Research Interest Narrative - the perfect storm

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Introduction

Every programmer is ordained into the church of code with the same simple

program. All it does is display the words 'hello world.' In 2014, I took a

computer science class, printed 'hello world', and am now forever a member of

the church of code. When I wrote my first 'hello world' program in 2014, I was

already 21. 21 is old for a programmer to write their first 'hello world.' Being

nearly a man when I first learned to code has given me a unique perspective

on what life is like with and without programming and how fun it truly is.{ In

this essay I will explain: the problems I had before I knew how to program,

how much fun I had learning how to solve those problems, and how I currently

program with a team of other expert programmers. Throughout this class and

in my internship at Leidos this summer, I intend to further research tools that

enable team work between developers. I hope to have another 'hello world'

moment with some of these tools, and perhaps introduce some of them to my

team!}

2 before

Before I learned to code I occasionally faced many problems that either required

code or could be performed much faster with code. These problems didn’t occur

every day, but the problems that I did face heavily inﬂuenced and motivated

me to keep working hard while learning how to code.

2.1 Joe

The problem that inﬂuenced me the most was given to me by my God father

in an internship I did at his ﬁnancial advice ﬁrm in the summer of 2013. At

the internship, I was hired to copy information from a thousands of websites

and paste the information into an excel spreadsheet. At the time, automating

the process didn’t occur to me, but the task stuck with me and when I learned

how to code, automating repetitive tasks became a very important to me. The

task took months of hard work but if I were to do it again today, I would write

web-scraper to automate all the copying and pasting. I would be done with

months worth of work in less than 10 hours.

2.2 Business

When I started college in 2012, I was initially a business major. I worked hard

as a business major but I ran into certain problems where programming was

simply the right solution.

2.2.1 oportunity cost

In my second semester of college, I took micro-economics. One of the core

principles of micro-economics is opportunity cost. Simply put, opportunity cost

states that diﬀerent jobs pay diﬀerent amounts, so you should choose the job

that pays the most. At the same time, I had a close friend, Dimitri, who was

a Computer Science major who would talk about how much money he would

make after college. It took me a few years to realize that ultimately my micro

econoimcs class was ironically telling me that Dimitri was right and I shouldn’t

be majoring in business.

2.2.2 investing

In highschool I worked a few part time jobs and saved up a small amount of

money. In the Accounting class I took in my ﬁrst year as a business major,

learned the beneﬁts of compound interest and how important it is to invest

your money so it can grow. Unfortunately, managing this money became abit of a headache because I was always worried if I was invested in the right

company. Eventually I came to the conclusion that a computer could help me

manage these funds. Years later, I wrote a web scraper to find companies that

changed more than 10% in a day which I would then invest decide if I wanted

in.

3 during

In 2014, on a whim, I decided to take my first coding class when I was still

a business major. It was completely impractical as it didn't count toward my

degree in any way. Despite it's impracticality, the class could help me in the

solve the problems described above. In addition to solving those old problems,

new opportunities constantly presented themselves as I was learning to code.

Coding quickly became an obsession that's shaped my life since.

3.1 Online resources

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As I was learning to code I found a ton of cool videos and other resources I

could use to apply my new skills to once honed. That semester I stayed up long

nights drinking beer and watching videos of Defcon talks alone in my room.

Even though I struggled to understand many of the topics in the videos, I

dreamed of one day understanding them and advancing the \_eld. I'm not quite

there yet.

3.2 Love interest

One day a friend invited me to a party where I met my girlfriend. She was a

political science major and took the same coding class as me on a whim like me.

She said she was having trouble in the class and I promised I would help her

with it even though I was struggling in the class myself. In a desperate effort to

impress her (which I'm still always trying to do), I learned quickly, got caught

up in the class, and passed what I learned on to her.

4 after

Learning coding was life changing. After I first learned coding, I knew it was

something I wanted to do for the rest of my life the only question was how. So

after taking that coding class, I switched from being a junior in the college of

business at the University of MaryWashington to being a Freshman Information

technology major at Northern Virginia Community College. Graduating years

after my friends is a small price to pay for a rewarding career, financial stability

and a girlfriend I love.

4.1 conclusion - propose a topic

These days I'm moving from the academic world of George Mason University

to the professional field at Leidos. This summer I'll be returning to Leidos for

an internship. In my previous experience at Leidos I learned how to work with

developers using certain softwares. When I returned to George Mason, I used

this experience to contribute to the Student Run Computing and Technology

(SRCT) club at George Mason. Over this summer I look forward to introducing

my team at Leidos to some of the technologies that SRCT uses for collaboration.