Fatih Atlamaz

Mr. Espich

Career Exploration Internship

19 April 2022

Final Exam Project

**Word Count:** 918

**BACKGROUND (FIRST SEMESTER)**

One of the best choices I've made academically was finding an internship for my senior year. Originally, I wanted to take seven courses to improve my GPA, but I decided that professional work would be more beneficial for my future. I decided to apply for an internship with Digonex, a branch company of Emmis Communications. Over the past year, I have learned countless lessons. I realize now that it's impossible to be prepared for every task. My first project was focused on web scraping using an application called Dexi.io. I was terrified because I had no experience in web scraping or in Dexi, but I realized that a big part of completing a task is learning how to do it. My progress on the project started off slow, but got exponentially faster, and now I'm completing twenty times more work in one day than I did when I first started. I am now more familiar with web scraping, HTML, CSS, and page formatting than I have ever been.

**SECOND SEMESTER**

**Pride and Significance**

One of my favorite things about this internship was the progression of my work. The first thing I ever did during my internship is still in use and sometimes I need to go back to it and make changes. With this type of progression, I know that all of my work is significant and will continue to be used in the future. It makes me proud when I go back to the first ever programs I created and see the progression of my knowledge in both programming and soft-skills. The minutes before my first ever meeting with my internship sponsor was one of the most stressful moments I have ever lived, but now I’m prepared to have a meeting with anyone. Conducting two or three meetings every single week has improved my communication and one-on-one meeting skills exponentially.

**Work Completed**

The work I started second semester was similar to the project I completed in my first semester. In fact, with the addition of clients, I have had to go back to my first semester’s programs and add new ones to accommodate the new client additions. Since January, I have created similar web scraping programs on competitor websites (I don’t think I can get in detail). However, this time the work would not end there. In order to analyze the data in the future, I was tasked to store the collected web-scraped data in excel files. Creating hundreds of excel files by hand and storing rows of data in each file *every day* is impossible, so I had to figure out a way to take the collected data on Dexi and transfer it into excel files automatically. I did exactly that with a lot of time, perseverance, and most importantly, research. The day I figured out how to access APIs and create excel files with code was a highlight in my newly starting computer science career. The work did not end there. The next step in my project was taking those individual excel files and creating one large excel file that stored that month’s data. I went through that process nearly twenty times with each competitor posing different challenges.

**Challenges**

I am happy to say that I did not face as many challenges as I thought I would when I first started my internship. It was my initial belief that learning how to complete my tasks (the technical programming skills side of the internship) would be incredibly difficult. It wasn’t; with time and effort, I was able to adapt and complete the tasks that were assigned to me. The challenge of properly conducting a meeting between myself and my internship sponsor and other co-workers quickly faded as I gained more experience. The last challenge that I faced and still continue to face is the fear of completing my project. I was assigned with the task of competing as many programs as I could for the competitors. I really wanted to finish the programs for every single competitor, however, now I know that it will not be possible. I still want to finish the work that I started.

As I mentioned before, one of the most important lessons I’ve learned during this experience is the fact that people are flexible. The flexibility and clear communication between myself and my co-workers have made everything easier and less stressful, and I really appreciate that.

To this day, one challenge that I still face is staying on track and persevering through roadblocks. Because my work heavily depends on the websites that my programs visit, any changes in a website’s structure or any variable not accounted for leads to a program failure. Sometimes fixing these problems takes 5 minutes, but other times it takes multiple days. Spending the day going back and fix something that was already completed means that I make no progress. At the end of those days, I know that I am no closer to finishing my project than I was the previous day. When this happens several times a month, it becomes difficult to continue persevering.

**The Future + Conclusion**

This internship has strengthened my love for computer science and programming. I am now even more confident in my choice to pursue computer science in college and in the future. I am also now more confident in my ability to work in a professional field. Pursuing this internship opportunity has been one of the best choice I’ve ever made.

Thank you for everything,

Fatih Atlamaz