Biography

Jessica McKellar

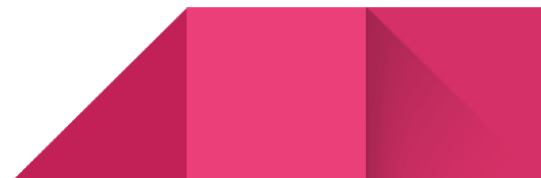**Name :** Holly Baker

Student Number : 17329137

Course : Computer Science

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Introduction

A young woman, who's immersed herself into the computer science industry creating a number of successful startups and contributing an exceeding amount to the python community. Acting as an inspirational role model for young girls and creating more available opportunities for those with no access to achieve what they desire. McKellar's work and mindset has guided many people in and outside the python community.

Early Life

Jessica McKellar emerged from San Francisco Bay Area.She attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, firstly studying chemistry and then going on to achieve a masters in computer science. Since this McKellar has mostly been in startups linked to computer technology. (En.wikipedia.org, 2019). She has experienced working with the same founding team since completing her masters, where they assembled in college and have continued to work together up to this present-day, sharing three companies.

Work

In the python community, Jessica McKellar is highly recognized for her remarkable contribution to Twisted, a networking framework for Python, and notable breakthroughs .Spending her entire adult life in companies that work with python.

McKellar's first start up company, Ksplice, was a result of one of her co-founders, Jeff Arnold's, master's thesis. Ksplice is an open-source extension of the linux kernel that allows security patches to be running kernel without the needs for reboots, avoiding downtimes and improving availability.(En.wikipedia.org, 2019) This company was later acquired by Oracle in 2011. The software highly involved c and assembly, however a considerable amount of the infrastructure was in python.

Furthermore, in 2012, the same group of software engineers who co founded Ksplice reunited to generate a second start up. It was a chat and collaborative software primarily in python, called

Zulip. (En.wikipedia.org, 2019) In 2014, it was acquired by Dropbox and McKellar secured the position as the director of engineering for three years. As part of her time there, she was the group leader for the set of teams which were responsible for all of the platform software of Dropbox such as the desktop client, one of the biggest python distributions ever .

Eventually the key members split from drop box , and in 2017 they went on to build another startup called Pilot.com. This offered a bookkeeping service, targeted towards startups, technology companies, and nonprofits.(En.wikipedia.org, 2019).McKellar is now the founder and CTO of PIlot.com.

Volunteer Work

Looking at another angle of McKellars life where programming has a significant imprint, is her activism role in world communities. Jessica McKellar invests an incredible amount of time to community building, diversity and inclusion and enabling other people to learn in and out of the python community.

One hindered community outside of python she has been associated with is the inmates of San Quentin State Prison. Jessica McKellar draws parallels between the free and open source software movement and the work to end mass incarceration.(YouTube, 2019).

In a visit to San Quentin , herself and a dozen inmates, collectively discussed how technology is being used in the criminal justice system. They talked about the algorithms being used for setting bail, determining sentencing and parole decisions and so on. This discussion led to the fact that we do not have access to these source code algorithms and we do not know much or any information about the people who designed them. Following this, She made the assumption that these people of authority are more than likely not similar to the inmates, who are mostly black and from poor neighbourhoods . And how the design of these algorithms are crucially impacting their lives leading to life or death situations.

This is why Jessica McKellar cares, she wants to increase awareness about these issues above. Take action to address them. McKellar presents the message, that we are little by little shipping this world into where the software we produce and the communities we cultivate around the software have a better representation of the people that are affected by it.

Last year,a man named Simon , was released from San Quentin State Prison. He had served a 17 year sentence.Through the last mile program , he graduated from a coding program in prison and applied for a job as a software engineer when he was released.

One year ago he had never used the internet, and now he is a software engineer. He told his story at a web summit reaching thousands of people. Jessica McKellar was behind this movement which allowed him to learn to code in prison. She drove real change providing a real opportunity.(YouTube, 2019).

Activism

McKellars involvement in python's open source community ,has taught her to become an activist as she witnessed certain groups , such as the inmates of San Quentin State Prison , struggling with accessibility, access, diversity and representation.

She now travels the world to protest and amplify the voices of people that are being affected by certain systems. McKellar's involvement within programming workshops, such as Raspberry Pi children classes, has increased access for children wanting to program. She has also spoken at several conferences about outreach efforts to increase the diversity of open-source communities.(En.wikipedia.org, 2019)

Awards

McKellar has received two main awards over recent years. In 2013, She won the 0'Reilly Open Source Award for her contributions to Python and in 2016, McKellar won the Women in Open Source Community Award , awarded by Red Hat. Beside's awards, she is the co-author of the book Twisted Network Programming Essentials, 2nd edition. (En.wikipedia.org, 2019)

Conclusion

Jessica McKellar formulates a universal mindset among programmers and how this powerful collective mindset can be an essential tool to changing systems in the world. She truly believes that programming changes the way you think about, and debug, and interact with the world.

 With this mindset and her desire to be a software engineer , McKellar has accomplished and contributed a great deal to the computer science industry. Her activism attitude has

enlightened many people's lives and her partake in founding three startup's have flourished into three exceptional constructed businesses.Jessica McKellar is a marvelous example of what a woman can achieve in the computer science industry, and will undoubtedly carry on being a major figure in the python community.

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