**Article Review – “**[**Be A Better Designer By Eating An Elephant**](http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2014/10/17/be-a-better-designer-by-eating-an-elephant/)**”**

*By Phillip Nadjafov*

Alexander Charchar’s piece titled “Be A Better Designer By Eating An Elephant” focuses on motivating readers to try and take up small learning projects during their free time in order to keep up with the constant innovation going on in the programming environment. To do this, Charchar recommends setting up a 30 day program in which the individual plans to learn something new, (such as a new programming language, design tool, etc.) and then works on fulfilling that goal by learning what they want, taking it one small piece at the time. (This is why the author refers to this process as “eating an elephant”) The author provides recommendations for fulfilling such a goal through methods such as setting time aside at the same time of every day, sharing the process with friends, and increasing the difficulty of learning if things get too easy. I found Charchar’s article to be especially inspiring when he states, “You might be able to develop your skills to keep up with, and then break ahead of, the pack…With time, you could become an authority to whom others in your field, both students and professionals, call on for help in becoming more skilled and knowledgeable themselves. Instead of simply meeting standards and expectations, you could be setting them.” (Charchar) This statement provides a clear summary of the effectiveness of learning new things through small steps, and shows how much of an impact could be made with a small bit of expanded knowledge. When concluding the article, Charchar states how this process of learning could be applied to any field of knowledge, and provides recommendations for books to read when starting. I personally would like to try taking a 30 day learning challenge, but I find that such a challenge would be difficult to accomplish for a student such as myself, who is constantly focusing on both studies and extracurricular activities. Applying this article to computer science, a 30 day challenge could be very useful for learning new programming languages one small step at a time, and could be made even easier by following the tutorials provided by books such as the Head First series. What I believe would be the most difficult aspect for someone in order to fulfill a task would be to follow through with the plan; making sure to set time aside every planned day and not wasting it on entertainment instead. All in all, I found this article to be very motivational for encouraging me to focus on my studies instead of procrastination, and I would like to try the challenge someday, maybe even learn a new language on my own!