**Personal statement**

Visual Communication

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When I started to be interested in web design, I was in Australia with a working holiday visa in 2019. I was born and raised in Japan, and I went to Australia to learn the culture and English. One of the friends I met there introduced me to the interesting, exciting world which was web design, application design, and so on. He was an undergraduate student in Sydney and his major was information technology, so his major was not specifically about web design, but he created some websites as well for fun because he was also learning JavaScript in the class. When he showed me the coding and his portfolio, I instantly thought it was awe-inspiring and beautiful, but at that point, I was not sure what attracted me so much, whether it was his ability to understand and create the complicated coding, the beautiful web design, or fun animation in the web design. What I knew was a strong interest and inspiration towards the vaguely IT field. Whenever I hung out with him, I asked many questions, and that showed interest in information technology. Then he told me that it seemed like I was interested in web design or somewhere related to front-end coding. That is when I realized that it may be my future job. Although I thought web, application design was a blight field, I sort of assumed I could not do it because I had never studied anything related to IT before because my major as an undergraduate was English and Culture which is not related to IT.

Before having been to Australia, I had wanted to be a flight attendant. That is why I chose the English and culture department when I entered the University in Japan as an undergraduate student. However, in Australia, I was introduced to this fun attractive field, web development, and application design, and I started to change my mind. On top of that, I was unable to apply for flight attendant companies because the year I graduated was 2021, which is when the COVID pandemic hit the traveling industry. They stopped hiring that year. Ever since I went to Ohio University as an exchange student in 2017, I always wanted to do a master’s program because I felt there were many more things I would like to learn, and I had not yet figured out what I ultimately wanted to do in the future at that point. When I was in the last semester of graduating as an undergraduate student, I did not know if I wanted to be a flight attendant, an English teacher, a Japanese teacher, a web developer, or do a master’s program. As I stated above, I had wanted to be a flight attendant since I was a child, but realistically speaking, as I became mature, I did not see the future in it anymore because the demand for it only exists when the economy is stable and wealthy enough. Also, compared to the IT field, I think the skill I can learn as a flight attendant is very limited. On top of that, flight attendants are regarded to be the job for young, tall, pretty women, so many quit the job before they become 35 years old. Therefore, I realized that the flight attendant job is definitely not for me. That is what I realized about the airline companies during the pandemic. I wanted to learn a skill that I could enjoy for the rest of my life. I still wanted to do a master’s at Ohio University, but my English proficiency was not met yet, also, I heard the possible case that as part of Trump policies, during the pandemic, you may have to go back or stay in your country if you only have the classes that you can do online if you are international students who do not have a class requiring in-person class such as gym or science experiment classes. I preferred to study on the actual campus, so I did not apply for it when I graduated. Therefore, when I graduated, I got a job in an IT company in Tokyo because the hiring team said that one did not need prerequisite knowledge about IT, and one could learn it while working there. I was very excited about working and improving my skills at the same time, but what I did there was dealing with customers’ questions and complaints about the specific machine which was not really what I wanted. I did not feel I was improving much. When I consulted with my boss that I wanted to do something related to coding, he said that it might take more time to let me do it because the customer service workers were in shortage. Therefore, I quit the job and started to learn about web design by myself.

First, I did not really know where to start so I started with learning the ITIL foundation because I thought it was the fundamental knowledge you need to learn anything related to computers, which later I knew was not really necessary. After I got my ITIL certificate, I started to learn HTML and CSS by myself using Udemy, which is one of the online website courses. I studied about 2 to 4 hours every day, but I needed to make money because I lived in Tokyo by myself and I studied English to do a master’s program at Ohio University, so although learning HTML and CSS was exciting, I could not study as much as I wanted.

For the future job, my mind was about a field where the demand is expected to be stable probably because of the experience from the stagnant state of hiring of some specific companies during the COVID pandemic. That is why I started to think teacher is one of my job options for the future job as I was aware of the importance of education. Therefore, as an almost safety net, I got a certificate of Japanese language teaching for non-native speakers in Tokyo. However, even while studying for the certificate, I did not stop learning web design. Whenever I found some free time, I created web design just for fun mainly about family introductions or some events in my life. I had a fun time, and I would be thrilled if I could do it for a living.

After having got a certificate in Japanese language teaching, I decided to apply for a master’s program and a scholarship at Ohio University because my English proficiency was sufficient, and the president was changed to Biden who does not seem to make a strict excluding policy for international students, and I was able to get them after the test and interview. Therefore, I came to master’s in Asian Studies to be a good teacher who is familiar with learners’ backgrounds because many students who are learning Japanese are from other countries in Asia, such as China and South Korea. Originally, I was planning to continue to study JavaScript and other skills related to web or application design while studying Asian studies, but I realized the assignments and homework in the classes were too many to learn other things by myself. Even though I know the importance of finding the information by myself, I think if there was any guidance, it would be more efficient for me to improve my skills. Thus, I would like to apply for the master’s program in Information Graphics and interactive Design in Visual Communication.

As I stated above, I think I am a hard worker. When I was in Tokyo, I worked full-time, but I studied English and IT simultaneously. I lived by myself, so I did everything by myself including laundry, cooking, finding the apartment, payment of the rent, and so on. After realizing that the job was not what I wanted to do and they would not give me the opportunity to learn, I quit the job, and I studied HTML, CSS, English, certificate in Japanese language teaching while I was working as a part-time job. Also, my passion for web, application design is undoubtable. Although a part of me wants to work in this kind of field because of the large job opportunities all over the world and I see the promising possibilities in the future, I truly want to work there because creating web design is genuinely fun, and learning and creating code is very satisfying especially when it properly works as I expected.

I am not very sure if I have a highly refined artistic sense, but I enjoy art and other people’s work. I think I can recognize what is pretty, what is old-fashioned, what is masculine, what is feminine, and so on.

To sum up, I would like to do a master’s program in Visual communication. The reasons for this are because I am a hard worker, I see the large job opportunities, I am passionate, and I have fun when working on it. I am not very sure if I have a high artistic sense, but I think these senses can be refined while studying and getting to know the field more. Hence, I think I should study Information Graphics and Interactive Design in Visual Communication