

**Matt Jones - 8th May 2018**

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## **Blog entries**

### **An enterprising escape!**

Tuesday, 8th May, 2018 - 3:47 p.m.

While I have been studying at Newcastle I have been learning how to be independent but most parts of personal enterprising have been improved in this module. I feel as if my creativity has been improved, also the fact that I can solve problems easier and using what I have learnt, not google. This has helped me be more independent when working whilst also allowing me to be more adaptive as I can realise if a theory of doing something might not work. This can be seen in my website for CSC1026 as there were several things which didn't work when being made and I had to find another way to format the page properly. Furthermore, the creative aspect was easier as I have a better aspect on how I am making the second website after making the first. This will allow my website to be more interesting and engaging with an audience and my target group. Overall, I feel as if I am better equipped now to do tasks that will be featured next year, for example making an app.

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### **The programming professional!**

Tuesday, 8th May, 2018 - 3:46 p.m.

After the first term I thought my programming skills could have been better. The start was hard for me as I have never done coding before in my life and it was a big shock to the system when presented with certain challenges. Nearing the end of this term I can confidently say that my programming knowledge has improved drastically. I feel like this is because I have been taking better notes in lectures and allowing myself to fix problems instead of calling demonstrators. This has been extremely helpful for the project in CSC1022 as I can look at what the spec is telling me to do and have a clearer view of how to do it when coding. I seem to also find myself with less errors which included basic mistakes e.g. brackets or semicolons. This has allowed coding to be a lot less stressful as I must face less errors and when something does break I know it's most probably something bigger than a bracket. Overall the fact that programming is becoming less of a chore and I can enjoy making systems with a better knowledge of java.

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### **Communications Key!**

Tuesday, 8th May, 2018 - 3:46 p.m.

When joining computer science, I thought the interaction would be at a premium, however throughout this year I have learnt that it is very important in all sides of the course. I felt as if I was already fairly good at communicating to people, but I have further developed this throughout semester two. The best example of this was in the group video that we created, this is because throughout the entire process there were clever ideas which needed to be finalised on. The best way we thought of doing this was to have a democratic vote on which idea we should use, I felt this was the best way as then it allowed everyone to have a say and eliminates a stronger presence deciding everything. Another way communication has helped me this semester was with the demonstrators in practical classes. This is because now I feel as if I can talk to them more about the problems I have allowing me to understand their response better and give rebuttals. This has let me learn quicker.

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## **Planning to victory!**

Tuesday, 8th May, 2018 - 3:45 p.m.

I feel like have improved drastically planning and organisation in my first year and university. The main thing which I have learned is how to set goals and plan when there is a big task in front of you. A notable example of this is the project for CSC1022, the way I set about tackling the task was to set goals of things that need to be completed first. This would allow me to have several targets which will be increasing in difficulty instead of trying to do the whole project in one. This also allows for me to target general progression and I can give a better estimation for how long it will take for me to finish. Another thing that I have learnt is look at the pros and cons for doing certain options. This still needs to be improved but I feel as if I am better at weighing up different options when looking at task. A good example of this was the video made for our group project. We had two ideas one being us news reporters or a white board style video where we draw and talk over the top over the video. We decided with news reporters as we could explain better with more interesting visuals, also including the group better. Overall, I feel like planning is one of the most important things to learn in university and is useful when done properly.

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## **Becoming the Master Learner**

Friday, 15th December, 2017 - 2:24 p.m.

Over this term the skill which has been the most applicable to my work would be information literacy. You might wonder why but it is all because when I have a problem in my code or working out, sometimes people aren't allowed to give me a straight answer. This is where going through online websites and resources i.e. lecture notes help me. The only problem is you need to know what you want to fix or solve whilst also sifting out the absolutely horrible code which is laying around the internet. The fact is this is a way you can even learn functions and systems which have not even been taught to us yet, allowing me to use different skills which will be useful throughout my time here at Newcastle.

A skill which has never been good for me is also my literacy. If you asked me to reference Harvard style before coming here I would have had to walk off in shame as I had never had to use it before. Now I have used it several times and at least know what people are talking about when it is mentioned. Also doing tasks like these have helped me improve my overall active learning as I have responsibilities to get all my work down even if it might mean I miss a night out or two.

Overall my Intellectual skills are improving but still need to be worked on in the next term

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## Becoming the Master Computer Scientist

Friday, 15th December, 2017 - 2:20 p.m.

Before coming to university, I had never coded anything in my life and to think that after just about 10 weeks I would be able to make systems which work (most of the time) has amazed me. Within my courses the bulk of the information which has been taught is extremely difficult for me to understand at first glance. Through countless practical sessions and revision at home, I have been able to put myself and my work in a better position. This has shown extremely positive on my work as I achieved 67 out of 70 on my maths coursework and maths was the thing I was worried about when coming into university. The fact that I only missed three marks really shows how much I have improved in my overall learning and understating for maths and to me that's the most rewarding thing to have learnt.

Another thing which I have learned is the history of computer science which I found very eye opening when regarding how much history there is. To be honest it shocked me at some of the very primitive software and hardware which was developed into what we use today. The fact that the history is also littered with certain ideas which have never really taken off and may have been very ineffective also poked my interest.

Overall, I think my academic knowledge in computer science has greatly improved and has urged me to carry on in the same fashion in the next term.

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## Becoming the Master Leader

Friday, 15th December, 2017 - 2:17 p.m.

When joining this computer science course, the skill I thought I would be using the least would be communication as my metal picture of my work would be me and a computer and that's it. I was far from right because one of the first pieces of work we had to do was a group presentation with 9 other students. I am already quite outgoing and conversationalist at heart, but skills such as delegation and leadership have really been important in these first few month. When our group was given this first presentation no one really took charge (effectively) and nothing was done. It took me and another member of the group to give everyone a job, I'm pretty sure if we didn't do this, It never would have been done!

Another skill which has defiantly been used and improved would have to be my peer assessment. Trying to understand other people's code and give constructive feedback has been a big part of helping my group and the peer assessments I have received have also been useful. It's hard sometimes as people have different styles of code, so trying to give feedback can be difficult but normally the problems are just brackets. They are the most annoying things I have ever encountered! Building a relationship with my group was my main aim when meeting them and our group has flourished into a tight friendship group.

Overall my interaction with my group and peers has been a lot better than expected and has made my first term great.

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## Becoming the Master Organiser

Friday, 15th December, 2017 - 2:07 p.m.

When I started at Newcastle University my main problem with work and life was my poor organising. Furthermore, coming to a university like this I would need to buck up my ideas on planning for coursework and revision. I feel as if throughout this first term I have started to make some headway on being more organised and it has been the most

useful tool in my arsenal by a long shot. These later stages of the term, being bombarded with coursework from all of my courses have put a real strain on the planning. However, The initial layout of how I was going to approach these pieces of coursework when they were released have allowed me to have some time to myself and not sitting behind a computer scrabbling to finish last minute. Having a good plan is really important as you can set times and plan out every day for maximum effectiveness.

My independence, which I also thought was a weak point of my work has greatly improved when having to code most of the time by yourself. The fact that most of the work at university has to be done independently shocked me at the start, I thought I wasn't going out at all! Thankfully I found ways of working independently, extremely quickly by using my time effectively. This allowed me to balance my work and living quite nicely hand in hand whilst also improving my revision sessions.

Overall my self-management skills are still not where I would like them to be but at least it's a start!

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