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Assignment #3 – Career Paper

Written Profession Communication

What does it look like to be a Front-End Web/App Developer?

As a computer science major, there are many possible career paths. One could become a specialist in security, graphic design, software engineering, quality assurance, and the list goes on. The career that I find most fun and interesting is a career as a Front-End website or application developer; but what does that mean? A Front-End developer is responsible for making visual, interactive elements for websites or applications that users engage with. Simply put, we make things look nice and easy to use. In this paper I will go over positives and negatives, ethical issues that come up, what the typical salary is, and how much writing is involved in this field. I was able to interview Ryan Sweeney, who is a Sr. Applications Developer for Intalere where I worked this past summer. And Jeff Taylor, a Software Developer for UPMC enterprises, who is a family friend to gain some insight into what it is like to be a professional in this field.

Well the job sounds great right? Well it's not all apples and roses (which I don't think is a real saying, just what came to mind). In any job there are ups and downs, pros and cons, and ethical implications to consider even if it is your "dream job!" Inside the IT world, most, if not all of your job is done on the computer, be it coding or communicating with team members/customers. This can be viewed as a positive or a negative, depending on your feelings regarding the use of mediated sources continuously. Ryan Sweeney, thinks it is freeing to be able to work whenever or wherever needed. He is a father who has to spend some days working from home, and being in this type of field makes him able to do that. Sometimes he does have to make deployments for a site while at home, but doesn't feel that it takes too much time away from his family. On the other end of the spectrum, Jeff Taylor, finds that the constant access to a computer can be a burden and "sometimes makes it hard to put down work". There are many other reasons why this field might seem like a burden to some, as well as reasons that it's worthwhile. Ryan and Jeff agreed that being stationary most of the day looking at a computer screen can be frustrating and draining. As someone who has

never learned well in a school setting, I connect with one negative that is brought up in an article on learningpath.org. They mention that ongoing training is a necessity because of the constantly changing world of web development techniques. But the biggest positive I have found, and a huge goal of mine, is that you have an “impact on people’s day-to-day lives (by creating software that make people’s every day job easier)” This is what attracts me to the healthcare field, being able to help people through a set of skills I possess. Lastly, devisonx.com mentions the amount of overtime hours without overtime pay. This is something that Ryan touched on saying that sometimes he has to make deployments during his time at home.

But there is so much more to consider beyond positives and negatives when thinking about the career you want to be in, possibly the rest of your life. I mentioned how I desire to help others, but the issue of ethics needs to be brought up on a large scale in this field. Both people I interviewed are working in healthcare. And with that, there are many issues that need to be considered. Jeff Taylor says that ethical considerations take place at almost every stage of their development process, specifically how the software that is being created affects patients, providers, and insurance. These are just a few of the issues, because being in the healthcare industry for IT means you’re probably dealing with patients’ private information 90% of the time. Ryan Sweeney mentions the need for respect of personal data, as well as bringing up an ethical issue as an employee. He says that honesty is a huge concern in this field, because of all the freedom that comes with being able to work from home. He makes the point that you can easily get distracted and take advantage of that freedom. Ryan explains it is of ethical concern to maintain to a high working standard during the work week.

With so many issues inside this field to be worried about, what could make it all worth it? There are a number of things that I wanted to know. As a senior looking for work to provide for

myself, I was very curious as regarding salary. According to naceweb.org, the average entry level starting salary with my education is \$61k. Both Ryan and Jeff gave similar numbers. I was also curious as to how satisfying this job area is, specifically about working for the healthcare industry. I was not surprised that both my resources said that they were very satisfied with their career choice. They love knowing that what they are doing is making a positive difference in someone's life.

Ok, so what could be the real downside? You guessed it....writing. Every job has writing in some fashion, and some people are more blessed than others with the ability to take our 26 English letters and make them sound beautiful and poetic when speaking of the simplest things. So in what way does writing play a part in the Development field, whether it be web Development or software development? Ryan focused on the writing involved in communication between himself, other developers, or to the business partners for requirements. He emphasized the importance of being able to communicate clearly and effectively. One aspect that not all IT people have the ability to do is take their technical knowledge and implementations and communicate these ideas clearly to business professionals. And this is what Ryan is talking about, being able to communicate through writing. His last comment was that he "probably spends about a fifth of my time writing emails." It was interesting that Jeff actually mentioned the other side of writing inside of this profession. Which rounded out my information well I think. He focused more on the writing of actual code as opposed to the communication, saying that writing code takes up the majority of his time. He did also briefly mention the need for formal documents, email correspondence, and documentation.

I think that this is still the job career for me. I like being able to be creative with code and graphics, and make the layout and design look good and work well for a user. My desire to help others continues to push me towards the health care field. There may be a lot of things to consider before deciding on this job. There are ethical issues, the difficulty of leaving work at work, and

sitting around looking at a computer all day. But in the end I think the positives outweigh the negatives and the ethical issues are easy enough to stay on the correct side of as long as you are conscience of the information you are dealing with.

Over the past year, I have been leaning more and more regarding this field. I have found that it is not only something that I enjoy, but something that I am good at and that it even fits inside my personality type. Through this time I have spoken with a dozen of professionals inside my career choice, attempting to learn all I can. Because of this, I feel like I already knew most of the information that I found online and got through the interviews. The most interesting thing to me was to put all the information together into one place besides my own head.

References

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