

Describe your most meaningful experience(s) and why they matter to you.

While eating at different restaurants, I've consistently observed the incredible hard work and sincerity of locally-owned restaurant owners. It struck a sad chord in my heart to see many of them shutting down due to the pandemic. One day, I was discussing with two friends how locally-owned restaurants were in real danger and now is the time to give back for all of the delicious and heartfelt meals they've prepared for us. After already having built a restaurant discovery website (craverightnow.com), I was confident I could apply my skills to build a locally-owned restaurant discovery website.

We started our journey with the task to classify and organize locally-owned restaurants. We quickly realized that even Google and Yelp have been unsuccessful in this task, as "locally-owned" is quite ambiguous. Instead, we made a clear definition of "locally-owned" and scraped the web to create a list of chains that we can blacklist from our results. From there, we went on a development spree and after a month, we started reaching out to our friends to beta test our website. We realized our database still wasn't 100% accurate, so we released a crowdsourcing feature allowing users to flag inaccurate results. After reaching out to food bloggers, influencers, and our friends, we launched locoeats.org and have had over 3,200 users.

I realized that the components of developing Locoeats.org were the same components I want in my career. I want to be developing software to solve challenging problems I'm passionate about.