I wrote my first computer program in Pascal about 8 years ago. As with most programmers, a simple "Hello, World!" opened up a whole world of possibilities. Within a few months, I had coded a more advanced version of the arcade game Space Invaders with an adjustable shooting angle and other additional features, which made both me and the 70s proud. After that I never stopped experimenting with programming languages: from back-end to front-end, from useful to esoteric, from feature-rich and high-level to the ones close to the machine code. The thrill and excitement which always accompanied the influx of new information and challenges, have kept pushing me to improve throughout the intervening years.

Before coming to the UK I studied in a school that specializes in Maths and Computer Science. This was where my programming journey began. Most of the coding was done in C, but we also covered AVL trees, Huffman coding, OpenGL object rendering and graph algorithms. The latter especially interested me, so I am currently revisiting this topic and trying to tackle the travelling salesman problem and Dijkstra's algorithm. I also enjoy solving challenging problems in my other A-levels, Economics and Maths: Project Euler is an archive of hundreds of programming/mathematical tests, which I like to solve in my free time; studying Economics has helped me to learn about the workings of the real world and improve my critical thinking, thus allowing to see the broader picture. I am planning to incorporate the knowledge from all three subjects in order to create a successful business. [The last two sentences need rephrasing as they sound banal and, in a way, childish, but are in fact true. A business is probably the only reason I'm studying Economics :)]

After watching the documentary The Social Dilemma, I became more aware of the problems with the unprecedented convenience of modern world digital technology — the business model of big tech companies, based on collecting personal data to improve their eerily addictive algorithms and sell it on to advertisers. I read Free Software, Free Society by Richard M. Stallman [I'm aware of his ideas, but haven't actually read the book, although I'm planning on doing so in the nearest future. This sounds more impressive and appropriate than "watching YouTube videos".] and I found out about the world of FOSS (Free and Open Source Software), which I ultimately made the subject of my EPQ project, "Linux: [the or an?] OS you control", inspired by the co-founder of the operating system itself — Linus Torvalds. My research demonstrated how by looking ‘under the hood’ [I really like this phrase], i.e. meticulously decomposing every programming action, it becomes possible for a user to control the system, instead of the system controlling the user.

I moved to the UK to study last year, which opened a multitude of possibilities. Studying alongside like-minded people, and having unlimited access to texts written in English allowed me to expand and develop my field of interest in Maths and CS. Reading Clean Code by Robert C. Martin and Andrew Hunt's The Pragmatic Programmer revolutionised my coding style, so much so that even someone with zero programming experience could grasp the main idea and the flow of a program, i.e. the code has become a lot more readable and maintainable. Behind Deep Blue, describing the creation of the first Artificial Intelligence that in 1997 defeated the world chess champion, led me to enroll for a two-week AI summer course at the University of Oxford, which covered machine learning in depth. I am keen to explore this further, along with other emerging fields such as cryptocurrencies and blockchain, building on the work experience I undertook as a consultant in the Swiss cryptocurrency investment and project development business Euratek GmbH (a [this phrase if from their website: https://euratek.co/about-us/]). All of this would not have been possible without the aid of O'Reilly academic textbooks like "Mastering

Bitcoin" or Linux and Python guides.

I believe that physical and mental health are intertwined, and am always trying to do something meaningful outside my academic routine: be it sport (7 years of tennis and 4 years of

MMA), volunteering activities (like co-ordinating a fundraising Night Walk for the National Autistic Society), or just helping out the college (since YEAR, I have been acting as ‘Digital Innovator’ in the Student Council [Less pretentious phrasing?]). (\*WIP witty last sentence to leave a good impression.\*)