

2021: Reviewing my First Year in DS

Mengyu Jackson

One year ago, I was enrolled in Flatiron studying to become a Data Scientist. Data Science is a fascinating topic for me, and I loved studying all of it from current state of the art methods for qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, time series prediction, image classification and more to historical anecdotes and [interesting paradoxes](#). Although I enjoyed the learning process and the bootcamp a lot, the time since graduation has been very difficult. I wanted to quickly find a job that would allow me to continue developing my skills while also making at least enough money to justify keeping my kids in daycare.

Finding a job has been much more difficult than I expected, especially given the resilience of [Data Science to the pandemic](#) and the continued popularity and growth of the field. I found that I'm not the only one [having this problem](#). In addition to the general excess supply of Junior Data Scientists compared to demand, my inability to relocate has been a consistent sticking point in the interview/hiring process. Because I need to keep my kids near their grandparents and my husband can't leave his job, I'm stuck with a much smaller pool of opportunities than many entry level Data Scientists.

I came very close to pulling my kids from daycare and returning to full time parenting to save costs before I found another option: While I'm job searching I've been doing daily practice on websites like leetcode and kaggle anyways to keep my technical skills sharp. I decided to start spending my time on Freelancer, Upwork, and Fiver instead. Using freelancing websites will help me stay in touch with what skills clients are willing to pay for, help me work on and improve client communication skills, and help pay some of the bills while I build professional experience for my resume and continue to look for a steady source of work.

So far it has been very stressful, and I don't think I would enjoy this type of work long term, but I'm not ready to give up on my dreams of being a professional Data Scientist yet. I plan to make it happen in 2022. Happy New Years!