

CPD Report

COMP330 - CPD Report

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January 6, 2019

Introduction

Following on from my most recent CPD report, my focus is drawn ever more towards planning for the now quickly approaching end of the degree. What comes next? It is equally thrilling and daunting for this chapter to almost be over, and the choice between whether to continue my studies or begin my career is not straightforward. Despite this, I cannot lose focus in this final term. The opportunities available cannot be missed, and after working so hard over the period of this course, I owe it to myself to complete this course to the best of my ability.

Masters

While completing a masters may not be essential for the majority of computing jobs, it is a desirable qualification which I desire. Ignoring for the moment any benefit completing a masters affords me, I consider the changes I had to personally endure to return to education as a mature student. Where some have advised me to take a year out to earn some money and relax before making a decision, I argue that again changing the pace of my life is a considerable factor. I may be unwilling to disrupt my life in this way

again with the responsibilities of life, love, and mortgage. I feel pressured to decide now whether to continue and to what extent.

Until recently the most viable option was the *Launchpad* MA entrepreneurship course. However, recently an MSc in Artificial Intelligence option has become available. Reflecting on this BSc course, I found the business aspects that best represent an entrepreneur masters course's contents were the least enjoyable due to an absolute lack of writing any code. However, Launchpad does offer a sizeable stipend as payment which shamefully offsets this. Meanwhile, The MSc option incurs a reduced loan option therefore more part time evening work, greater debt, and potentially no real advantage to employment. It would result in the lofty title of *Master of AI* though, and I would quite like that.

Either way I must decide soon. I give myself one month to research further, decide, and complete the application process, before the work in this final term begins to mount up.

Employment

Alongside the option to return for a masters qualification is the option to leave education and begin work. Recently I have been offered a graduate position in a software development company in Penzance working on interesting projects with likeable people. As employment is the ultimate goal of this retraining period of my life, it is immensely reassuring that I can now be considered employable. Penzance is on the border of what I would consider an acceptable commute from home, so armed with this new confidence, I plan to explore more nearby job opportunities. I accept that as an offer, Penzance exceeds my expectations and is likely the best choice. But without exploring any other options I cannot know for certain. As a target, I would like three employment offers to choose between by the end of term when I finally have my working week free from course work.

Considering attending a masters course, this job may be only for the summer months before University commitments begin again. Although any option to work around these

commitments either remotely or at evenings or weekends would be a huge boon to managing my time whilst studying, avoiding the minimum wage and late nights of hospitality work - my current predicament.

Separate hobby projects

I like computing. I like writing code, and I like the process of creating entertaining or useful *things*. As I face doing this for employment, I feel personally responsible for maintaining this passion despite negative connotations associated with a job, in the same way that a favourite song may be ruined if repeatedly heard at work. I feel compelled to identify what I find enjoyable in computing and pursue these areas as hobbies and passion projects outside of potentially stressful work activities. An example of this is the 6502 *NES* programming module. Be it due to nostalgia or the challenge, I immensely enjoyed this project and have since taken to relevant online forums to continue this as a hobby. I must take stock of what I have enjoyed during this degree before it finishes and for what reasons. Currently I flit between personal projects without direction or conviction so I must take care to identify and separate what I enjoy and what I may be best employable at, and separate the computing hobbyist from the computing professional.

Guest lectures

Reflecting back upon previous cpd reports, I once took great pride in not only attending every guest lecture, but using the opportunity to reach out to these industry professionals afterwards. Regretfully, this has fallen by the wayside recently due to deadline pressures and work commitments which is unacceptable. I fondly remember taking something away from every guest lecture I have attended, be it programming related or not. After missing the *Monument Valley* developer talk recently I felt a great opportunity had been missed. Opportunities that are only available for one more term. I don't want to regret

anything about my time at Falmouth, especially if due to being disorganised or my own laziness. Unless impossible, I will attend every guest lecture remaining in this term.

Dissertation

As the pinnacle of a BSc course, the dissertation encourages the greatest workload and stress of the course thus far. Approaching this entire course with the aim of doing as well as I can has been recently overshadowed by the publication of another student's dissertation in a scientific journal. The bar has been raised, and now I want that too. Yes, this is a stretch goal, and yes, this is statistically improbable given the quality of students that have previously gone unpublished. Avoiding motivational platitudes, this is a purely selfish endeavour. I want to be the best, it has been done before, so I want it too. Realistically, this may not be achievable. The quality of my research may discount any amount of work given. My hypotheses may simply be wrong. We will find out soon! Despite best intentions, I must continue to work methodically through the research and experiment process. A good rapport with my lecturers is invaluable for continued advice and course correction when I get side tracked. By continuing to discuss ideas with whoever will listen to me, working hard and not falling behind, I may be able to produce some research worthy of printing.

Conclusion

I seem to want a good job, a good masters qualification, a published dissertation, a new set of hobbies, and friends in high places due to attending every guest lecture. Absurdly, this all feels possible despite the short amount of time remaining.