

Meet Quinn Damerell. From developing for Windows Phone to being hired at Microsoft, Quinn tells all!

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Tell us a little about your experience with Windows Phone.

My experience with Windows Phone has been amazing! Coming from Android, there are so many things I love about the Windows Phone SDK and programming environment. My favorite part is that the SDK makes it really easy to do everything you want to do, yet it still exposes the power for developers to look directly into the building blocks to get complete control if they need to. I think that's one thing that really makes the platform powerful.



Tell us about the apps that you have built.

I've written quite a few Android apps, but transitioned over to Windows Phone because of its ease and its beautiful metro design. It's nice working in an ecosystem that's not already really crowded with tons of apps because it gives your app a much better chance of making it big. My most successful app that I've written for Windows Phone is one called [Baconit](#). It's a metro style reddit reader for Windows Phone that currently has over 40,000 downloads and a 5 star rating. I've also written some other Windows Phone apps, but they're more for fun.

Have you ever hit a bump in the road while developing? How did you overcome it?

I always run into problems and learn from programming apps, which I think is really important especially for students. The main thing to remember is to not become overwhelmed by things you don't know yet. I think that whenever you start working with a new SDK, you always get kind of overwhelmed by even the sample project. I started Baconit in November of 2011, and I definitely felt that way. But after a few days you really start to understand the platform a bit better and get the general idea of how to do things. Once you have the general concept, there is nothing a quick internet search can't solve, especially since Silverlight and the Windows Phones SDK are backed by MSDN.

How did you land your job at Microsoft?

The story of how I landed an internship at Microsoft is quite unique. I knew I really wanted to work at a larger company (or at least score one of their amazing internships), so when I was a freshman I worked really hard to get an internship at one, but ended up not even being considered. I had always loved working on projects outside of class though, and at the beginning of my junior year I started working more specifically on mobile apps. So by the time the first job fair came around I had a few apps written that I was able to show the recruiters on the spot right after I introduced myself. Having those apps really made an impression on the recruiters and that landed me my first few interviews at Microsoft. I'm not going to lie, I didn't perform perfectly in my interviews at Microsoft, but my interviewers could tell that I had the programming and communication skills needed to work well at Microsoft. I was offered an internship on Windows Phone on the browser team and I accepted immediately. I was really concerned before I got out to Seattle that my skills wouldn't be adequate for my job, since Microsoft is filled with very smart and excellent programmers. But when I got there my team was more than welcoming. They all told me that if I ever needed help with anything to just let them know and within a few weeks I had the environment under control and was up and running. The summer flew by and it was easily the best summer of my life. Microsoft internships are amazing. At the completion of my internship, I sat down with my boss and he offered me a full time position in the team I had been working in and I accepted.



Any advice for student developers?

Two things:

1. Doing work outside of class looks amazing on your resume and also teaches you so much that you don't learn in college. From my experience, CS majors who have been active outside of class work are much, much, much more likely to get good internships/jobs. Your work doesn't have to be amazing, just showing recruiters that you're driven and have a real passion for development. Also, like I said, it seems really odd and kind of not true but you will learn some common programming skills by doing your own work that you might not learn in college. TL;DR doing work outside of class is essential!
2. You don't necessarily have to be the smartest, brightest, or quickest at programming to get the awesome jobs and internships. If you really want the job, go into the interview as a humble human. Interviewers sometimes even ask you questions that are impossible for you to know, just so they can see how you react to situations where you need help or where you might stumble. During the interview feel free to ask for help and clarification if you need it. After all, your interviewer is also only a human and after interviewing ton of nervous people, having one person that talks to you like an informal friend is bound to leave an impression that will make them remember you. It also shows your ability to communicate well and work well in a team.

Where can students learn more about you?

My personal website is QuinnDamerell.com and my contact information is on there. Feel free to contact me with any questions about beginning Windows Phone development, my experience at Microsoft, or how to play an awesome sliver level StarCraftTM 2 game. Also, be sure to check out [Baconit](#) on the Windows Phone Marketplace!



Comments



laksmi 15 May 2012 12:11 PM

very nice.....especially advice for student is soooooo truthful....



Tech Student Experience 15 May 2012 3:27 PM

Hi Laksmi! I am so glad that you found Quinn's advice helpful. Thank you for your comment and have a great day!



Rahul 15 May 2012 7:04 PM

Awesome Advice for student.. Thanks a lot..



Tech Student Experience 16 May 2012 3:41 PM

Hi Rahul - glad Quinn's blog was so helpful! Make sure to follow us on Twitter @MS_Student and check our Microsoft Student Facebook page, as we share career advice this week. Have a great day!



Aditya 17 May 2012 9:36 PM

I am almost same as Quinn, I can do a lot of programming stuff but am overwhelmed by the myriad of options available... glad to know that it's a common situation and I am not alone!