BIOGRAPHY OF BILL GATES

CSU33012 Software Engineering

Abstract

This is a personal essay on the biography of Bill Gates and why he is somebody that has impacted software engineering and who inspires me

Mary Coyne

coynem2@tcd.ie

Introduction

I chose Bill Gates for this paper because he has done a lot of impressive work both in the tech world and out of it. I believe he is a very interesting person, having accomplished a lot in his life. Gates is most famous for founding Microsoft Corporations which in turn made him a billionaire. He also founded the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which was identified by the Funds for NGOs company in 2013 as the world's wealthiest charitable foundation. The primary goals of the foundation are to enhance healthcare and reduce extreme poverty across the globe, and to expand educational opportunities and access to information technology in the U.S. Gates' charitable work is the main reason I chose to write about him because I believe it is an extremely important thing to do, whether you're a billionaire like Bill Gates or a broke college student like me. His enormous influence on the entire tech sector was another reason I chose to write this biography on him.

Microsoft

Bill Gates founded Microsoft in 1975 with his childhood friend Paul Allen in a garage (that's the most important part). It was set up as a company that made computer software and microprocessors. Gates left Harvard university and Allen quit his job to focus on their new company. By the end of 1978, Microsoft's sales topped more than $1 million. Allen left Microsoft in 1983 due to medical issues. Microsoft released a new operating system in 1985, which you may be familiar with, called Windows. In 1987, the year after Microsoft went public, Gates became the world's youngest billionaire at the age of 31. (*History.com authors, 2015*) In 2001 Microsoft joined the video game industry by releasing the Xbox. Both Windows and the Xbox have been updated throughout the past decades and current versions of both are still extremely popular and widely used today.

Microsoft has developed into one of the biggest multinational companies in the world. According to their LinkedIn account, at the moment, Microsoft does business in 170 countries and they employ around 144,000 people. (*LinkedIn*). Bill Gates left the day-to-day operations of Microsoft in 2008, but all of this shows that his company that he started in a garage in the mid-70s now provides so many people with incomes and easy to use tools.

Personally, I've been using Microsoft products since I was around 7. We had Windows 7 on the home PC. I'd write random stories in Microsoft Word (the longest being 52 pages long), draw random pictures in Microsoft Paint or make a random mashup of pictures and videos in Microsoft Movie Maker (my favourite being the remake of the Titanic I made with my friends). Through the years I've continued to use Microsoft products, including doing a course in Transition Year called ECDL which showed us how to effectively use Microsoft Office (I was a bit ahead of the game there, since I started messing with it at the age of 7). Now, at this very moment, I'm writing this paper in Microsoft Word on my laptop which has Windows 10 (I'm sorry, computer science will not convert me to Linux, I'm truly a creature of habit) and I even did some online courses created by Microsoft in 2018 so that I could learn how to program using Java.

In a way, Bill Gates indirectly inspired me to study computer science. All those cool tools I messed around with at 7 years old were really fun to use, who wouldn't want to be having fun with computers every day for the rest of their lives? It ignited my interest in computers in a big way. So I used our home PC most days, until I was 10 and got my own laptop (everybody else wanted a phone, I wanted a laptop) and just tried to enhance any skills I could. I honestly don't think I would be here today if I hadn't been messing with word, paint and movie maker back in 2007.

Charitable work

Some of Bill Gates most notable charitable work is with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which he set up with his partner Melinda in 2000. The foundation aims to enhance healthcare and reduce poverty across the globe. According to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Fact sheet "the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life". Health and education are really important subjects to me as an individual. I suffer from epilepsy and as a result of this from the ages of 11-15 I missed, on average, 70% of the 4 school years that span over that age range. Because of this I know what it's like to have horrible health and miss out on my education. After that I never took either for granted ever again. While I am very aware of the that I was not in the same situation as the many people suffering through poverty and that effecting their health and education and I am very lucky that I had the resources I did to recover, I am very empathetic towards their situations because I have lost out in both health and education in the past and I believe that they are very noble charitable causes.

In 2009, Bill and Melinda Gates along with Warren Buffett founded The Giving Pledge, whereby they and other billionaires pledge to give at least half of their wealth to charity, whether that be during their lifetime or after their death. "The voluntary group now includes more than 200 families and individuals from more than 20 countries" (*Brown, M., 2020*).

I really admire the fact that Bill Gates donates so much of his wealth to charity. Where somebody like me may only be able to donate their time, it's great that people like Bill Gates donate both their time and their money. "Bill and Melinda Gates have given $45.5 billion to charitable causes, including the eponymously named Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, since 1994 […]. In 2019, the couple donated $589 million to charity, making them the seventh most philanthropic people last year" (*Brown, M., 2020*).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that Bill Gates has had a positive effect on the tech industry, many different charitable organisations and loads of people worldwide (and of course his wallet) in creating Microsoft. He created an enormous corporation. The knock-on effects of Microsoft can be seen on so many scales from the thousands of jobs created and the easy to use software accessible to billions of people to me being in a computer science lecture because at seven years old I liked writing things in Microsoft Word.

References

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