**Adobe Systems Incorporated: Software Developer**

Prepared By: Curtis Collins

Co-operative Education

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Algonquin College

Employed by: Adobe Systems Incorporated

Supervised by: Stephane Gervais

Ottawa, Ontario

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# Executive Summary

As a Software Developer at Adobe Systems Incorporated, I learned many a new skill. For the first two months of the work term I worked on the Process Management Server team. The team included seven developers and roughly four quality engineers. Following the Scrum ideology for our product, I was exposed to a completely new approach to rapid product development, and all was going well. Many of the basic technological skills learned in the classroom were applied through regular use, and were subsequently fortified through a continuously developed understanding of different practical technological frameworks. While the knowledge attained in the classroom was in no way all inclusive in preparing me for what I was to eventually face in the workplace, it seemed to provide the crucial building blocks that allowed me to push ahead and succeed in my position here at Adobe. In particular, the programming intensive courses made available throughout the program have given me the confidence to really delve into the product itself without feeling overwhelmed by its size and complexity. Overall I was very happy with my time here at Adobe, as well as with the way Algonquin has prepared me for the transition from college to the workplace. That being said, no amount of preparation could have been made for the layoffs that occurred in November. Out of my entire team there is but one person who still has a full-time job here at Adobe. Despite this, I think Algonquin has done an excellent job in preparing me for my position as a working member of society.

# Introduction

This work term report is going to highlight my experience working for Adobe Systems. I will provide an overview of the organization as a whole, regarding who they are and what they do, as well as the impact they have on the technology industry. Work environments can vary quite substantially across the industry, and so I will provide some insight as to what the environment was like for me as both a co-op student and as an Adobe employee. Next I will go into some detail concerning some of the tasks my job required of me, and what sort of recurring duties I may have had. At this point I will also list some of the specific projects I was involved with, and how the school has given me some of the knowledge and tools to finish certain tasks. Adobe has offered a great opportunity for learning, and so I will provide an example of many of the benefits it offered in regards to furthering my intellectual value, followed by my initial learning objectives and how I have met the goals that I set out for myself. Now let us begin this haunting journey across the daunting and unfamiliar land that is Adobe.

# Adobe Systems

Since its inception, Adobe has gained a reputation for the software it produces, and has extended a hand into a growing number of new markets. In the beginning, Adobe set out to monetize the PostScript technology, which would later influence the Portable Document Format. Since this time, Adobe has created and acquired software tools used for creative and multimedia development, software development, web development, eLearning, enterprise software, as well as platforms such as Flash and Shockwave. As for myself, specifically, I have been working on Adobe’s enterprise software, LiveCycle.

# Work Environment

Some companies simply offer their employees a more comfortable work environment than others. Often times the companies that want to hire the best talent will try to entice that talent with a flexible, relaxing, and enjoyable work atmosphere. I would have to say that Adobe is fairly high up on the list as far as the work environment is concerned. Even working as an intern I found that I wasn’t lacking in any essential supplies. I was given a fairly large cubicle and new equipment, and later in the work term I managed to get my hands on a company laptop. I can safely say that I was provided with everything I needed to do my best here at Adobe. Also, there were other perks, like free snacks and coffee. The work hours were very flexible as well.

# Duties

For the first two months of my work term, my duties were fairly consistent. As part of a development team I was responsible for implementing and documenting product features and enhancements. Using Scrum development, the product release was subdivided into sprints that would usually last for three weeks. At the beginning of each sprint, planning would take place. We would take a list of features, called the backlog, and decide which ones were to be done in the current sprint, as well as divide each backlog item (feature) into smaller tasks. This was done in order to accurately measure our progress in day to day activities. Most of the sprint was spent completing the tasks we had created during planning, and adjusting according to how things were progressing. The end of the sprint would usually conclude with a demo of what had been done throughout the sprint, and a retrospective. The retrospective was a chance to assess what was done well, and what was done poorly in the previous sprint, and also set goals for the next sprint. This cycle continued until November, when something unexpected happened. There were massive company layoffs on our product, and most of my development team was let go, with only a few given a transition period. In light of this, our development cycle was scrapped, and the uncertainty and moral of the office was fairly low, and so with little work to do, I decided to take a few online courses offered by the company. Soon enough, though, we had a clear objective again, and since that time I have been helping to set up our new development environment as the product is given a new direction.

# Projects

The product I worked with was a piece of LiveCycle, called TaskManager. TaskManager runs as an OSGI service alongside the Sling Web Framework, and both on top of a Java Content Repository. The product is written in Java, but most of the challenges came with learning the many technologies used by the product. Maven was used for compile time dependency management, and so it was used to build and deploy the product into a network repository. The Sling web framework uses both a Jcr repository for storage, and OSGI to manage components. These technologies are often overlooked in the classroom. We are taught the essentials, critical thinking and programming skills, but I find that to a much lesser extent are we taught how to successfully combine technologies into a single environment. This was perhaps one of the more beneficial learning experiences for me.

# Goals

The goals I had set out for myself for this work term were very obscure to me at the beginning. Often times you don’t know what exactly you are looking for until you find it, and this work term was no exception. Originally, I had hoped simply to develop my programming skills, and maybe learn a couple of new technologies. While these goals were indeed met, I think my most valuable experiences I took away from this work term weren’t technical, but social. In my previous work term, I worked on a team of only two people, with a third who was slightly attached to the product. With a team multiple times larger, there is much more association and collaboration. Over time you really get to know where the strengths lie in the group, and each individual’s area of expertise. Eventually, though, the biggest learning experience was the one that was to be least expected. The sudden layoffs in the building had definitely affected me, giving me a valuable insight to the reality of the corporate world. The one thing I will take away with me from this experience is the necessity to keep my skills current and up to date, and be ready for anything.

# Conclusion

To sum the whole work term up, it was good. No one died, nothing exploded, and I learned a couple of things. I feel that my technical capabilities have improved greatly as a result of the many new technologies I was required to learn, and the development cycle offered many new ideologies than what I have been exposed to in the past. The unexpected layoffs gave me a whole new experience to take away with me. While my position remained intact, my role at Adobe was greatly affected by what happened, and the lives of many of the people I grew to know as friends were changed forever. Life experiences like these are something that the school can do very little to prepare for, and one of the little nuances that make co-op such an invaluable experience.

# Recommendations

Unfortunately, I can’t truly recommend my position here at Adobe, because I can’t see them offering another position in the group I was in. However, for anyone interested in working for Adobe in general, I think it really depends on what sort of place you would like to work. The corporate environment is not a place for everyone, and can sometimes be a jungle. For four months, though, why not get a taste of what it’s like. When it comes to co-op I don’t think there is such a thing as a bad experience. You always learn something.

# Glossary

**Scrum** – An iterative and incremental framework used in software development.

**PostScript** – A programming language used in document formatting.

**PDF** – Portable Document Format is a standard for document formatting.

**OSGI** – The Open Services Gateway Initiative is a modular system platform for the Java programming language.

**Sling** – A web framework used for creating content based applications on top of a Jcr.

**Jcr** – Specification API for the Java programming language used to access a content repository.