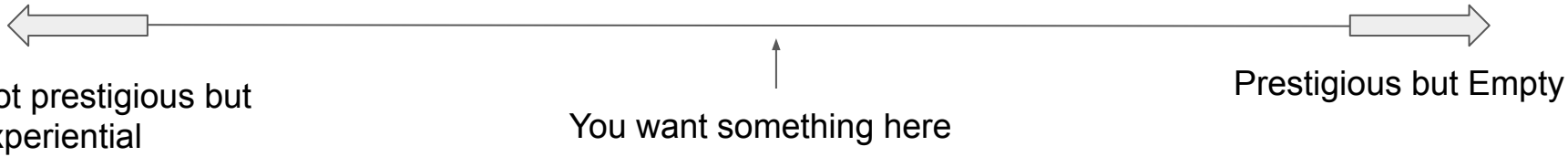
Activities

What are Activities

- Activities are memberships or interactions with organizations and networks with other technology professionals that help you build your experience and expand your knowledge base be it through Workshops, Q&As, talks, or just plain dialogue.
- Activities are a way to show off that you are more invested in technology than someone who is just in it for the money, and that you are someone willing to invest your free time interacting with the tech community to build your skills as a professional.
- Activities become even more meaningful when you go from a learning role to a teaching role. These positions give you leadership and management experience essential for anyone planning a career in tech.

How to pick worthwhile Activities

- When picking activities, you need to find a balance: you want something showy and prestigious, but also something you actually get something out of by participating in.
- On one hand, you have people paying the $400/year IEEE Membership fee and never going to an IEEE event for 10 years. On the other hand, you have people with hundreds of thousands of reputation on stack overflow that they will never be recognized for.



Activities for IEEE members

The IEEE strives to offer what we believe is the ideal activity to participate in as a university student of technology:

- Workshops for hands-on experience and learning
- Prestigious IEEE Name Recognition
- Leadership opportunities
- Project Opportunities

We are not the only tech-related club hosting workshops and providing leadership opportunities. We are proud to have other passionate tech clubs for you to join:

- UAlbany CDO: Cyber Security Club and hacking team

Activities for IEEE members (cont.)

We are both sad and proud to announce ourselves as the ONLY on-campus organization for CEAS Students.

You may have heard of the following clubs:

- Base64 : “The programming club”
- ACM-W : “Women in computing”

Both clubs become defunct last year, cementing the IEEE’s dominance over CEAS.

Other Activities

Engaging in activities by communicating and working with professionals in the field has never been easier. On top of “Club” activities, try out some of these low commitment activities:

- Becoming active on a technology forum or a platform like stack overflow
- Contributing to open-source - with GitHub it’s never been easier.
- Starting a Blog about your experiences with technologies
- Starting a Youtube Channel with tutorials for technologies

Workshop Activity!!!

Any Questions on Activities?

Take a moment to list activities that you participate in right now.

Take a few minutes to think about what activities you might want to participate in, check out some open source projects, take a look at the forums for your favorite technologies. Do they look like anything you would enjoy participating in?

Think about activities involving leadership experience, do you have any? Think about how you can get some.

Experience

What is Experience

Experience is the most important thing in your profile - projects and activities help you gain experience with technologies you want to learn. The experience we're talking about is the experience applying your technologies on projects you're obligated to do - in other words - "work experience."

We include the following activities as meeting our abstract definition of experience, ordered from most important to least important:

- Tech Jobs
- Formal Tech Education
- Internships
- Training

Why Experience is King, and why it’s hardest to get

Experience is the #1 most important thing to have on your profile. You could have 100 technologies on your profile, but a company will prioritize the person with 1 technology and 10 years of work experience.

Much like success breeds success, experience breads experience. The more experience you have, the more likely you’ll be able to get more experience.

Getting your foot in the door with no work experience can be challenging, even when trying to get internships. This is why building up the rest of your profile is so important.

How to get Experience

As previously stated, experience breeds experience; the more experience you have, the easier it is to get more. The best way to start getting your foot in the door is internships and startups.

Internships may also want some experience, but will normally be looking at other profile components since they understand themselves as being experience stepping stones.

High-tier internships may want to interview you or require letters of recommendation. Activities and projects are a good way to prepare for interviews, while having a good relationship with professors is a great way to get letters of recommendation.

And now A Special Message from Robin for International Students:

International Students must have experience

For international students, you have to get CPT to do an internship and OPT to get a job after graduation. For employers, it is a mystery and extra work that they might want to avoid. Because of this unwelcome position, you need to change the employer's mind with outstanding experience. The truth is that school work is not enough.

Experience is especially important for international students since you need to compete with naturalized citizens who have the same qualifications but are less of a hassle. The best way to stand out is with more experience.

Workshop Activity!!!

Any Questions on Experience?

Take a moment to list any experience you have.

Take a few minutes to think about what experience you would like to get. Any internships you're interested in? Look up if they require letters of recommendation or an interview. Write down a few of them and consider applying! Ask other students about their internship experiences, see if the internship they had may be a good fit for you.

Bringing Your Profile Into Reality

How to Bring your Profile into Reality

- Your profile is in the abstract, but you bring it into reality all the time through resumes, CVs, bios, and profile pages.
- Most resumes and profile pages already (consciously or unconsciously) use these five core profile components due to how obvious they seem, but understanding how to balance them and their importance hierarchy is key to effectively marketing yourself.
- Remember to stress experience and tailor the presentation of your profile to suit the desires of an individual employer!

Resumes

- Resumes are a one page list of the biggest achievements on your profile and are normally presented when applying for a job or internship.
- Resumes should be tailored for the position you're applying to, an AI company would rather see a list of your AI projects rather than the games you made.

Do

- Tailor your resume to the position
- Quantify your achievements with results
- Use action verbs to describe experiences
- Keep your bullet points short & simple

Avoid

- Making spelling/grammatical errors
- Using passive verbs
- Under-selling leadership experience

Resumes (Con’t)

Remember, resumes are short and sweet! Try not to go over one page.

Always attach a cover letter specifically written about the position you’re applying for, this shows you’re not just mailing out your resume to 100s of places and you actually care about the place you want to work.

Prioritize showing off relevant experience followed by relevant projects and technologies. if you have extra room or extra strong activities and certifications, throw them on as well.

Activity: Resume Analysis And Creation

First let's check out some resumes and break them down into their five profile components, what are they doing well, what could they be doing better?

Sample Resumes

Use the lists you created in the first part of this workshop to create a quick draft resume or look over a resume if you already have one, is it well balanced? Are you showcasing Experience? Projects? Technologies?

Share it with our helpers! Have them take a look and let you know what they think, or be brave and let me analyze it in front of everyone.

CVs (Curriculum Vitae)

“Unlike the resume, which lists work history and experiences, along with a brief summary of your skills and education, the CV is a far more comprehensive document. It goes above and beyond a mention of education and work experience and often lists—in thoughtful detail—your achievements, awards, honors, and publications, stuff universities care about when they’re hiring teaching staff. Unlike a resume, which is rarely longer than a one-sided single page, the CV can be two, six, or 12 pages—depending on your professional achievements.”

You can thank us later, we’re not going to have you to make a sample CV, however keep in mind profile components if you ever find yourself making one!

Online Profiles

Online profiles are a great way to bring your abstract profile into reality.

Most developers have an online presence with their own profile website, sometimes featuring a blog and a list of projects.

Almost everyone has an online presence on social media platforms or forums. Make sure to take advantage of these online profiles to sell yourself with a line or two about your accomplishments in your bio!

Use platforms meant for professional networking or collaboration to sell your profile even more.

Activity: Online Profile Analysis

Let’s take a look at some online profiles!

IEEE Github: https://github.com/UAlbany-IEEE-Student-Branch

Some Profile Websites:
https://codeburst.io/10-awesome-web-developer-portfolios-d266b32e6154

Take a minute to look over your bios and online profiles, are you selling yourself as well as you could be? Think about other profiles you could create to boost your online presence.

Wrap Up

Any Questions?

Feel free to stick around and ask about your profile, get resume help, or chat with us!

Keep your eyes open for more info on our:
Introduction to Development with Unity
workshop next week, Wednesday at 8pm!

Thanks For Coming!