Hi, my name is David Herscher. My road to Cecil College hasn’t been the most direct or efficient one to say the least. Upon graduating high school, I immediately entered the work-force, where I worked various jobs. I spent the bulk of my time in retail, a field in which I experienced moderate success and even reached the beginning of management placement for a large, well known retail company. But I was never fulfilled by my job. I would spend most of my time at work thinking about other interests and generally daydreaming about the things I wished I **could** be doing.

It was the pursuit of these interests that would eventually lead me down the road to Cecil College, but not straight away. I had grown up loving comic books, cartoons and video games. So initially, I decided that I would teach myself how to make them. Why not, it would be a rewarding pastime if nothing more. So I began doodling and writing. I’d created a few short comics. One of which was basically a diary of my daily activities in retail, and it turned out to be quite funny if I do say so myself. Around this time, I also had started fiddling around with the various Adobe applications. I’d realized that if I wanted to bring these ideas to life, then the computer was the best way to do that.

But, something started happening. The more time I spent on my parent’s old Pentium 4 machine, the more I became fascinated with the computer itself. I found myself less and less interested in *using* the computer to make something, and more and more interested in *making* the computer do something *useful*. At the time, I was driving a $700 POS Ford Escort and I had been saving money to buy a nicer car. I knew what I had to do. So I took my car savings, all two and a half thousand dollars of it, and I bought a new computer. It was a Mac Pro, and it was beautiful. I was in love.

Fast forward about 2 years and I emerge from behind my computer screen and find myself registering for classes at Cecil College. I was still working full time in retail so I had to take classes at night. I worked my way through Pre-Algebra. (Huge gratitude to Mr. Gene Davis, who taught me math in a way that sparked a fire for logic and function that burns inside me to this very day). I went on to learn about the principles of design. I took classes on HTML, Cold Fusion, Web Design and even a really interesting class where we got to play around with a bit of C++. All the while, I continued working full time and making goofy little web sites in my spare time between School, Work and Homework.

Eventually, I was able to use those classes and goofy websites to land a job doing web design and front end development for a small company that manufactured athletic equipment. Shortly thereafter I revised my resume and landed my current job, IT for Conde Nast Publications.

Which brings us finally, to Fall, 2013. VCP279, for the win. I had a really hard time starting this part of the presentation. Honestly I didn’t know what to say first. In the end, I decided that the best way to introduce my project was by thanking the person who made it a possibility in the first place. So, Professor Adam Jacono, thank you. Thank you for being so open and allowing me to pursue the things that are important to me. In doing so, you have pushed me to learn more and to accomplish more this semester than I thought was possible. Ok enough of that, we don’t want him to get a big mustache, I mean head! we don’t want him to get a big head…

So on to the project. The purpose of this project was to build a functioning web application to be used for the purposes of rental creation, administration and management. My focus for this endeavor was to provide a flexible, portable and accessible solution to this problem. I wanted to use reliable, open and standards compliant technologies, which would provide a flexible foundation to be deployed on top of the most basic set of hardware and software requirements. Most importantly, with this project I set out to push myself to learn something new. This body of code is not only the summation of all that I have learned thus far. It represents the application of that knowledge towards building a foundation upon which my learning continues far into the future.

Written entirely in PHP, HTML, CSS and JavaScript; Comprised of ~XXXX lines of code written entirely over the course of 3 months, the VCP279 application satisfies all of these goals. It provides a user friendly interface for the Admin level management of users and equipment. The application offers self-service user account creation with account collision prevention and regular expression powered password validation. VCP279 can handle individual, account-type based user login privileges based on a simple selection switch accessible through the admin panel. It allows for the creation of equipment rentals through the use of a fully functioning shopping cart. And being powered entirely by open source, standards compliant technologies, it requires only a web server and a Mysql install to run.

While not perfect, and admittedly hacked together in some areas, the VCP279 application does all that it was supposed to do. Most superficially, it is a working rental application. But it also represents much more. Yes, it does indeed encompass all that I have learned thus far. But more importantly, it has been a vessel through which I have learned to apply that knowledge towards building something that seemed nearly impossible to me but 3 short months ago. It is a foundation. A foundation upon which I intend to continue to build. No, it is not finished. I intend to continue to refine it. To make it better, faster. To add functionality and even greater flexibility. In learning to create this most basic application, I have seen possibilities on the horizon that were hidden to me before. Ideas, born from asking questions that I heretofore never even knew to ask.

Finally, I hope to donate the application to the Cecil College VCP in the near future. And within 18 months I will release the source code under the GNU public license. A very small, but first of what I hope to be many contributions to the areas of Education, Technology and Productivity.

Thank you for your time.