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Data Science

In late spring 2018, I attended the HackRU hackathon at Rutgers. The event spanned roughly 36 hours and had well over 200 attendees. Some of the sponsors included at the even were: JnJ, Merck, Trello, iCims, and prudential. I was able to intereact with many of the vendors who were actively recruiting computer scientists for their entry level programs. Many of the sponsors were unaware of Rutgers coding bootcamps, and I was happy to share my experiences thus far. The vendors had several prizes for using their services in your code or coding around a specific subject matter, which was pretty cool to see (They were giving away a millennium falcon waffle maker).

Overall my experience with the hackathon was very positive. The group I was working with was very helpful and had a deep understanding of the subject matter. Many of which had attended hackathons in the past. They were able to give advice as I was coding and sort of coach me through the issues I was having. As a very junior coder, it was reassuring to have that support during the process.

One of the cons of the experience was the sheer age gap between myself and the attendees. I had anticipated more people out of school or within masters programs would attend, but that was not the case. In addition, those who did not attend Rutgers full time did not have access to the wifi, so I was stuck coding off of my cell phone hot spot.

Most of the students I met had intern experience at large banks or consulting organizations. It was interesting to hear of their background and their goals, but ultimately I did not believe they would be able to help me within the foreseeable future. The next networking event I attend will be a more professional environment with people more around my age. I believe in that environment I would be more successful in networking.

Originally the thought of networking was quite daunting, especially with people who have more advanced coding skills. But after attending I no longer feel that way. I am fairly confident that at my next event I will be able to leverage the connections I make to both grow as a professional and potentially find leads towards my new career path.

Futhermore, I think networking is a crucial part to career growth and is something that should be taken seriously and pursued passionately. I am truly grateful for the opportunity Rutgers had given me in allowing me to attend the bootcamp. I am looking forward to the next steps in my Data science career.