ConnectED Talk with Karishma Chandnani

Meeting notes

Journey from BITS to Esri

- **During Internship:**
  - Show dedication and a willingness to learn—this increases your chances of securing a job at your PS-2 station.
  - Be proactive in seeking information online about things you don't know. Refer to academic articles and reach out to industry professionals to learn more.
  - When faced with software development challenges, visualize the problem to find the solution. Stay calm and focused.
  - Remember, good code is both scalable and maintainable.
- **Within Corporate Life:**
  - Be a consistent and dedicated worker.
  - Don't shy away from difficult projects. While they may involve a lot of work, they provide immense learning and growth opportunities.
  - Don't hesitate to ask for help from managers or seniors; seeking guidance can save time and prevent mistakes.

Projects at Esri

- **Satellite Imagery and Remote Sensing:**
  - Worked on cloud removal from captured images, cleaning the data for improved analysis.
  - Provided users with the ability to write scripts using Esri's API, leveraging satellite imagery for custom projects.
- **Deep Learning Models:**
  - Developed models allowing users to detect and analyze crops, assessing their health and conditions.
- **Challenges Faced:**
  - Transition from multispectral to radar imagery required extensive preprocessing.

- Radar imagery involved heavy research, but most technical papers focused on theory rather than providing code.
- Solving errors required identifying problem areas and visualizing both the code and workflow. Asking for help early was crucial to save time.

How to get into ESRI for PS-2?

- **Be Honest in Your CV**: Clearly mention the projects you've worked on, including the tech stack and programming languages. Know your projects thoroughly, as they will be the primary focus during the interview.
- **Master a Programming Language**: Be strong in one language you are comfortable with, such as C#, Python, or JavaScript, since ESRI Sharjah R&D uses these languages. Fundamentals matter.
- **Know Your Projects Inside Out**: Without prior work experience, your projects are your main discussion points. Be ready to explain them in depth.
- **Tailor Skills to the Role**: Understand which languages are used in the center and demonstrate your ability to fit into the appropriate team based on your skills.

College Life

- **Importance of College Projects:**
  - Projects help you stand out and demonstrate teamwork skills.
  - Approach projects methodically: Identify a problem, create a solution plan, and conduct research to develop and implement it.
- **Academic Focus:**
  - Commit to learning; companies often use CGPA as a metric to gauge how quickly you can learn and adapt.
  - Make sure to enjoy college life, but balance fun with learning.
- **Skills Development:**
  - Use your time in college to explore and learn about new technologies.
  - Master one programming language—it will serve as a foundation to quickly learn others.
  - Take additional courses outside university to broaden your knowledge.

Career Preparation

- **Microsoft Applied Skills:**
  - Focus on application-oriented courses for Microsoft services.
- **Programming Languages:**
  - Learn languages based on your domain of interest. For example, Python is essential for Machine Learning.
- **Preparing for the Job Market:**
  - For software development roles, understanding cloud technologies like AWS is key.
  - Familiarize yourself with version control systems, particularly Git.
  - Maintain an honest and well-structured resume, and be truthful during job interviews.
- **Lifelong Learning:**
  - Technology will continue to evolve—take certifications and courses to upskill yourself.
  - Regularly connect with industry professionals to stay updated on market trends.

Cloud Skills and Certifications

- **AWS Certification:**
  - As a software developer, it's important to learn about at least one cloud service provider.
  - Prerequisites: Basic programming knowledge and experience with one language.
  - Recommended Course: Udemy course by Stefan Marik.
  - Preparation Time: Roughly 1.5 months if studying on weekends.
- **Cloud Skills:**
  - Learn about cloud services such as surveillance and Kubernetes.
  - Stay updated on the latest trends like Generative AI and custom Large Language Models (LLMs).

Networking

- Networking is critical, especially in today's globalized world.
- Reach out to people working at your dream companies via LinkedIn, and be patient.
- Maintain good relations with batchmates and seniors. Forge connections with people in other colleges through inter-college fests.

Avoiding Burnout

- After major releases or deadlines, take a day off and unwind—whether it's reading a book, watching movies, or enjoying other hobbies.

Job vs. Masters

- **Job vs. Master's Degree:**
  - It's a personal decision. If you have a specific field you want to specialize in, consider pursuing a master's degree.
  - A master's can also be a stepping stone toward relocating for work opportunities.
  - After some work experience, you'll have a clearer idea of what you enjoy, helping you decide if a master's program aligns with your career goals.

Why Software Development?

- **Interest in Software Development:**
  - Passionate about coding since school.
  - Find joy in seeing how your work positively impacts people and organizations.
- **Writing Good Code:**
  - Start by writing code that works, then optimize and refine it.
  - Ensure reliability by using unit tests, which are vital for large codebases.

Handling Feedback

- **Feedback from Seniors:**
  - Treat feedback from seniors as constructive criticism—they are speaking from experience.

- **Customer Feedback:**
    - Understand customers' frustrations and use them to improve your software.
    - Sometimes, customers misuse tools—guide them in the right direction.

Other Advice:

- **Planning for Productivity:**
    - Plan your day for better productivity.
    - Don’t rush through coding—it may result in poor quality. Focus on writing correct, efficient code.
- **Software Development Beyond Tech Companies:**
    - Software development roles also exist in non-tech companies like banks and retail firms.
- **Graduate Trainee Programs:**
    - Some companies offer graduate trainee programs that don’t expect much experience and provide in-depth training.