

Alexander D Brown

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I am an IEEE published author studying Software Engineering at Masters-level with an enthusiasm for teaching.

In previous workplaces I have often been praised for my enthusiasm and can-do attitude; often demonstrating I was able to work well independently, as well as with a wide range of people; from school children to senior members of management.

Education

Aberystwyth University

Master of Engineering (MEng) Software Engineering

Aberystwyth

2009 - 2014

Awarded the Portaltech Reply Bursary in Computer Science for best performance in the penultimate year of the MEng scheme.

Produced a highly marked (78%) third year project entitled "Kyffin Williams: Digital Analysis of Paintings", which also resulted in a paper for the **8th International Symposium on Image and Signal Process and Analysis (ISPA)** entitled "Can we date an artists work from catalogue photographs?"

This paper was later presented at the conference in Trieste on 3rd September, 2013 and was co-authored with the project supervisor, Hannah Dee; a PhD student at the Aberystwyth School of Art, Gareth Lloyd Roderick; and a Professor of Digital Humanities at the National Library of Wales, Lorna M. Hughes.

This third year project was also presented twice at the British Computer Society (BCs) Show and Tell event twice at Aberystwyth University, gaining good feedback from members of the audience including members of staff in the Computer Science department.

Produced and presented on the topic of industrial years and improving social media presence at a careers weekend run by the department to small groups of second year students intending to take industrial years themselves in November 2013, 2012 and 2011.

Volunteered as part of the Technocamps project at the university, teaching school children aged 11-15 year basic electronics and programming for them to be able to build semi-automated robots.

Have produced a number of programs relating to a range of subjects including: implementing Artificial Intelligence algorithms, developing RESTful services, solving complex problems and mobile development for both websites and native applications

Work Experience

Aberystwyth University

Advisor

Department of Computer Science

September 2013 - Present

Responsible for running a drop-in service to help students with understanding course material or extra-curricular projects. The majority of problems were related to debugging a variety of languages including PHP, C and Java. Other problems included software installation and theoretical understanding of programming paradigms.

Organised and taught half of a two day course to introduce first year students to basic programming

concepts including simple data structures common to most programming languages and flows of control. Responsible for the sign-off of assessed worksheets in the practical sessions for two first year modules. The first of these modules focused on the use of the UNIX command-line environment and the second of these modules taught development of basic Java and Haskell applications.

IBM

CICS Level 3 Service Tooling Engineer

IBM Hursley

June 2012 - July 2013

Responsible for designing and developing useful Java-based tools for the CICS Level 3 Service team, including an eclipse plug-in to print out information required for code reviews and a large system to automate the delivery of fix patches for CICS Eclipse-based products, which hooked into many internal systems.

Helped gather requirements to apply to a system designed to be used by all Level 3 Service teams so that the CICS team would not be disrupted in their work and attended meeting to discuss the development of this system.

Maintained and improved several systems for generating statistics for problem reports and the processes for fixing these problems, including a Java Enterprise server and DB2 database hosted on a CentOS Enterprise Linux server.

Lead a team of three IBM employees to run a Java-master at Swanmore School of Technology, to get school children aged 13-15 years introduced to programming in the Java programming language at a basic level.

Helped teach several Java sessions internally within IBM to help members of the Level 3 CICS Service team and Industrial Trainees gain the skills and knowledge needed to use Java in their jobs. Mentored by an ex-lecturer from the University of Southampton to help decide the content of these sessions and the teaching style involved.

Organised the inductions for the 2012-13 intake of Industrial Trainees for their first two days at IBM, requiring the networking with both managers of each trainee to ensure they had the equipment and logins for their roles, as well as members of upper-management to present introductory talks at each of the three inductions. This was done as part of a team of three, with the help of industrial trainee and graduate managers.

Designed, built and tested a game based on the travelling salesman problem for school children to play on the Blue Fusion event, run over national science week. Worked as part of a team of five using Java with the AWT graphical library.

This game was also used as the event's finale, in which the AI agents the players produced were pitted against one another to determine which team had the best algorithm.

Aberystwyth University

Part Time Teacher/Demonstrator

Department of Computer Science

September 2011 - May 2012

Responsible for the sign-off of assessed worksheets in the practical sessions for two first year modules. The first of these modules focused on the use of the UNIX command-line environment and the second of these modules taught development of Java applications, particularly GUI-based applications using the swing libraries and multi-threaded programming paradigms.

In the December 2011 Staff Student Committee Meeting I was praised as an "excellent" demonstrator. Contributed to the peer observation of teaching for demonstrators, giving feedback on how to improve the teaching methods of demonstrators and to improve the process of the demonstration of practical sessions.

Programming Experience

Examples

Code for the following projects and other, smaller projects, has been made available at:
<https://github.com/SoftlySplinter/> where possible.

Java

Used OSGi to develop a highly-modular Java system which automated the process of releasing fix packs of Eclipse-based tools, integrating several external services and APIs, some of which were known to change their API without warning. The purpose of using OSGi for this task was to allow the whole system to continue functioning if one service changed in a way which broke the code, or was simply unavailable at that time.

Have also developed Eclipse plug-ins, again using the OSGi framework, to improve workflow of the CICS Level 3 Service team.

Developed a simple program to simulate the flocking behaviour of birds and to show this behaviour graphically using the AWT graphical libraries.

Maintained and improved a Java EE application to automate the gathering of statistics running on a IBM Websphere Server and using Java Beans to connect to a IBM DB2 database.

Python

Developed an open source python implementation of the tent protocol using the Flask microframework, with automated testing through Travis. The main focus was on the REST API for the server to meet the specification.

Built a command-line based tool which used OpenCV to perform a number of image processing analysis techniques, including colour-space analysis; texture analysis and histogram comparison, on a set of pictures. This analysis was then fed into a classification algorithm and used to perform validation of how well each analysis technique performed using statistical correlation.

Produced a command-line tool which used a genetic algorithm to solve the travelling salesman problem using a number of different crossover and mutation operators

C

Built an interpreter for an esoteric programming language based on the dwarf fortress game using the standard GCC libraries and including support for UTF8 character encoding. This also included a small suite of tests to ensure the language functioned correctly and uses Travis to automate these tests.

Volunteering

Technocamps

Support Staff

Technocamps Aberystwyth
October 2012 - December 2012

Attended weekly club sessions to supervise activities for school children ages 11 to 19, which involved teaching the Arduino electronics platform, robotics and basic software development.

Battle for Wesnoth

Pixel Artist

February 2009 - July 2010

Worked as part of a team of pixel artists to improve the art for the open source game "Battle for Wesnoth", which involved producing animation frames as well as giving and receiving critique.

Adur Canoe Club

Webmaster

September 2009 - August 2010

Redesigned and maintained the canoe clubs website to improve the user experience. Primarily working with HTML, CSS and JavaScript, but also producing small PHP scripts based on the existing content to improve some of the functionality.

The current version of the website can be found at <http://adurcanoeclub.org.uk/> and although the design has changed slightly since the new webmaster has taken over, it still retains many similar elements. Also served as a committee member during this time, attending regular meetings to organise the running of the club.

Adur Canoe Club

Instructor

September 2009 - August 2010

Server Administration

Debian Server

Debian 6.0.7

<http://alexanderdbrown.com/>

2011 - present

Administered a personal VPS running a variety of services, including Nginx to serving static content as well as PHP using PHP-FPM (FastCGI Process Manager) and a WSGI implementation for testing Flask applications on a real server.

Primarily used for hosting a blog using the Python-based Pelican framework, which I have begun to contribute back to.

CentOS Server

IBM CICS L3 Service Statistics Server

2012 - 2013

Maintained and administered an in-house server which ran a Java EE WebSphere server which managed the automated collection of statistics for the CICS L3 Service management. This server also hosted a DB2 database for persisting this information.

Ubuntu-based Server

IBM CICS L3 Service Sandbox

2013

Set up and maintained a testing server to help determine how the future versions of certain APIs would affect the CICS L3 Service tooling and to be able to react to such changes before the changes were implemented on the in-house servers.

This server was also used to host backup build engines for the in-house servers to allow some redundancy in the system.

The other use of this server was to test out the capabilities of what the system could do and how the work flow of the team could be improved through the use of newer features of this system.

Other Skills

Teaching

Qualified British Canoe Union (BCU) Level 2 Kayaking Instructor. Ran a number of sessions as the duty instructor for Adur Canoe Club, as well as supporting other instructors as part of their duty sessions, involving teaching kayakers of a wide range of ages and skill levels the skills required to improve their paddling.

Communication and Presentation

Attended presentation workshops in the business centre of IBM Hursley to improve presentation skills with the aid of professional presenters.

Presented a range of topics to several audiences including the findings of a paper at a conference, the teaching of computer science and kayaking techniques and the application image processing techniques at the BSc Show and Tell.

Announced and moderated talks at the Free and Open Source Developers Meet (FOSDEM) in Brussels, Belgium in 2011.

Interests and Hobbies

I am an amateur photographer, my work can be found here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/softlysplinter/>.

I am a BCU qualified Level 2 Kayaking Instructor, with an interest in whitewater kayaking.

I play the drums and have achieved Grade 4 musical exam.

I am beginning to learn the Iaido martial art through the Bujin-Ryu school of Iaido and Iaijutsu.