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August 26, 2003

Ms. Trish Meng
Coordinator, Co-op Program
Faculty of Computer Science
University of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 4400
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5A3

Re: May – August 2003 Co-op Work Report

Dear Ms. Meng:

        This is my third Co-op work term report, which outlines my work at the National Research Council's Institute for Research in Construction from May to August 2003.

        The Institute for Research in Construction (IRC) in Ottawa conducts research in collaboration with companies and organizations in Canada and throughout the world. Their primary mission is to "improve the safety, durability and comfort of Canadian workplaces, homes and public infrastructure while helping builders become more competitive." In addition to conducting research in construction, IRC is committed to developing the National Code Documents for construction.

        This report articulates my activities and duties while working with the Codes and Evaluations Group at IRC, Ottawa. My growth in terms of knowledge and experience is also described in this report. This work term was a delightful experience that helped develop my technical and interpersonal skills. My work term supervisor, Mr. Tarek Raafat, has commented on the report in my Work Term Evaluation and has reviewed it with me.

 Sincerely,

Brad Touesnard

Encl: Work Term Report

University of New Brunswick
Faculty of Computer Science

Co-op Work Term Report

Student Name: Brad Touesnard

Student ID#:   3060899

Employer: National Research Council,
                                 Institute for Research in Construction

Work Address: 1200 Montreal Road
                                 Ottawa, ON
                                 K1A 0R6

Work Supervisor: Mr. Tarek Raafat

Work Term Dates: 2003 May 5 – 2003 August 29

Work Term Report #:   4

Submission Date: 2003 September 8

Introduction

From May 5th, 2003 to August 29th, 2003, I experienced my fourth co-op work term with the Institute for Research in Construction at the National Research Council's established campus in Ottawa, Ontario. During my work term with IRC, I developed new web sites and managed existing ones maintained by the Codes and Evaluations group for IRC and its partner organizations.

Summary

During my work term with IRC, I was responsible for carrying out the duties of the previous co-op student that occupied the position. I was expected to develop new web sites and web applications for clients of the Codes and Evaluations group. I was also responsible for updating the existing web sites maintained for IRC and its partner organizations and performing various rudimentary tasks such as updating documentation, scanning documents and compiling web site statistics. My supervisor checked up on me several times per day and was attentive to my progress. He also conducted a midterm review in July in which I was given feedback about my resume, interview, and work performance to date. I was impressed by my supervisor's managerial skills and the amount of input and feedback that I received. The rest of the Codes and Evaluations staff were approachable and were glad to help when they could.

My aspirations at the beginning of this work term included becoming a stronger Perl programmer, enhancing my skills with Linux, and developing my interpersonal skills. I was able to achieve all my goals throughout the course of my work term and even able to contribute some of my expertise that should have a positive impact on the way NRC develops their web sites.

Having never previously visited Ottawa and moving into a house occupied by people I

had not yet met was somewhat overwhelming at first. However, since this is my fourth work

term I took comfort knowing generally what to expect in a professional IT environment. I had

absolutely no trouble adjusting to the Codes and Evaluations environment at IRC.

In the past, my supervisor ensured that students who occupied my position kept the

developers' documentation current and complete. The documentation in which I was introduced

was extremely helpful and brought me up to speed very quickly.

Professional Development

This work term enabled me to develop my Perl programming skills in which I had

previously limited knowledge and experience. Perl is the first programming language I ever

used but I quickly switched to PHP as it offered a better solution for the web. This work term

allowed me to finally solidify my knowledge and expertise with Perl. Additionally, I was able to

put into practice the Linux skills acquired in "Operating Systems I" (CS3413) and pick up a few

new Linux tricks as well.

At the beginning of this work term I expected that it would take a couple of weeks to

familiarize myself however, the comprehensive documentation delivered by my supervisor

enabled me to begin performing tasks almost immediately. The importance of documentation

was certainly made apparent during this work term and I have been convinced that it is an

invaluable part of the software development process.

The Institute for Research in Construction staff are highly skilled and I am glad I have

had the opportunity to work with these people. Working with such a talented group of

individuals enabled me to considerably improve my technical knowledge and interpersonal

skills. I am also very proud to have been able to contribute my knowledge and experience in

web development, hopefully improving the development process at IRC and NRC.

Conclusion

I believe that my fourth co-op work term was a complete success and I am very pleased that I had the opportunity to live in Ottawa for a short time performing work that I enjoy.