SHOWCASE REPORT
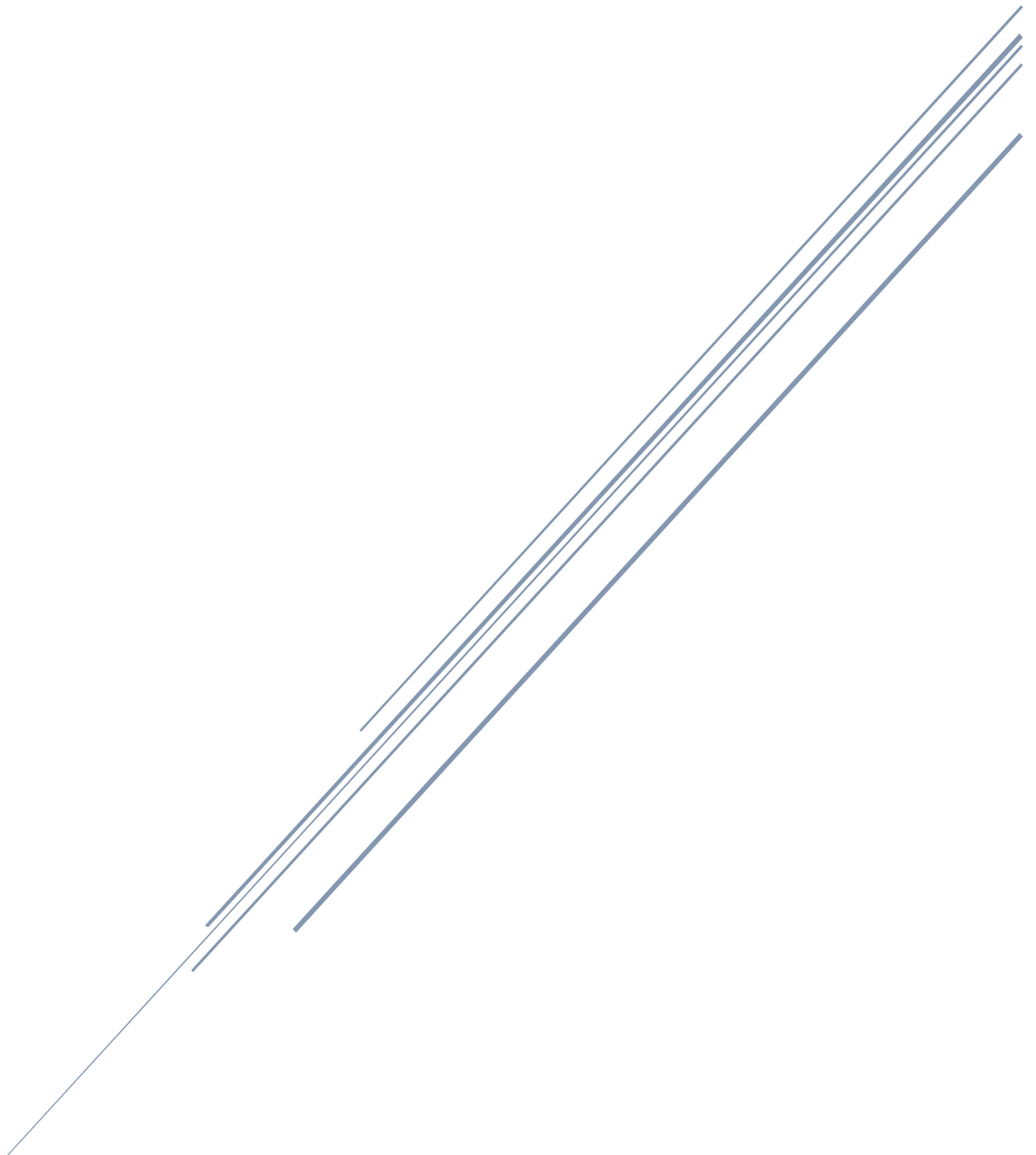
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In this next section I plan to describe and explain all the skills and learning experiences I have gained from my time at university studying computer technologies over the past four years. These include all of the modules I studied throughout the four years, including individual and group assignments I undertook for various modules. I will also discuss my current year progress and discuss my final year project and the various reasons to why I chose this project. Finally I will discuss my current and future employability and discuss the skills and experiences I have learnt from university to help find me a successful employment.

During the past four years this course has massively widen my knowledge of computing technologies. When I first entered university my knowledge of computing was very little, I gained some my knowledge from my ICT A-level, of which I achieved an A. This only taught me very basic website and database design, but mostly I gained my knowledge from my own personal learning, I had set up a few websites for local businesses in my same rural community using Visual Studio. This gave me lots of confidence going into this course as I knew my past knowledge would help me succeed.

 In my first year we undertook various different modules that tested our computing skills. The first module we undertook was the "Visual Programming" this focused on the coding language VB.net which is an object orientated language, this module was used to help create various applications such as a calculator, miles per gallon application and a member registration program. This module helped me gain basic programming knowledge on visual studio. Another module we undertook was "Introduction to Databases" this module involved learning about how a database works and learning the basic functions of a database. This module helped me gain skills in database basic design and structure and how to implement databases to websites. Another module we undertook in first year was "Web Technologies" in this module we learnt how the World Wide Web works and how to develop web pages using HTML and JavaScript. This was my favourite module as I built creative websites before I was at university, but during this module I expanded my knowledge massively. One module called "Academic Skills for computing" was a very different module compared to the others. This module focused on professional and personal development. The module helped me focus on what I needed to do to help make my profile better and how to improve my studies in my various other modules.

Unfortunately in second year I was made to repeat my first year due to the fact that I had not passed all my modules. It was no one's fault but mine as I had taken the completely wrong approach to work during my first year and was very thankful that I got the opportunity to repeat them. I treated my first year as if all work could wait to last minute and would often say "don't need to go to that class, it's not important" how wrong I was. I knew in order to succeed in this year I had to put greater quality into my work and attend every class, with the change of approach my marks soon began to increase and in second year I achieved high 60's on all 3 of my repeated modules but due to the regulations I was capped at 40%. Second year was a major wake up call for me and knew to succeed further in university I had to take my new approach into my next year.

On to my third year at university which was the second year of the course. In this year we expand our knowledge on the coding side by being introduced to ASP.net and HTML5 from "Visual Web Development" and "Dynamic Web Authoring". These were massive advancements from the languages used in first year, but the content I learned in first year helped me have a better understanding of the programming languages. The main module in second year was the "Group Project" this involved three of my classmates and myself completing a project using ASP.net. I took control and set myself as Project manager as I was determined to get a high grade in the module. The four us met up and planned what each of us were going to complete in the project. This was all well and true until one of the group members dropped out of the course, leaving us with only three members. So again we met and discussed fairly what we were going to do each. As the deadline was drawing closer I soon realised that one of the group members was rarely in class and had no ambition to do his part of the project, so I had to finish his part as well in order for us to

achieve a decent grade. I worked hard on this project on my own as I wanted to do well and ended up passing the module well. I learnt various skills from the group project that I feel will be relevant in later years as well. I learnt that I was able to quickly act to ensure that all areas of the project were covered by spending more hours and working efficiently on the project and not falling behind in others, even though we had less members than most groups. The project as a group would not be my cup of tea, I would rather work on my own and ensure the work is completed to a high standard, but this module helped me understand that when working in groups something's are out of your control such as people dropping out or not submitting work and it is how you react to this things that help you learn, of which I think I did well. This module especially helped to show me that I was ready was looking forward to beginning my placement year and my final year. One of my favourite modules from second year was "e-business" this gave us a complete different approach to computing compared to the other courses. In this modules we focused on how computing can improves businesses. I found this module very beneficial as I plan to run a business later in my career and some aspects we covered in this module will majorly help me achieve that aim.

My next year was my placement year, my placement began in a small computer repair shop in Coleraine called 'Tech-Medics'. During my time there my role as a software developer to use java / SQL and WAMP/XAMP to create an Android App which interacts with a server side database. Other duties include interfacing with customers, diagnosing & repairing laptops/computers/phones/consoles, web design, e-commerce and general shop management. The interview was a one on one interview where the owner would ask me about various situations on how I could solve problems with software or hardware quickly and easily, lucky for me I had always enjoyed on figuring out how things work and stripping them apart, so the interviewer was very happy with my quick responses. University also had a helping hand in this as with the majority of the coursework very little help was given and that taught me use my initiative and helped me prepare well for my interview. I found the job enjoyable but not very challenging. After 3 months I was offered a new placement, one in my local repair shop called 'i-Broke'. The role was almost the same but the owner promised me a more challenging and more control role. So I decided to take the new placement and it turned out to be a very good decision for myself. At my new placement I ran the repair shop, every fault was repaired by me or checked by me, I set up a stock alert system to ensure we never ran out of stock and dealt with majority of customers. The new role had helped me a lot as it increased my confidence and helped me majority improve my software and hardware repair skills. The placement benefited me as it help me experience how a business is run and how to run it successfully and this will benefit me later in life. One major benefit from my placement was that I was offered a job once I finish university.

After a full years placement I finally returned to university for my final year, I knew that final year would be intense and would need major work in order to succeed. I knew that in final year a project had to be made and had already made plans with my placements owner about constructing a site for his business, he aggraded that if I can meet his requirements he would purchase this of me after the year had finished. Going into final year I had a completely different approach than any other year and I had planned to get my head down, work hard and aim for a 2:1 overall. So far after my first semester I am averaging a 1st in all my modules and plan to maintain that threw the year.

The main aspect of final year was the project which was based on my placement 'i-Broke'. The aim of the project was to create a fully functional website for i-Broke to help eliminate several problems identified by me from my time within the business, to allow users to purchase products from the store and book/check the status of their repair. Also to allow the manager to manage the status of the repairs and to potential update the website to allow the business to become a phone parts supplier based in Northern Ireland. The project was to be made by myself along with the help of my mentor. My mentor would help advise me in any areas that I got stuck and would set me deadlines to ensure that I was keeping up with my work.

One of the most beneficial modules in final year was "Project Management". This module helped me realised that time management of the project is the key for success. Any wrong estimations could have a major effect on the other modules. This module helped me prioritise my requirements and tasks and correctly choose my software development methodology that would help me in the progress of my final year project. This module helped me correctly draw a Gantt chart that helped me prioritise tasks and how to efficiently use my time. It also allowed me identify my progress throughout the year and makes any necessary changes throughout.

In the future looking to expand my knowledge of the ICT sector within the current economy. I have skills and knowledge in gained my various years at university and placement that I hope to carry forward into the next job I get.

In conclusion, after writing this report it has helped me understand that you learn a lot more skills at university than you ordinary think. You don't just learn what the lectures teach you but you learn how to manage your time, work in groups, stay on top of your etc along with all the content you have learnt from each module. Looking forward I know I will be very thankful for the university and all the skills that it has taught me and will help me majority in the IT industry. After writing this report I feel very confident in completing my final year project to a high standard.