

Home Page

Preamble: I know what you're thinking, a whole website devoted to one person that isn't even famous? Well.. It's more than that. This website is an expression of me, my skills in and knowledge of IT. Have a browse, get to know me and feel free to get in contact if you want to chat all things IT or about my IT Project "Stock-Take-IT".

Me and IT

Hello world, My name is Tim Prast. I am 30 years old and was born and raised in Perth, Western Australia. In this website I am going to give you, the reader, a bit of background about myself and then we are going to explore my interest in IT, when and how it began, why it hasn't seemed to go away and what makes me Tick.

Some might call Perth the most isolated capital city in the world, and while in a sense I'd have to agree based on its geographical nature, But the growth of the Internet and Technology has meant it doesn't have to feel that way. Growing up in Perth pre the true implementation of the internet afforded me a relatively sheltered upbringing. My brother and I would run around in the gardens, roam the streets or kick the football at the park and so long as we returned before it was dark all was well. I wasn't exposed to the things kids are these days with the easy access to the Internet (targeted ads, Screen parenting, social media). I'd call my friends on the landline or ride my bike to their house if I wanted to see them, times seemed simpler and the world seemed smaller, but nostalgia has that effect.

I don't remember the exact day itself, but I have very vivid memories of my Uncle bringing over an IBM desktop computer that ran on a MS-DOS operating system. I was too young to really use the system by myself at the time, but I would spend hours watching my Brother play games like Commander Keen and playing with the floppy discs themselves. Eventually the DOS system was replaced by a windows desktop and the use of computers became more commonplace in school. As I went through my schooling, more and more homework was done on the home computer. We went from handwriting essays and reports to typing them out on Word or running a presentation on PowerPoint and digitally submitting them. I often feel like I grew up alongside computers, each year new software or hardware came out and it felt like technology was growing and advancing to suit my needs. Gone was having to go to the library to find Encyclopedias because there was this new thing called Google that can give you all the information in the world simply by typing in a search query.

Mobile phones, Social Media and YouTube crashed into me like a wave. All of a sudden, I could be in instant contact with all of my friends. Mobile Phones couldn't run as many apps as they can nowadays nor were they so dominated with the social media apps of today, we had to rely on the good old Text Message. Myspace was dominating the market and online chat programs were the thing to use on Desktop. I still remember sitting in an Audio/Visual Media class one day and some friends showing me a website called YouTube, here was this platform where I could watch videos on just about anything, all online and all for free.

Gaming has also been a large part of my life. Whether it be the first Nintendo 64 my family had or the multiple gaming PC's I've built over the years. I have very vivid memories of using the dial-up connection to look up gaming guides for Ocarina of Time, even nowadays I still use the same

websites when I get stuck in a section of a game. Building my very first gaming PC was a big step for me, I spent hours researching components and making sure everything would work and fit together, researching what components did and how they worked, what was required for it to run and turn on, how to plug everything in and connect it all up. The first time I powered the PC up and everything ran smoothly was both a huge relief and a feeling I still hold dear to this day. Gaming continues to play a role in my life by connecting me with distant friends and a source of much needed stress relief in the busy adult world.

Nostalgia aside, I've spent the last 12 years, after graduating Highschool, creating a career within the hospitality industry. I have owned and operated my own Small bar in Subiaco for the last 5 years and I couldn't do anywhere near as many of the things I can that help me run that business without technology. I've seen things go from Point of Sale (PoS) systems with a Clunky user Interface to the smooth heavily stylised things they are now. Our PoS is entirely cloud based and runs from a web browser on small mini pc's using touchscreen monitors to interface with the user. Menus are available on the website (which I built using Squarespace and did all the Domain registering and connecting myself) and customers can follow us on social media to see pictures of food items, daily specials, upcoming events or even just connect with us before deciding to visit the venue itself. On back-end side of things, our payroll, rostering, stock ordering and accounting is all done with the use of technology. From cloud based accounting software to share-able Google Sheets and even apps that staff can use to track their hours. Nothing in the modern business world is untouched or unchanged by technology.

I chose to go to RMIT because it has a great reputation, and its campus location fits nicely with my future plans to relocate to Melbourne early in 2022. I've been looking at making a career change for the last few years as after 12 years working in Hospitality the hours are beginning to become too much. My interest in IT meant that a degree in IT, with a hopefully transfer to Computer Science once I arrive in Melbourne, was a natural fit for me. I get to learn more about IT and Technology and then develop my skills enough to pursue a career in it.

For me, Technology has always been there. Always advancing, always changing but always there. I feel like I've grown up with it. The phone in my pocket has at least a thousand times the operating power of that first IBM Desktop and links seamlessly with my life. It's no longer a cumbersome box that sits on a desk draped in cables and wires, it fits in my palm and connects me to the larger world. This, for me, is Information Technology. It is the way technology can help us to integrate with, connect to and interact with the larger (and sometimes smaller) world around us.



This is me, taken outside work one warm summer evening.

Ideal Job

My Future Career and Plans

Something you may have guessed from my home page is that I have a passion for the way IT can integrate into a Business and deliver tangible results. I am constantly looking for ways to improve My business's workflow, streamline processes, increase efficiency and reduce back-end work hours. This is all very achievable when you can apply the right technology to the right task or process, as such, my ideal career in IT would be to work as a Business Analyst.

A Business Analyst helps a more traditional business bridge the gap and find a more modern IT focused solution to suit their needs. A Business Analyst's key role is to meet with a Business or End Product User and understand what a system does, how it does it and who it does it for. That information is then used to establish a set of requirements that need to be met, facilitate those requirements being met (pricing, validating, compromising) and use technology and hard data to do so. The role requires a person be able to problem solve and communicate effectively but also think analytically and critically. More technical skills are required when creating solutions and thinking critically and analytically about a problem. With a strong knowledge of the technical aspect of both the problem and the solution, a Business Analyst is able to communicate effectively with the client about their needs and provide the needed support and recommendations when it comes to providing a solution.

The Role

Business analyst for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

I have included a screen shot of what I believe to be my ideal job. The job itself is with the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The DELWP is a department that melds with and facilitates conversations between (and about) the Environment, the Community, Industry and the Economy. The DELWP aligns strongly with my personal opinions on the Environment and Climate Change and providing for a robust and biodiverse world for us to live in while encouraging a team based and inclusive work environment.

The role is within a smaller branch of the DELWP, the Forest, Fire and Regions (FFR) team, and "Supports the design, development, documentation and implementation of data collection, integration, business intelligence and data analytics solutions and technologies" [1,1]. The advertisement lists the essential requirements as:

1. Demonstrated business analysis experience, with knowledge and experience of data modelling and data management systems implementation. [5,1]
2. A thorough understanding of the principles of information technology including SQL Databases, Software Development Life Cycle, Agile processes, Web applications and web services. [5,1]


3. Outstanding verbal and written communications skills. [5,1]
4. Demonstrated high level stakeholder management skills. [5,1]

Knowledge and understanding of the below are key requirements for the role.

- Data Modelling
- Data management systems and their implementation
- SQL Databases
- Software development life cycle
- Agile Processes
- Web Applications and Web Services
- Written Communication skills

These are all part of my Degree in IT, if not, Supplementary courses can be taken (Both online and through specialty schools) to further my knowledge in specific areas such as SQL Databases. I aim to gain an overarching understanding of IT as a whole during my time at university which will place me in a good position to develop on the job specific software or hardware skills as I go through-out my career in IT. Experience in IT unfortunately only comes in time, so while this may be my ideal job, it is nothing something attainable straight out of university, this however gives me a long term goal to work towards. I believe I already have strong interpersonal skills, written and verbal communication skills, practical business acumen (implementing IT focussed solutions to business problems) and an understanding of good business practice so these will put me in a good position when future (but more junior) roles require business experience and strong communication skills.

Image and website reference;



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

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Business Analyst

Department of Environment, Land, Water And Planning ★ 3.4 • 31 reviews

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The **Business Analyst** is a member of the Data Insights team in DELWP's Forest, Fire and Regions (FFR) Group. This role supports the design, development, documentation and implementation of data collection, integration, business intelligence and data analytics solutions and technologies. Working with stakeholders across DELWP and its public land and emergency management partner agencies, the Business Analyst identifies and documents data management, reporting and functional requirements, across a range of themes, including bushfire response and recovery, emergency management personnel, aerial firefighting, planning, and public land infrastructure.

The Opportunity

- Work in a highly supportive team environment, with a culture which values connection, collaboration, curiosity, and authenticity.
- Make a difference in Victoria's bushfire, emergency, and land management sector.

About you

You are passionate about data and are someone who can see the big picture, while having mastery of the details. You are a self-starter and an excellent communicator, and you love taking initiative and pioneering new and creative ideas. You are confident and comfortable working with ambiguity and uncertainty.

Your application should include:

1. An up-to-date resume [maximum three pages] which clearly details your skills and experience as relevant to this role.

Specialist/Technical Expertise/Qualifications

Essential

- Demonstrated business analysis experience, with knowledge and experience of data modelling and data management systems implementation.
- A thorough understanding of the principles of information technology including SQL Databases, Software Development Life Cycle, Agile processes, Web applications and web services.
- Outstanding verbal and written communications skills.
- Demonstrated high level stakeholder management skills.

Desirable

- A strong understanding of best practice design and definition of data integration processes including API design.
- The ability to translate data requirements into SQL, Stored Procedures, SSIS packages.
- Demonstrated experience working in an agile environment (SCRUM) including the creation of user stories, prototypes / wireframes.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. “Business Analyst” search. Seek.
<https://www.seek.com.au/job/53949800?type=standout#searchRequestToken=afa93b2d-438f-43d1-85d0-fc680f7bebb6>. September 16, 2021.

Personality Profiles

My Thoughts

When I approach a problem I like to think about all the variables, the possible solutions and the possible repercussions or results of implementing those solutions. I’ve taken personality tests before at different points in my life, with some being more honest with myself than others and some giving more favorable (or what I saw as favorable) results. I don’t believe a persons Personality is entirely set in stone. I think it can change through-out a persons life and for a variety of reasons; A change in circumstances, new friends or partner, a new job or a sudden loss can all have an affect. For me, personalities are an entirely fluid thing but yet some aspects cannot be entirely altered.

The Meyers-Briggs test

At this point in my life, I feel that a result of “Advocate” is perhaps the closest I have seen to align with both how I see myself and how the world potentially sees me. Meyers-Briggs defines an Advocate as “someone with the Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Judging personality traits. They tend to approach life with deep thoughtfulness and imagination. Their inner vision, personal values, and a quiet, principled version of humanism guide them in all things.”[1,1].

On first read I picked out “Judging” as a negative trait due to its connotations, but on further reading I realised that it is who I am and how I tend to operate. Often times I have redundancies in mind, plans upon plans and that I do prefer to think ahead to reach a solution. I can be creative with these solutions and often prefer to think outside the box for a less orthodox approach to a solution than others might. I care deeply for those I work with and for and place their wellbeing above my own, I try to create a positive work environment in those around me and encourage others to be their best selves. I often find myself thinking of others first when approaching a problem or reflect greatly on how a solution may impact others rather than myself.

I believe my ideal job fits this personality test result perfectly. An Advocate often see’s their purpose in life to help those around them, more altruistic, more focused on fixing the deeper underlying issues to help others and the world around them. As such, a role withing DWELP would mean that I can help the environment, those that live within it and come up with both practical and creative solutions to do so. Liaising with the various leaders in Industry and the community would allow me to take a front seat in approaching issues than run much deeper in our society than how a company can maximise profit. Finding a sense of purpose in my work is something I constantly strive and look for, something which is lacking in my current career, something which a career as a Business Analyst could help solve.

However, there are drawbacks. I can tend to get stuck in my ways when it comes to a plan. All the redundancies in the world don’t allow for the chaos factor and I can struggle to adjust when things do not go to plan. My intuitive personality type means that I can get lost in looking to far forwards and looking too deeply into something. I may spend too long looking into a problem, diving in too deep too quickly before realising there is a simpler solution. The “Feeling” trait lends itself towards being a concerned and constructive team member but also means I can become too highly invested in an individual’s well-being, avoiding solutions that may negatively impact them or a greater concern.

Finally, “Introverted” is not something I see either one way or the other. It is the one constant in most personality tests I have taken. I think it does conflict at times with my desire to lead, but it also allows me time for introspection and to look at problems more deeply or differently than others.

Click below to see the results of Meyers-Briggs Personality test

<https://www.16personalities.com/profiles/04c4d5fd1709d>

RMIT Personal Learning Profile

I took the RMIT Personal Learning Profile (PLP) as part of my RMIT orientation and onboarding. The results surprise me when I look back at them now as the test lists “Using Technology” as a focus area. While technology plays an important role in my life on a daily basis, when doing the test, I was concerned about my ability to use a solely online platform for Education. Over the last few weeks, I

have become more and more familiar with using Canvas as an educational tool and now feel more comfortable using it to its fullest extent.

Another focus area the test highlighted was Personal Value. In the past I have struggled with university, picking the wrong degree or feeling forced to choose a career so early in life. As such, I struggle to feel like I can achieve academically at a university level. It is not because I do not see the actual value in what I may study, it is because I have found that in the past I have not really planned where I see the degree taking me to.

Two Strengths listed in the results are Persistence and Accessing Support. I've learnt over my life that it is important to ask for help when you need it, there is always somebody that knows more than you and I see it as a great strength of character to be able to seek advice or help when you need it. Persistence is something I also learnt from an early age. While I may have faltered in my previous attempt at tertiary study, I always felt it was because work life got in the way, or I stopped enjoying my course. I persisted in my career and came to own my own business which has now put me in a position to be able to further my studies. I now have the motivation and drive to continue along this path.

[Results available in PDF inserted into website and GitHub upload]

The Situational Judgement Test

The Situational Judgement test is one that some potential workplaces may require I take, whether it be formally or informally by way of specially worded interview questions. The test is designed to assess a person's ability to choose the most appropriate course of action in a given workplace situation, mainly aimed at handling behavioral or team orientated situations.

In my test I answered 11 out of 16 questions correctly. I found that my incorrect answers were often based around what the test termed "Least Effective responses", while in all but two answers I selected the "Most Effective" reaction. To me, this indicates that I can implement the most effective response and solution to a given situation in all but a few situations.

The two incorrect answers to "Most Effective" reaction were in response to situations that I felt would have made team members feel uncomfortable or would have only been paying lip service to an issue. In one of these instances, I elected to meet with the team members in an informal chat setting to discuss the issues rather than meet with team leaders individually to hear their concerns. For me, a team-based discussion allows for better collaboration and a more refined team plan. However, I do see the benefits of a formal 1-on-1 meeting with team leaders to discuss their issues. After which I would meet with all team leaders together to discuss how we can best implement their ideas to create a better team environment and move forward.

[Results available in PDF inserted into website and GitHub upload]

IT Project

IT Project & Stock-Take-IT

One problem I constantly run into in my business is accurately and efficiently doing a stock-take. The venue, albeit small, has plenty of storage areas for inventory which are not confined to one area and relies on either staff or myself to be able to efficiently and accurately count inventory. I have used apps and software in the past to help speed up this process but often find they are not intuitive enough, require too much set-up time or do not play nicely with our current PoS and back of house systems. For this project, I have decided to investigate the issue and come up with a proposed solution that could (if practical to create) be implemented in the business and have a real and tangible result on workflow, efficiency and inventory management. This project and its investigation also allows me to develop my skills in IT and work towards a future career as a Business Analyst, By looking at a problem in my own business and then working towards and planning out a solution.

The result of this thought process is “Stock-Take-IT”.

Stock-Take-IT will be a one stop shop for stock taking and inventory management with a strong focus on and high marketability towards the hospitality sector.

Stock-Take-IT

The focus of Stock-Take-IT will be on delivering a high quality mobile App for both iOS and Android systems with back end functionality for a range of cloud based PoS systems and inventory management suites. A key part of Stock-Take-IT is on the user experience, with a simple and easy to use UI. The App will allow the user to download the App to their phone or tablet and;

- Assign storage locations (zones) within the venue
- Unit Profiles
 - Pictures of Units for counting
 - Detailed names
 - Unit name may be different to PoS name so both must be searchable and retrievable within the App
- Allocate certain products to certain locations (zones)
- Search a full list of Inventory within the Venue and Zones
- Allocate Zone maximum capacity amounts
 - Eg; When this fridge shelf is full it holds X amount of Y Product
 - This eliminates time spent counting individual units when fridges are fully stocked.
- Notate when a product in the list is no longer sold, discontinued or not stocked.
 - Useful for when a product needs to be removed from the broader inventory list
 - Useful for a venue or business that rotates through a large amount of “One Off” products.
- Allow the user to count ‘Less than Whole’ units
 - Used where “X” amount of bottle/Keg have been used
- Allow multiple different users to contribute to the same stock-take at the same time
- Establish Par Levels
 - The App will allow the admin user to set a “par” level for each item in the inventory
- Alert users to a “Live” difference when the stock take is “Pushed” to the backend
- Allow the user to Stock take in the way they find quickest.
 - Alphabetically
 - By location (Zone)

- By stock type
- Save data locally or sync to push data
- Once a stock take is pushed the data can be exported to a CSV file or feed directly to a PoS inventory system.
 - The Data is then compared to the current “Live” value
 - Any discrepancies are then “Pushed” back to the App user to indicate any discrepancies, further counting required etc.

Stock-Take-IT isn't revolutionary by nature and while there are a number of different Stocktaking Apps and Software packages out on the market, it's simplistic functionality and design are sure to be a winner. By not bloating the App with the QR, Bluetooth or barcode scanning technology aimed at larger warehouse facilities we avoid the larger competition space. This allows us to focus marketing on the key demographic, Hospitality Venues, and tailor the App to suit the key issues and problems facing the industry. A large percentage of Hospitality staff are Young, Casual or Part-time and low-skilled. By making the App as simple to use as possible, giving the user the power to simply input a product name or location and see the units required for counting we can cut down on the searching and manual input nature of Stock Taking and mitigate the risk of error.

Execution

In order to execute “Stock-Take-IT”, I will have to develop a large number of skills, knowledge and experience with including (but not limited to);

- Fluency and expertise in either Kotlin or Java programming languages
 - Both would be ideal
- Using the Android Software Development Kit (Android SDK)
- Experience and knowledge working with SQL
 - The App will require data storage and databases
- Using Git
- Extensible Markup Language (XML)
- Material Design Language Guidelines
- Android Studio or an Integrated Development Environment
- Backend programming language such as Python
- Swift Programming language
- Apple Human Interface guidelines
- JavaScript Object Notation
- Grand Central Dispatch
- Cloud based networking
- Exporting data to CSV and associated databasing
- Back-end PoS design, architecture and data storage
 - This will likely be associated with the above skills as most PoS for hospitality are now cloud based and run through browsers or Apps.
- Project management

Initially, I would plan to develop the App for Android systems. Fine-tuning the design, architecture and execution as I go along. A first plan phase would be required to map out the functionality key

points and how to achieve them in real programming terms with the associated key skills required. Once a First plan phase is established, I can work towards a roll-out map for the App, which functionalities to focus on for initial testing, which aspects are key to the underlying use of the App. The First plan Phase and roll-out map are what I would pursue into Assignment 3 whilst attempting to build out an architecture plan – Which technologies and skills are required to make each specific functionality achieve the desired result and then built a mock-up of the App using the MIT app inventor tools.

For me, this project aligns incredibly well with where I'd like my career to go. It fits with my current career and experience, it highlights what I see as a problem within my own business, and then allows me to flex my Business Analyst muscle and try and find a solution to said problem. It allows me to grow and develop my IT skills in a more practical way that will fit with my planned career progression by starting at the base level of designing and creating an IT focused solution to a problem and then by implementing the solution in a real and tangible way. As I've mentioned previously, while there are already Apps and Software packages in place that attempt to solve this problem, I believe none really target the Hospitality sector itself. This project is about combining my current career and my planned future career and being able to meld the two into one.

Contact & References

Contact Email

If you feel like reaching out and getting in contact, my email is below:

S3921214@student.rmit.edu.au

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September 16, 2021.

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[List of embedded materials available on website and in GitHub]