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Google Chicago
20 West Kinzie Street
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am applying for the position of Software Engineer. I have ten years of experience in the software field, and a life-long infatuation with problem solving through analytic, synthetic, and creative means. I am a self-motivated, well-rounded, lifelong learner whose passion for computer science has recently been rekindled. I would love a chance to collaborate on projects with the best and brightest minds that Google attracts. I also have ideas for new projects that fit within the framework of Google's larger vision and which leverage Google's primary strength, search.

My professional background is grounded in web application development, but I have recent experience in desktop and mobile application development as well as in user-interface and database design. I have been lead architect, team leader, programmer, QA tester, and customer liaison, sometimes all in one project.

My communication and interpersonal skills are exemplary, and have helped me tremendously both in communicating design ideas to peers, as well as in client interactions, where my strong listening skills become even more important. My main concern has always been to give a client the best experience possible. At the beginning of a project, I guide them through a Socratic exercise to make sure they are clear about what they want, which may differ subtly from what they first present. This has an added benefit of generating the functional requirements of the application at a high-level. I continue to communicate closely with the client all the way through to the short revision cycles of testing before release.

I constantly strive to improve myself as a programmer, both practically and theoretically, from learning a new API or language to studying design patterns and algorithms before going to sleep.

Personally, I love long-distance bike riding, and in the fall of 2001 did a solo ride of approximately 2,000 miles from Chicago, IL to Orlando, FL by way of Boston, MA. I have performed improv theater for many years and am an alum of the Second City and Improv Olympic. Until last year I was a member of a well-established Chicago pop band. I am also very interested in the synthesis of computers and cognitive sciences and I am currently teaching myself LISP to investigate more closely the work done by Hofstadter and others on the CopyCat and MetaCat projects.

I am very excited about the opportunity to work for Google, and I am confident my skills and experience would make me a valuable asset. Thank you very much for taking the time to review my qualifications and interests.

Sincerely,
Colin Sheaff