

How to get into Software Engineering

What makes a candidate stand out for a junior programming vacancy?



If you don't have much commercial coding experience, having 1 or more personal coding projects, live on the web or published to GitHub, helps candidates get interviews for Apprentice Programmer and Graduate Trainee roles.

Start Coding, Keep Coding

So if you want to go from hobbyist coder to commercial programmer, web developer, or software engineer, keep coding and publishing your Applications!

Computer Science or Hobbyist Coder?

Doing Computer Science at A-Level or University is great for learning the theory of computing, including coding. However, coding your own personal software or web projects is important even for those doing Computer Science because the best programmers are self-starters who keep pace with constant change. They typically use the latest development languages, frameworks, tools, DevOps and Cloud Platforms, which may not yet be covered in Computer Science, but are used in industry today.

Passion for Coding

As a hobbyist coder, you demonstrate your passion for programming problem-solving code by getting up to speed quickly with the basics, building websites or systems outside of formal education. As well as knowing how to code, you can build systems that are in use, which means that you have already learnt how to overcome some of the issues faced in delivering projects to a good standard.



Resources For Web Developers and Software Engineers

I would advise going through the following alongside your personal coding project

Top 5 For New Developers

1. [Codecademy](#) for learning the basics of HTML, CSS and JavaScript.
2. [Stackoverflow](#) for Q&A on software development + Stackoverflow Developer Survey for what's going on in the industry
3. [GitHub](#) for software source code management and distribution
4. [Pluralsight](#) for more advanced tutorials
5. [Microsoft Azure developer account](#) is free and enables you to write and run code in the Microsoft Cloud to showcase your work as well as tutorials (AWS and Google have similar accounts. Take your pick!)

Generating Ideas For Personal Coding Projects

Make real software that helps people. For your own extra-curricular software development ideas, make web apps or web sites for:

- ✓ Your hobby
- ✓ Family & friends' business
- ✓ Lists of development projects out on the internet
- ✓ Age 14 to 18 UK Government Cyber Schools Programme
- ✓ Age 18+ Google Summer Of Code provide real-world development challenges

Self-Help Coding Groups

If you are looking at a career change into software development and wanting to network with others doing the same, you could look at coding groups in your local area. In the Northwest of England, we have Code Up Chester, which is a feeder group into Code Nation Chester, who run courses in JavaScript for a fee and Apprentice training.

Conclusion – At First Coding Job Interview

Providing URLs or a GitHub account of Applications puts you ahead of candidates that have none.

Good Luck and Keep Coding!