12/13/17

Ironhacks Interview

1. I participated in Ironhacks for a couple of reasons. My main reason was because my advisor told me to take a wrong class so I had to drop a class mid-semester and was left taking 12 credits and I wanted a class to fill this gap. Then, I heard about Ironhacks through an email and decided that I wanted to take this class because I needed to take an Honors class to get Honors credit for the year and it was only 8 weeks. In addition, while I was researching the class I found out that you learn lots of technical skills and can get access to more internship opportunities through this hack.
2. At first, I familiarized myself by exploring the tutorials tab in the Ironhacks website. However, because I had some experiences with coding I decided to wait until the hack started and just learn as I go. When the hack started, I mostly used w3schools to find the correct syntax. However, if I got really stuck or found a great resource I utilized the Ironhacks forum. In addition, when visualizing data, using D3.js, and Google Maps I watched Youtube videos to teach myself.
3. When Phase 1 started, I started by drawing out what I wanted my application to look like and wrote some important features that I wanted to add in. Through this whole process, I tried to keep my design simple because I knew that I had a limited amount of time. I tried to understand the task by looking through the data and what I was working with so that I had a brief idea of how I wanted to find results. Once I planned everything out, I started by formatting my application so I knew where I wanted my information to be displayed. The biggest barrier that I encountered was how to connect to the datasets and how to search through them for the information I want to display. Since I was having lots of trouble with this, I asked questions on the forum and went to all of the help sessions after classes so that I could receive one on one help. While I was coding, I did not commit very often. However, while submitting my final commit, I would submit my project a bunch of times because I was never sure if I did it correctly and I didn’t want to fail the class if I submitted wrong. It helped that I could ask if my project was turned in correctly. During the hack, I did come across some limitations. I really wanted my app to be like “Tinder” where a user could give a thumbs up or down to get better housing results. However, because of the time constraint and my limited coding ability, I was unable to figure out how to get housing results like a result that was given a thumbs up. In addition, because it took my so long to visualize data, I struggled to display accurate results by the end of the hack. In training, there were videos on connecting to the data and how to display a google map inside of your app. These two videos are what I used the most. Other than that I mostly used Youtube or w3schools. I really used the forum to learn new skills and solutions from my peers because I figured that there are other classmates that are more knowledgeable in certain areas than me. I also made sure to answer other people’s questions because I figured that if someone answered mine I should answer others to continue the discussion so that the forum was useful and helpful to everyone. After the first feedback, I was very shocked by my scores and how well I did. However, I got very confused because I wanted to know how other people in the hack did so I went to the results tab on the Ironhacks website. While I was looking at everyone’s results, I ended up opening all of them so that I could see what others did and so that I could find mine. While exploring other people’s apps I started to get some ideas on how to make my app better. I also tried to see who was able to connect to the data to see what they did but no one had done that yet.
4. In my other submissions, I tried to make my app more organized and easier to understand so that users can get results as fast as possible. I tried to prioritize the visualization of data. However, I got frustrated and often just worked on the aesthetics. I think that in the third phase I improved the most because I found out about bootstrap and used it to make my app easier to view and understand.
5. If I could start again, I would start in the third phase or even earlier to try and display data and use the last phase to format and display everything in an ordered fashion. I would do this because if I had done this then I would have been able to manipulate more data and make my app more interesting and informative. Unfortunately, because I have never participated in any other hacks I cannot compare Ironhacks to anything. However, from what I hear traditional hacks are only about two days of rushed intense work and no sleep and I am glad that Ironhacks is not like that at all.
6. I plan to save my app and whenever I have an interview where a prospective employer wants to see my skills I plan to show them this app. If I had lots of time to work on this I would probably complete it and keep adding to it so that it could be fully functional and available to NYU students.
7. Ironhacks was an amazing experience which I am really glad that I participated in. It was a great hands on outside of the classroom learning experience.