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CS 261: Data Structures
Assignment 0
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Introduction

Hello, my name is Ed Francis and I am excited to be taking Data Structures this quarter. I am currently living with my wife in Tokyo, Japan. I am on track to complete the OSU computer science program in between 1.5 and 2 years. I have found the courses that I have taken with OSU so far to be enjoyable and rewarding. I am glad to be living in the age of high-quality, online university education!

I have always had an interest in computers and am old enough to remember the proliferation of dial-up Internet, market share battles between AOL and CompuServe, CD ROM and floppy disk drives, and the great excitement leading up to Windows95 and other Microsoft product launches. I focused on the humanities in college, however, as a liberal arts major with a concentration in Chinese and Political Science at Middlebury College in Vermont. After graduating in 2005, I moved to Washington, DC to look for a job. I worked briefly in study abroad, but I later took a position with a consulting firm studying and reporting on trends in China's high technology industries for industry and government clients. That job has unexpectedly led to a rewarding career combining foreign languages, technology, and international travel. Lately I have been helping to produce an industry newsletter focusing on the Chinese wireless, Internet, TV, hardware and software industries. This project and others have provided many opportunities for witnessing the increasingly important role played by computing and information technology in Asia and throughout the world.

By taking the online post-bacc program I hope to both improve my ability to understand developments in the IT industries and to develop skills needed to participate in industry more directly in a software development or product design role.

Programming experience

Before joining the OSU programming I gained some experience with programming through self-directed web scraping, text processing, and database projects. I mainly used Perl and Python for web scraping and text processing, and I used the MS Access, MySQL, and Oracle database systems for recording. Much of this code was written to handle Chinese-language information, so I have some practice with character encoding issues.

Since joining the CS program I have practiced C++ in my CS 161 and CS 162 programming courses. I have also taken CS 271, Computer Architecture and Assembly Language, which has given me some practice with assembly language programming for the MASM x86 assembler.

I have also taken CS 225 (Discrete Structures), and I will be taken CS 290 (Web Development) and CS 340 (Introduction to Databases) this quarter, and TA'ing for CS 162.