8020 JOB-SEARCH IN 2023 AND BEYOND.

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Start with your online presence

Let's start with some fundamentals.

It is wise, although not essential, to have an online presence. By this, I mean a LinkedIn profile, Twitter, perhaps a GitHub profile.
If you decide to remain a "ghost" and not maintain any online profiles, perhaps you should consider a career in Cyber Security. I joke!

It is important to realise that potential employers will nearly always look you up online. They will check out your profiles, see what you're up to, what you tweet about, see if there are any red flags.

Does this seem a little intrusive? Sure. Is it a totally reasonable and expected step for employers to take? Also, yes. This is the world we live in now.

Below, I have included some tips on each platform I have already mentioned. These are not meant to be exhaustive guides, but they should help you get your online presence in order.

LinkedIn

First, let's get your profile into shape.

• Add a photo
• Update your headline to outline what you are interested in.
Don't just leave it as "Student at X"
• Add your education history
• Add your employment history

LinkedIn does a pretty good job of prompting you to fill in each important section if you haven't already, so follow the guidance when you create your account or login.

Getting your LinkedIn profile into shape won't magically bring you job offers. But it will help support your job search and it will let you engage in conversations and reach out to new connections more confidently.

We will discuss LinkedIn in more detail throughout this book, but one good place to start is to search for groups to join. Find groups that are relevant to your areas of interest and specific to your country or

region if possible. Within these groups, there will be opportunities to interact with other people and make new connections.

You can also look at the suggested influencers to follow on LinkedIn. Following their content may help you uncover new ideas which could help you in your professional journey.

Twitter

If you're not on Twitter, don't worry. You don't **need** a Twitter account, but if you do have one, you need to make sure it won't harm your job search efforts.

The simple rule is this: if you use Twitter for stuff that you wouldn't want a potential employer to see, then I recommend you make your profile private.

You'll need to use your own judgement on this. It's your call.

Conversely, if you would like to have a public Twitter profile for networking, learning, and building a personal brand, get started by filling in the important bits of your profile.

• Add a photo
    • Fill out your bio with details of what you're interested in, what you tweet about and "who you are" as a person.
• Add your location – this can be as generic as your country
        e.g. "UK" or you can give your specific city or town.

Sometimes, this can work to your advantage when applying for local jobs.

• If you have a portfolio website, online CV, or GitHub profile, add a link to this in your Twitter profile.

Once your profile is good to go, you can start tweeting about what you're interested in, share your work, share your learning, connect with other like-minded "techies", and start to uncover new opportunities.

GitHub

If you work with code and you're not sure what Git or GitHub is, take the time to learn. There are some great resources online and it will be well worth your time.

If you are aiming to become a web/mobile/app/software developer of any kind, you should really have a GitHub account (github.com). Having an active GitHub profile can strengthen your job applications significantly.

There are other Git providers such as GitLab and BitBucket, but I would recommend going with GitHub as it is so widely used.
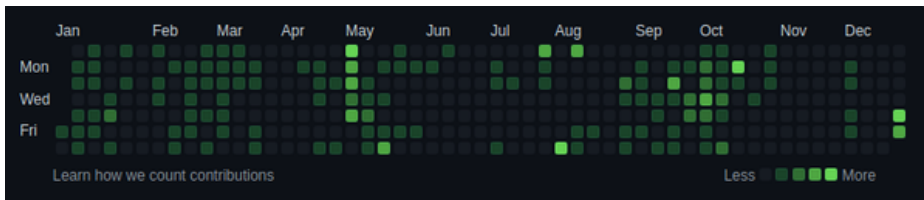
As with LinkedIn and Twitter, you will want to get your profile into shape, then you can start building your reputation.

• Add a photo (sound familiar?)
        • Fill out your bio with what you're interested in and what you do.
• You can enhance your profile page by creating a repository named the same as your username and adding a README.md

markdown file. The contents of this file will then be displayed on your

profile page..

Whenever you work on a coding project, commit your code to a public

repository.

The more you commit code, the greener your GitHub "contributions grid" will become.
Here's an example screenshot of my contributions grid from my GitHub profile page.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |

Mon

Wed

Fri

Learn how we count contributions   Less ▢▪▪▪ More

See how active you can get on GitHub. Remember to commit often. Don't commit a whole day's work to GitHub as a single commit. Break things down and commit your changes as you make progress.

Think about it as building your reputation, one code commit at a time!

Build a project portfolio

Whether you are working with code or not, building a portfolio of personal projects can give you the edge when it comes to your job search.

It demonstrates that you are proactive, keen to learn, and have a good work ethic.

A personal blog is an even better place to showcase your learning, experiments, and projects.

As a developer you must write blogs on dev.to, it is a blog

~~community for developers with different experie~~nce level.

You can then share your blog posts on your social profiles as well.

Keep learning by doing, show curiosity, and document your journey.

Most importantly, try to have fun with it!

KEY POINTS

- Employers will look at your online profiles, so get them into in shape
- Your online profiles are just the starting point for building your online reputation, networking, and starting conversations
- Consider building a personal project portfolio

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Think outside the box

If you are about to start your job search, where would you start?

Google? Sure.

Job sites like indeed.com? Ok, they might work.

You will probably be able to uncover hundreds of job listings without too much effort. This sounds great, right? Lots of jobs to apply for. Well, let's rethink this.

You may apply to a hundred jobs (how soul destroying!) but how many **others** are applying to those same jobs? Maybe hundreds.

I don't like those odds. Even if you *are* potentially the best candidate for the job, how will you stand out from such a large crowd?

I'm not saying it cannot be done, because it can, but we'll come back to that later.
For now, I want you to think outside the box.

Did you know that there are hundreds of job opportunities out there that aren't even listed online?

Did you know that there are employers out there who are desperate to find talent but don't have the time or resources for a formal recruitment process?

So, where are these job opportunities and who are these employers?

So how can you take advantage of this?

Here's what you need to do: **reach out to them!**

Do you need a complex introductory email that explains why you would be such a valuable asset for their company?

Nope.

Have a look at the example below from Jenny2.

Hi,

I hope you're doing well. My name is "Swastik", currently working as Frontend Engineer (ReactJS) at Taqtics.co. I'm really interested in applying for a ReactJS role at Fyntune.com.

I have 2.5 years of experience in frontend development. Additionally, I have experience in fullstack (MERN) development .

I would appreciate your referral if you have any. I have attached my resume below.

Thank you!

Can you see how simple it is?

But here's the best bit: This is a real email that I sent which got me my current job.

Today, you may want to avoid using "Dear Sir/Madam" and use "To whom it may concern" instead. If you know the name of the person

you are trying to reach, though, you can address the email directly to them.

Start out simple.

In the next section, we'll look at how to find these employers.

KEY POINTS

- Not all job opportunities are advertised online
- Keep your outreach messages clear, polite, and to the point
- Employers often hire for attitude over skills

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Where would you like to work?

How can you find these elusive employers who would be interested in working with you?

Well, let's reframe the question away from them and onto you: where would *you* like to work?

Do you have a dream job? What do you enjoy doing most? Are you a natural coder? Are you gifted at organising things? Do you enjoy working with lots of other people?

Leveraging Google search

Searching for companies local to you can be hugely beneficial because it gives you an edge and makes it a lot easier to meet face to face with employers even if you may end up being offered a remote-first role.

Here are some Google search ideas to get you started:

• Web Design company in [city]
• Software Development in [city]
• Digital Agency in [city]
• App Design Studio in [city]
• Game Design Studio in [city]
• IT support company in [city]

As part of your company search, create a document or spreadsheet and note down 10-15 companies that appeal to you.

This will be your "shortlist".

Getting to know a company

For each company you find, have a look through the following to get a feel for what type of company they are:

• Team page – how large a team are they?
• Who are the founders/directors – can you find them on LinkedIn? (something we'll come back to later)
• Social media activity – they'll look up the same on you!
• Careers or Jobs page

When you're looking through their website and social profiles, what kind of culture do they seem to have? Does it look like a good place to work? Obviously, you can't tell for sure, but there will be certain things that give you a clue about what kind of culture they have:

• Team diversity
• Background of the founders
• Language used across their website and social media channels (e.g. formal, informal)

Make sure to check out their Careers or Jobs page if they have one.

You don't want to reach out speculatively to them when they have clear recruitment guidelines or job openings on their website. This will just make you look lazy.

If they have job openings listed but nothing seems to match what you are looking for, don't be put off. You can still reach out speculatively

and explain your ambitions, while acknowledging that their current job openings don't seem to be an exact fit.

Read the small print

If you do find an advertised job opening at one of your shortlisted companies, great. Save the link and come back to it when you're ready to work through the application process.

Be careful to read job descriptions in full. Sometimes, they might include requests such as:
• "Include a joke about HTML in your cover letter"
     • "Make sure to tell us what your favourite animal is and why"
Do the actual answers to these types of questions matter?

Typically, not. But what it ***does*** show is that you paid attention to the job description.

This is often a first test. Applicants who don't bother to address this small request will often be discarded straight away.
Don't get caught out by something so simple.

Your first role as a steppingstone

You may find a company you would like to work at, but they may not have any roles available for the type of work you would like to do.

For example, you may want to become a software engineer and the company you have identified has a really attractive software

engineering department, but they only have vacancies in the IT Support department.

This might be a way for you to get a foot in the door. In fact, it can be highly advantageous to get some experience in what might feel like a less interesting role to build up your confidence and reputation.

Companies will often look for opportunities to recruit talent *internally* from different departments rather than always trying to fill vacancies from external candidates.

If you land an interview with the company, ask about the possibilities for advancing into other roles that you are interested in. If you come across as proactive and keen to progress, this will only help your chances of getting the job.

KEY POINTS

- It is important to think about what kind of company you would like to work at
- Don't search for jobs, search for companies
- Get to know a company before reaching out to them

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Speculative Outreach

Once you are armed with a shortlist of companies you want to contact, next comes the fun part.
You'll need to reach out to them!

You can do this in different ways:

1. Direct email or contact form
2. LinkedIn

Outreach via direct email or contact form

This option is quite straightforward. A company may advertise an email address on their website, or they may have a contact form, or they may have both.

If they have both, pick one. I wouldn't recommend using both methods at the same time as it could look a little spammy.
If you don't hear back within 1 or 2 weeks, you may wish to follow up using a different method.
Keep it clear and concise.

Simple works.

You may want to embellish your message with something unique to the company to show that you are genuinely interested in them. Here are some examples:

I really liked your work on the [...] project and that is exactly the kind of project I would love to work on in the future.

I value our local community, so your company stood out to me because of your local charity work.

I wouldn't recommend copying and pasting these examples. Use them as inspiration.

You can't fake it. It **must** be true.

In my opinion, part of having a good attitude is being *genuine*. And good employers will pick up on this.

If you get a reply, enjoy the ride even if it doesn't turn into a job offer. You will learn a lot just from talking to a potential employer, even if they don't have a role available right now.

If they're not able to offer you anything at the moment, that can take the pressure off and even allow you to ask other questions about their company or "how things work" that you might be too afraid to ask if you were interviewing for a job.

Ask questions. Keep learning.

Outreach via LinkedIn

LinkedIn has the benefit of letting you connect directly with people. Often, this means that the Managing Director or Founder of a company is only a couple of clicks away.

You should be able to search for the companies in your shortlist on LinkedIn and find a list of people that work there.

Even better, if you have identified the founder(s) from the company's website, you can look them up directly and request to connect.

This may sound scary, but it doesn't have to be.

As long as you have your profile in order, you may be surprised at the new connections you make.

If you're just starting out on LinkedIn, it can be difficult to connect with new people if your network is very small. You should try to expand your network as quickly as possible when you start out.

Connect with people you already know, friends, and family to get things going.

As your network grows, it will become easier to search and connect with people.

When you make a connection request, you can choose to send a note along with the request. Many people suggest **always** sending a note to explain why you're looking to connect.

If you don't send a note on the initial request, you can send them a message after they have accepted your request.

If you send a note with the connection request, the length of your message is quite limited, so you must use the space available wisely.

Your message length is less restricted once you are connected. You can then send links and attachments, but don't spam people without receiving any response. Wait for the conversation to start, then you can share your CV or portfolio if they would like to see it.

I have included a couple of suggestions below to give you some inspiration. You can copy and paste the message each time but make sure you personalise the note with their name and company.

Hi [name], I'm based locally and learning […] and I'm interested to learn what opportunities there might be at [company] in the future. Would be great to connect. Take care.

Hi [name], I'd love to learn more about [company] if you'd be happy to connect. I'm currently studying [subject] at [college/university] and I'm keen to expand my network. Many thanks!

As a final point, not everyone will accept your connection requests, but don't worry. This is just part of the process.

"Let's have a chat"

If you engage in speculative outreach and things go well, you may receive positive responses such as:

• "*let's have a chat over a coffee*"
• "*let's grab a drink and discuss what opportunities we might have*"
• *"let's catch up on a video call"*

It might all sound very informal, but you should still view the chance to "chat" with the employer as a potential interview.

You will still want to prepare, research the company further, come ready with questions of your own, be personable and professional.

If you are meeting face to face, you may not be required to wear a suit, but try not to look too scruffy!

If you are meeting at the employers' office, you can ask what dress code is expected. This shows respect for the environment you will be visiting.

KEY POINTS

- Keep your outreach messages clear and simple
- Pick one method for each company initially
- Follow up within 1-2 weeks using a different method
- Make it personal
- If asked to have a "chat", prepare for it like an interview

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Community and Conversations

Having your online profiles such as LinkedIn and Twitter setup means that you can begin to tap into online communities and conversations that can help uncover opportunities.

Twitter is great because it is so open. You can connect freely with anyone that has a public profile. There are active tech communities for early career techies that post on various hashtags such as #devcommunity, #100daysofcode, and #CodeNewbies.
There are other non-coding related hashtags too, so go and explore!

LinkedIn is less open in the sense that connection requests have to be accepted but there is now a "follow" feature on LinkedIn which gives a little bit more flexibility.

For both Twitter and LinkedIn, these should be your goals:

• Make connections
• Start conversations
• Build relationships

Why? The more you get yourself out there, the more likely good things are going to come your way.
Whether you realise it or not, you will be building a "personal brand". This has long-term value and can open up opportunities for you well into the future.

Every little action you take today will contribute to the increased potential for positive things to happen to you in 5, 10, 15 years into the future.

In the shorter-term, the larger your network is, the easier it is to connect with new people that might be (or know) potential employers.

On LinkedIn, keep an eye on your feed, or even actively monitor specific hashtags. You never know when a great opportunity may present itself.

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Think Different / Think Big

Searching for a job can be a long and arduous process.

It is important to look at the bigger picture before you wade in and start to feel overwhelmed.
We have mentioned before that applying to every job listing available is not necessarily the best approach.
You will expose yourself to the psychological toll of receiving so many rejections. If you don't really want the job, don't apply for it.
Pick your battles.

You can increase your chances of success by demonstrating a good attitude and using some innovative techniques to make you stand out from the crowd.

Some of the ideas we have covered in this book are as follows:

• Build an online presence
• Showcase your personal projects
   • Target companies you would like to work for, even if they aren't
                  advertising any vacancies
      • Try speculative outreach by email, LinkedIn to uncover hidden
                                  opportunities

• Explore alternative recruitment channels
• Look out for potential mentors

Once you land an interview and it goes well, should you accept the first offer that comes your way?
Let's first consider a few "bigger picture" issues.

Interviews are two-way

When you interview for a role, remember that you are interviewing your prospective employer as well.

You will likely be given the opportunity to ask questions, so have some prepared.

You could ask about what type of work you will be doing in the first week, first month, first three months, etc...

You could ask about whether you will have a workplace mentor. Will there be training and upskilling opportunities on the job? Asking these kinds of questions can also have the dual benefit of showing that you're keen to develop yourself professionally.

You may also want to ask about flexible working opportunities if that is important to you. You will want to double check what is in your contract before signing anything, though.

Something may be said at an early interview stage which doesn't end up being true or applicable to you if and when you finally get offered a role.

There are other things you will want to look out for as well. These aren't necessarily things you can directly ask about, but you can look for evidence of the type of company culture, how diverse it is, whether it is a high pressure or supportive environment.

Try to meet as many people in the company as possible and look out for how they are behaving and whether it seems like a place you would enjoy working at.

Remember, you don't need to accept the first offer that comes your way.

Recruiters

It would be remiss of me not to give at least a passing mention to recruiters and recruitment agencies.

As with all industries, there are the good and the bad.

The bad recruiters will send you to interviews for jobs which are entirely inappropriate, push you as hard as possible to accept job offers, and coerce you into feeling guilty if you back out of an interview. To them, you are a commission payment.

The good recruiters will do the opposite.

That said, I would not recommend going through recruiters to land your first job in Tech. There isn't a need. In fact, many employers won't even deal with recruitment agencies.

As one employer I know said, "*if they use a recruiter for their first job in tech, they are doing it wrong*".

Recruiters can be great when you are further along in your career and looking for senior roles or thinking about contracting.

But as this book has hopefully shown, there are so many opportunities out there in the world of Tech. All you need to do is go and find them!

KEY POINTS

- Interviews are two-way
- Pay attention to red flags and be prepared to say "no"
- Don't let coding tests get you down
- Negative feedback from employers doesn't always give the full picture so don't let it get you down
- It is not advisable to rely on recruiters to find you your first job in Tech

Thank You!