

Internship Application Essays

Something You've Worked On

Please answer the following question in no more than 250 words: "What is something you've worked on or built (related to your technical interests and software) that you're proud of? How did you build it? What did you learn? Use specific details, anecdotes, or concrete programming languages and experiences to answer."

When I first arrived in America two years ago, my limited English proficiency caused deep depression. After months of downheartedness, I determined to overcome this, and I developed the Supervisor app—a web-based tool enabling users to organize subjects, categories, and tasks. It offers features like progress tracking with start, pause, resume, and end options and insightful charts for productivity analysis. I take pride in this creation, not only because it is highly functional but also because it played a pivotal role in my life, providing the motivation to adapt and learn in a new country. I built the Supervisor frontend using React, Redux, and various widely-used npm packages. The backend was developed using SpringBoot. Over time, I have continued to update and refine the application, documenting these changes in a comprehensive changelog available on my website (<https://www.jameschan.us/supervisor/about>).

This project has been an invaluable learning experience. One of the most significant lessons I've gleaned is the importance of ongoing updates to enhance an application's performance and usability. Through multiple refactoring efforts, I addressed issues, incorporated new features, and embraced the latest frameworks and techniques. Each iteration revealed areas for improvement such as bloated code, disorganized structures, and security vulnerabilities. By diligently refactoring, I honed my programming skills and solidified my knowledge base.

What Motivates You the Most?

Please answer the following question in no more than 250 words: "As you think about your future career, what motivates you the most?"

My journey into the world of programming began at the age of 14 during my time in middle school. Back then, my dream was to excel as a game developer, envisioning myself working with renowned companies like Nintendo. During my studies at Jinan University, I delved into backend development by joining various app development teams and accumulating valuable experience. Upon moving to the United States, I taught myself in frontend development, broadening my tech stack. Currently, my aspiration is to become an exceptional full-stack developer, integrating both frontend and backend expertise seamlessly.

Regarding my future career aspirations, my greatest motivator is the prospect of learning cutting-edge techniques and sharing them with aspiring developers. I envision a future where I can contribute to simplifying the development process, enhancing data interoperability, and lowering barriers to entry into the realm of IT technologies.

One of my biggest dreams is to facilitate effortless data management for individuals, allowing easy access whenever needed. For example, imagine a future where people are relieved of the burdensome task of repeatedly filling in similar information across various forms. Instead, a system could efficiently handle frequently used data. To bring this vision to fruition, developers are tasked with building more functional, robust protocols, platforms, and systems. I see myself as a vital member of this collective effort, dedicating my energy to propel our technology forward as an ordinary individual committed to making an extraordinary impact.

Transform the Economy by Breaking Down Barriers

Please answer the following question in no more than 250 words: Hack. Mission: Our mission is to "transform the economy by breaking down barriers for Black and Latine/x professionals in tech" What resonates for you about this mission? And how would you actively promote this mission if given a spot in our Fellowship?

While my understanding of race issues in America may be limited as a new immigrant, I have a black friend named Olivier who shared his aspiration to create a platform assisting black individuals in overcoming career obstacles and shattering the glass ceiling. He emphasized the low percentage of black professionals in top corporate positions in the United States. Analyzing American society, I believe education stands as a critical factor in addressing this disparity. Merely providing additional opportunities or lowering requirements may not bring about substantial change. The true essence lies in highlighting the importance of education and encouraging learning, steering away from detrimental influences within their communities.

It's evident that individuals of the same ethnicity often gravitate towards each other, potentially resisting those from different cultural backgrounds. Reflecting on this observation, I propose an idea: creating more avenues for Black and Latine/x software engineers to produce tutorial videos or assume roles as instructors. By establishing a stronger foundation of Black and Latine/x representation in the tech industry, we can gradually diminish existing barriers.

This might be a bad answer, but honestly, I don't have an overview of the race issues in America since I am a new immigrant. I have a black friend named Olivier, and he once told me his wish to build a website that helps black people find jobs and break the glass ceiling. He informed me that In the United States, the proportion of black people at the top of companies is very low. I have observed American society and tried to analyze the cause, and I think that education is the most important factor. Providing extra opportunities and lowering the requirements don't change a lot. The key is to let them know that education is significant and encourage them to learn instead of picking up bad habits in their neighborhoods. However, I noticed that people of the same ethnicity are more likely to get together, and they somehow resist people from a different culture than their own. I came up with an idea based on these perceptions: offer more opportunities for Black and Latine/x software engineers to make tutorial videos or become instructors. With more Black and Latine/x people starting to lay the foundation in tech, it would be more possible for them to break down barriers.