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I grew up having different ambitions at various stages of my life. This was largely due to my search for exciting and yet highly intellectually challenging activities. At the age of 8, in my last year of primary school education, I wanted to be an Artist. I surely was not the most talented artist in the school, but it did not decimate my zeal to be an Artist. I simply got fascinated with having to create mental pictures of images and then produce them on paper. I was a member of the Press Club where I, along with other colleagues, was tasked with drawing images for headlines and weekly posts on the school's notice board. I also made various comic books with themes ranging from action and horror to science fiction and soccer. About 2 years later, I wanted to be an Architect. This decision came from my interest in technical drawing as a subject and advices from mentors on the professionalism of being an architect as opposed to being an artist. I took up this challenge because it seemed to be more daunting. Along the line, I also wanted to be a writer. I wrote various story books, though none was published and more often than not, my readers were my siblings, parents, relatives, friends and neighbours.

However, it was not until I turned 13 that I found my true passion. In my penultimate year in secondary school, I came across a colleague of mine who had predilections to computers and things relating to information technology. We became good friends and read lots of books together. I started reading books on Website Design, Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and Java programming. I was so intrigued and challenged by what I read that even though I did not have a personal computer at that time, I went out of my way to read a lot of hard copy books and practice using the computers in my school and in a nearby cyber café. It was at this point that my journey into the world of Computer Science and Information Technology Systems began.

I went on to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Systems Engineering at the University of Lagos, Nigeria where I chose to specialize in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. Through my five years in the university, I ventured into various fields ranging from computer programming to embedded electronics and artificial intelligence. I continued developing my abilities in computer programming by learning the Visual Basic programming language right from my first year as opposed to waiting till I was taught in my second year. I applied the knowledge I gained in Visual Basic in developing algorithms to solve problems I encountered both in the classroom and beyond.

In my second year, I re-visited Java programming; As a result of my experience with Visual Basic, I was able to comprehend certain terminologies and concepts which seemed complex in my secondary school days. In addition to Java, I was also learning C# programming which was the highlight of a compulsory course, SSG 207 – *Introduction to Engineering Computing* which I had to take in the first semester of my second year. It was a daunting task having to learn two different languages whilst having tests and papers to write in my other courses but I was far from giving up.

In my third year, I took two courses: SSG 313 – *Programming Languages* and SSG 314 – *Algorithms and Data Structures*; these courses were taken by Professor O. A. Fakinlede who is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Lagos and is also an alumnus of the University of Alberta. I became popular among my colleagues due to my flair for programming and soon I found myself teaching my departmental colleagues programming and also helping out so many students outside my department with course work relating to computer programming.

During my second semester in my third year, I was part of a summer training programme organized by Google in partnership with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T). This programme, aimed at making the participants more entrepreneurial minded and independent as individuals, entailed splitting the participants into teams of about 5 to 7 individuals, where each team was tasked with coming up

with a technological solution to a problem, developing the solution as an android based application and pitching the solution to potential investors. This programme enabled me to broaden my horizon in Java and because of my reputation in computer programming, I was made the programming head of my team. As the team lead, I wrote the codes for the android front end application, supervised the development of the database and back end scripts on Google App Engine and reviewed the final write-up for the pitch.

I interned at Bluechip Technologies Limited, a company which offers solutions such as Data Warehousing and Custom Business Application Development to multi-national companies in the telecommunications and Finance sector of the Nigerian economy. Within my first few weeks at this company, because of my well acknowledged programming skills, I was assigned by a departmental head to train all interns in Java and C# programming. I was also part of a select team of employees to undergo training on Oracle Database Management Systems. During my internship, I was amongst the first set of interns to leave the company to go to field, which was a terminology used when employees had to move from the company office to the office of one of the various clients to work on a project. Over the course of my internship I was active at Emerging Market Telecommunications Services, also known as Etisalat Nigeria, where I was involved in developing and deploying web based applications to servers and also at Access Bank Nigeria Plc where I work with teams on developing web based portals for customer solutions.

Resuming my final year, I felt fully armed and capable of conducting a ground breaking research project. I took two courses: SSG 503 – *Artificial Intelligence* and SSG 504 – *Automated Reasoning* which reshaped my thinking towards Computer Science and Information Systems Technology. These courses made me realize the future which I had categorized as distant, was already here. I suddenly realized that Artificial Intelligence is a field which would redefine the world as we know it now and many years to come. This moment of epiphany, along with my proficiency in computer programming and algorithmic methodologies aided my decision to pursue a Master's Degree in the field of artificial intelligence.
I started reading up papers on applications of artificial intelligence as such, I had a good understanding of intelligent systems before embarking on my final year project.

My final year research project, titled – *Modelling of a multi-lingual speaker independent automated home appliance control system,* aided in improving my knowledge of artificial intelligence. I and my partner built a system using an HM-2007 processor that allows people to control basic appliances such as light bulbs and fans through speech in Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo languages which are the major native languages in Nigeria. I further improved my knowledge by helping my colleagues whose projects involved the development of intelligent systems. I assisted a colleague by programming the micro-controller he used in building a smart obstacle avoidance robot, I also helped a colleague write an algorithm for recognizing certain images in his project and I built a circuit which uses biometric authentication in the control of appliances.
Once again, as a result of my well acknowledged programming skills, one of my lecturers requested that I worked with him on a project which entailed the building of an intelligent speech recognition system based on the Yoruba language. I helped in writing Matlab scripts to split data into training and testing sets and also train the system using algorithms such as K Nearest Neighbor (KNN) and Support Vector Machine (SVM).

In my country, Artificial Intelligence is a field which is not considered as necessary or important by many, but I think otherwise. I believe in seeing things from a wider perspective and thinking outside the box. In the course of realizing my dream of a more intelligent society, I have developed a number of projects, learnt over a dozen programming languages and become a part of a start-up company through which I hope to build technologies that intelligently aid the day to day lives of people; I wish to broaden my horizon by pursuing a Master's Degree at the Computing Science department of the University of Alberta, wherein, I can share and develop ideas with fellow students whilst working with an excellent staff and cutting edge facilities. I am particularly excited about the prospects of being mentored by and working with faculty staff such as Prof. Randy Goebel, Prof. Michael Bowling and Prof. Renee Elio, from whose wealth of research experience in Artificial Intelligence, I hope to learn a great deal.
Thank you for your consideration.