

Professional Insights

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Now, this is a story all about how
My life got flipped-turned upside down
And I'd like to take a minute, just sit right there
~~I'll tell you how I became the prince of a town called Bel Air~~
I'll tell you how I can convince you I'm the man for questionnaire

First off I would like to say that I formally know next to nothing about programming today. But don't fret. Don't run! Formal knowledge isn't always what gets the job done. I've taken only basic classes in HTML, so how could such a guy program so well? My experience comes from finding problems here and there, and sitting down for long periods of time because I care. I taught myself HTML, PHP, and JavaScript along the way. Each time I started Googling code examples, it felt like play. I literally looked forward to getting home and diving in again every day. My biggest passion is competitive swimming, and I first dove into programming to aid my coaching... in the beginning.

A big challenge as a coach is to sign my kids up for the weekly meet, but recording everyone's events proved to be quite the feat. I began with a simple `<table>` with each swimmer and their events entered using a checkbox element. I had just purchased a smartphone (no more dumb phones!) and was feeling overly ambitious to make my purchase relevant. I found, of course, that the table would clear when my phone turned off and the page was reloaded. This marked the beginning of my PHP career as I looked into database storage and my interfacing journey unfolded. Once I got my hands wet enough to store and retrieve the information, I began to see other possibilities such as family logins to double check what I had entered, or a button that submits the information to the team computer operator using automation. This system that I dubbed AMES (Alternative Meet Entry System) became quite popular even during early development. This excitement fueled me beyond measurement!

As the neighborhood parents learned what was going on, they wanted more and the program rapidly expanded. My creativity stirred new ideas and I learned new functions as my goals demanded. The program is now over 5,000 lines of self-educated scratch written code with about 80% being PHP. All of this was done with nothing close to a computer science degree. The swimming league of Greenville is looking to use it for the upcoming season as the primary event entry system! Hype? Beyond belief! But that is not all; it was literally the beginning. There is more to my story, and what I've done. Unfortunately there isn't room for a full explanation, so I'll explain briefly one by one:

My second undertaking was proposed by my sister's sorority requesting a system to help screen through incoming freshman. I was back at it again learning the functions that I needed. After many phone calls and debugging, I soon succeeded. The system creates a profile based on information from the current sisters and compares it to data obtained from incoming students. It returns which girls are most likely to get along and avoids the old hand selecting nuisance. My program was used by Kappa Delta in both Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 spreading my innovation to Clemson's Greek scene.

Currently I've turned my thoughts to more profitable endeavor. I used to sell my books (at a loss) to whomever, but I had an idea to use programming to instead make some "cheddar." I again used PHP to embark on this quest, and found to my surprise profit potential beyond what I had guessed. Through working on this project, I was again learning and gaining programming credentials. I designed a program that searches for the best buying and selling prices of books and logs a database with the differentials. I will verify and buy from location A, to get the books within a little more than a day. Next is repackaging and redirecting for sale at another location before identifying another book and repeating the rotation. For a little over a year I've been buying and selling at my program's recommendation. I have profited over \$1,200 since the program's creation!

I have retooled my business finance major to include a minor in computer science, and am very excited by the possibility to partner with an upbeat company. Sparc is just what I've been looking to find. When considering an addition to your team, keep me in mind. I look forward to talking in person more. I'll promise not to rhyme anymore.