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Project 01/2: Manifesto and Portrait of a Notre Dame Computer Science Student

Manifesto

The Notre Dame computer science student is a new breed.

We know about the stereotypes of the hacker: Cheeto-snacking, database-hacking, and basement-shacking. We also know the stereotypes of the startup kid: adventurous, naive, and uneducated. None of these stereotypes fit us. We can talk assembly code and compilers with the large bearded system administrator just as well as we can talk business with the accountants and consultants. We unite both worlds, acting as the interconnect of between the power of computing and the power of money.

We are driven by both passion and financial success. Our homework often comes second to our personal projects. We often go above and beyond the rubric for class projects, not to kiss ass with our professor, but to quench our desire to create, innovate, and learn. However, we will not let our passions be exploited by our employers. We are business savvy and know that our talents deserve generous compensation.

We code hard, party hard, and crash hard. We'll crush an assignment in half the expected time so we can go out and have a good time. We create businesses with the amount of money that our friends spend on Starbucks. The \$30 you spent on this month's macchiatos went towards our hosting bill for our new website. We stand on the shoulders of giants, and we are growing by the second. The pace of innovation is set by us; the capitalists and legislators can't keep up.

We are the new breed rising.

Portrait

Appearance

The average Notre Dame computer science student subscribes to many programmer stereotypes. Often wearing jeans with running shoes and a sweatshirt that a recruiter sent them, it

is easy to identify a common uniform among classmates; however, there is an exceptional number of students within Notre Dame computer science that do not dress according to these norms. Some students put more effort into their appearance and fashion trends, dressing individually and with care. While some sport trendy hairstyles, other students do not realize when a haircut is in their best interest; for those to whom this applies, they care not what society deems appropriate hairstyles. Laptops are often plastered with stickers, badges earned from hackathons and advertisements from high-profile employers.

Personality

Of course there are people that fall outside of this description, but for the most part a Notre Dame computer science student can be characterized by one phrase: generally uncomfortable at all times. I think that the computer scientists here, while getting along with their classmates, would rather spend time alone, which makes sense given their introverted personality type. Going out to a party or being part of a social setting means having a conversation with someone other than the Domino's delivery person, which by now they know by name. All other kinds of conversations are awkward. Being a computer science major comes with an uneasy feeling almost all of the time.

Academics

Regarding academics, the Notre Dame computer science student is always in the know about the current department gossips: which classes are the most rewarding, which are the most challenging, and, most importantly, which classes don't take attendance. If there is ever a lull in conversation with a ND computer science student, asking about their current class load is a safe move. They may begrudgingly discuss their required theology and philosophy classes, wishing that they could trade Cryptology for Christology.

The night before any large assignment, the ND computer science student can be found in the tropical climate of the Fitzpatrick Engineering Library ("Fitz"). Students utilize the wheeled base of their chair as they roll across the aisles, asking for help and giving pointers to their fellow students. Once you finish your assignment, it is advised to unceremoniously log out and leave the library. The first student to complete the project is the first student to be attacked by their peers with a litany of questions and requests for help.

As far as class selection goes, the ND computer science student is fairly relaxed. Most of their class choices are dictated by a strict curriculum, leaving very little to fret about. Contrast this to their friends in Arts & Letters, who regularly hold Satanic ceremonies and slaughter lambs to pray for a good DART. Textbooks are also fairly optional. Anything in the textbook can be found online (in both legitimate and illegitimate places).

Lastly, the ND computer science student has very few artistic bones in their body. CSS is considered optional, and little to no attention is paid to UX. The few students with even the most basic sense of design and style always wow the crowd at end-of-semester project presentations.

Hobbies Outside Computing

One might think that every spending a few hours a week in computer science classes that the students would want a break. And while some may hold leadership positions in clubs or play Ultimate Frisbee or even computer games from the 90s that they are extremely good at, many often work on side project in computing or other miscellaneous computing-related things. However, despite spending the majority of their time in computing related things, computer science kids, like many other college kids, do drink. Their drink is pretty similar to the average student here. They play the standard drinking games like beer pong, flip cup, and stack cup. However the games all have a twist to them. Most come with computer science jokes being thrown at people who miss a cup or can't flip their cup fast enough. Unlike other majors that might criticize someone's hair or clothes, computer science kids keep their insults related to what they know: computer science. In terms of outside hobbies, computer science kids stick to what they do best and feel most comfortable with.

Religion

Classifying the religious beliefs of the Notre Dame computer science student is not a difficult task. As a whole, our class is a few standard deviations above the national average in the category of percentage Christian/Catholic, primarily because we are at a Catholic school. Learning the religious beliefs of a particular student, however, is not easy to do. Notre Dame computer science students speak far less of their religion in general conversation than others. This is partially because it rarely comes up in a computer science class. It is more, however,

because the general conversations of computer science majors is geared more towards technology and less towards philosophical or theological topics.

Future Plans

As far as future plans go, there is some variation among the class, but not too much. Most are joining different corporations as software engineers. There are many mentions of Google, Apple, GE, Pariveda, Epic, and others. While happy to talk about their plans, most avoid asking others about plans, in order to avoid the awkward possibility that that person has nothing lined up. Further, compensation is taboo, and each is left to guess others' compensation based on company name.