

The Robo-liner : Building It

While requesting you to excuse my over-dramatic nature, I would like to welcome you all on board.

Robo-liner is a figment of my imagination, a luxury ship, named after the very famous Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft. Robo, which stands for Robotics, more or less describes my interests and dream at the moment, as a sophomore in Electronics and Communication Engineering, ECE, at IIIT Delhi (India).

The motivation for building Robo-liner lies somewhere in the utterly confused state of mind I've been in, during the past two years, over making career choices. In a country where almost every engineering aspirant wants to get a degree in Computer Science, I decided to go with the branch I felt would be right for me. However, upon coming to a college where Computer Science is on the minds of 90% of the students (if not more), I started to feel a little insecure about my decision. Getting insecure is something that comes naturally to me. So, I contacted a few of my seniors and decided to gain a little experience in this field. At that point of time, the applications for Rail Girls Summer of Code, RGSoc'17, were open, so I spent a lot of time looking over the projects and the kind of work and skills that were demanded off an applicant. However, I realised that I wouldn't be able to commit myself to that sort of work because I was genuinely inclined towards a different field. So, I did not apply for it. Instead, I began working with a professor on a research project which involves data collection, data mining, content analysis and a small amount of work with APIs, but vastly focuses on the human perception, the social side of things. This project, which is still underway, got me out of the shell of restricted coursework and the rat race for GPA (something I was never a strong contender for :P) and prodded me to look beyond and explore further. Though a good amount of people questioned me on taking up a project which had a little less of tech related work and very incorrectly termed it as a "Humanities Project", I'm very glad I listened to myself because we never know what one thing might lead to. And knowledge of any sort, never goes waste. One of the few people who repeatedly encouraged me

throughout was a senior at college, who is currently headed to Brigham Young University, USA for his Masters in Electrical and Computers. As a fresher in college, we are allotted an official mentor and having him, the ECE topper of the batch, as my mentor was a great thing to happen. I always talked to him about my interests in the field of robotics and he proved to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration.



Over the past one month, I did some serious thinking to attain clarity regarding my career. I knew I was more interested in the amalgamation of hardware and software, rather than only software. I knew that I don't want a job right after graduation and that I'd rather apply for higher studies. But I also knew that I have a serious confidence issue when it comes to coding and programming, as was evident throughout the two semesters. This lack of confidence pulled me down otherwise as well and I ended up with a GPA of 3.04/4.0 at the end of first year. The one good thing that came out of this was that I convinced myself that this is as bad as it can get. I have nothing to lose at the moment but I have two months of vacations left to start from ground zero and amass whatever knowledge I can, in programming and robotics. A few seniors did tell me that your aim changes by the

time you reach your junior year, but I feel that it's not worth waiting till then, and I'd rather keep myself busy in something that interests me at the current moment. So, robotics it is, till the time my mind gets steered elsewhere. Another annoying problem that I face is that I get burned out easily. And I can safely say that this is one of the major reasons why I so to say spoiled my engineering entrances. However, considering this to be a step of some significance, I decided to add a fun element to it. And thus, The Robo-liner took shape.

The Robo-liner aims to take its passengers along simple yet interesting aspects of programming and at a later stage, robotics, for I believe that a strong hand at programming is essential for any technology related domain. The Robo-liner does not have a defined destination because at no point can one attain the ultimate knowledge in these fields. However, it does have definite halts which signify certain milestones achieved and it will keep you posted on the various learnings which happen while it's sailing.

Once again, welcome on board. Happy sailing!

Until next time.

Signing off,

Sharmistha S. Gupta

Note : This is more of a self-tracking method however, programming and robotics enthusiasts are more than welcome to follow and their comments and suggestions will be deeply appreciated.