Learning Never Ends

**# About Me**

Thank you, Mister or Madame Toastmaster, (or whoever introduces me).

Good afternoon fellow toastmasters. My name is Alex (Basaric), I have joined toastmasters few months ago, after coming to few meetings as a guest. I'd like to thank Liliya for encouraging me to sign up officially.

I put my name for this speech a few weeks ago, then started thinking what am I going to talk about? I spent way too much time thinking about that, searching the web etc. Then finally found an article on toastmaster online magazine titled "How To Survive your first Ice Breaker", so I thought, "yes, that's exactly what I need” ... to give this speech and stay alive after that. So, I read the article, and it says, just make speech about yourself, so this is what I am going to do.

**## Early Years**

I was born and raised in Serbia, which used to be part of Yugoslavia at that time. Soon after finishing studies in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia split into several smaller countries, unfortunately not very peacefully. Together with the bad economic situation it motivated many a young person, me included, to leave the country.

**## Coming to Canada**

I came to Canada in early 90-s, on May 2nd 1992, to be precise, exactly 2 years, to the day, after a former colleague of mine. I called him the next day, he helped me prepare my resume, and I landed an interview at Spar Aerospace, where he was working at the time. It helped that we both had the opportunity to learn Unigraphichs, a Computer Aided Design software, widely used in aerospace and automotive industries. We used it at the company where we worked together for a short time in Serbia.

Soon a better opportunity opened itself up in a small automotive parts manufacturing company, called Master Precision, a division of Magna International. One of the clients was Chrysler, which uses different CAD software, called Catia. It wasn't too long before I became proficient in it, and when Boing published few ads in the Star, (yes people were reading careers sections of printed papers at the time and sending applications by mail!), I sent the application, and few months later moved to Seattle.

**## Seattle**

I spent about year and a half in Seattle, before being laid off. But it wasn't a big surprise, knowing how aviation industry is very cyclical. I was contemplating my return to Toronto where I had friends, and my sister and parents moved recently as well.

**## Back to Toronto - second career**

So, after coming back to Toronto, I decided to try and switch to a computer programming career. It is worth mentioning that computers and programming were a bit of a passion for me, ever since high school. So, during my time in Seatle, I took the opportunity to brush up on my skills. Boing was offering free evening classes, in various subjects. I took quite a few of them, including some in, then new, Java programming language.

Once back in Toronto, I took a couple of Java certifications exams, and started as a Java developer.

Most of the early 2000's I was working for a small startup that was helping large national real estate companies with web application development and maintenance, and later launched their own product for real estate agents.

Then, about 10 years ago, I joined Tarion.

Most of my 'second career' jobs were developing web applications using so called Java Enterprise Edition. Of course, there were lots of different technologies and tools to pick up along the way, front end, back end, different databases, application servers, different design and development methodologies, and so on- software development is a very dynamic field.

Now, there are even more changes with cloud technologies and moving of all Tarion Java applications, that I worked on for many years, to Salesforce platform.

So, in the end it is nothing but an endless learning path for me, and I am happy for that. Otherwise, life would be boring, wouldn’t it?

Thank you all.