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Intro to ITWS – Section 1 Course Expectations Paper

This course is called Introduction to Information Technology and Web Science, so when I signed up, I had two main goals: one, learn more about the organizational side of technology (something that I hope falls under the umbrella of “Information Technology”) and two, learn more about programming for the web (Something that I hope falls under the umbrella of “Web Science”). I’ll talk more about each goal in detail, starting with the “IT” component first.

To me, information technology refers to the businesses / managerial side of technology. While a programmer is simply concerned with making quality software that can correctly solve computing problems for an intended audience, an information technology specialist would think about and implement policies regarding the use of software and other technology. They would answer questions like: “Which people in a company should have access to a certain technology?”, “What procedures do employees in a company follow to gain access to the technology”, “How do we enforce the protocols and standards we’ve designed?”, and “What kind of technology would most benefit this company?” To me, information technology is a more general field. To come up with good answers to the aforementioned questions, one has to consider not just theories from the field of computer science, but also information from fields like business management and social interaction.

My goal after I graduate is to work as some sort of developer for a technology company, so I feel like getting deeper exposure to the field of information technology would really help me. I could find myself in a more upper level management position at some point in my career, so the organizational thinking and business practices I hope to learn about in this course would definitely apply and be useful. In the more short term though, it would be nice to see what kind of practices and policies other people in the industry are using, so that I can be more prepared to start my career when the time comes.

Moving on, my goals surrounding the web science component of this course are more straightforward. To me, web science has to do with the “behind the scenes” technology that makes the internet what it is today. This includes things like IP addresses, networking protocols, servers, and computer network organization. It’s very important to understand these foundational concepts, but admittedly, I’m more excited to learn about various languages and programming tools designed to target the web. This includes things like HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and jQuery at the front-end / surface level. I’d also hope that we learn a little bit about backend technologies as well. I’ve had some exposure to PHP and Java Server Pages, but I want to learn a lot more and add some more languages like Node.js or Ruby on Rails to my repertoire.

Everything is getting more and more integrated with the internet as cloud computing, the internet of things, and mobile computing become more prevalent, so I feel like knowledge of these web technologies will end up being very practical. I’m not far along enough in my career to know exactly what I want to do with my degree, but I feel like focusing on web applications is a pretty safe bet. Right now, it’s very common for service offering corporations to have more immersive and functional websites that consist of the full stack – a front end page to handle the user interface and the backend server side to validate purchases and provide whatever service is being offered. Maintaining these websites requires programmers with a knowledge of web science and web technologies.

All in all, I’m taking this course to augment my current CS curriculum and with the hopes of becoming a more well-rounded and experienced software developer. All of this comes with the caveat that I’m still not totally sure exactly what we’ll be learning in this course, but I’m certainly open to see how my expectations are proven wrong and follow where the course takes me.