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Information Interview
Media, Marketing, and Communications
11/9/2015

As someone who is interested in both technology and the world, looking into Geographic Information Systems, or GIS for short, was an obvious choice for an interview. I decided to reach out to a friend that connected me with a graduate of Ohio State with a degree in Geographic Information Systems, named Jordan Springer, who is now a GIS Professional and works in the field at Irth Solutions in Clintonville, Ohio. Apart from being a GIS Specialist at Irth, he is also a full time seminary student and ministry leader at Scarlet City Church in Columbus. These factors were very important as it allowed me to connect with him on a personal level as well which helped when asking questions about his background at Ohio State and professional life. Upon contacting Jordan via phone call, I instantly felt a sense of professionalism about him. We scheduled a day to meet a week after the initial call and I then did research on the Irth Solutions firm as a whole. The company is a large, successful firm that is privately and publicly contracted for business and geographic solutions. Originally the Geography Solutions department did not exist and the company thrived solely in business solutions. However, recently Irth formed a Geography department and has tackled many private and government projects. Currently, Irth is creating a digitized map and mapping application of the entire subway system of New York City – a year-long effort. Once the day of the interview arrived, Mr. Springer and I met at a local coffee shop after his long day at work. First we discussed the atmosphere of the workplace. Jordan brought pictures of the Irth office to view. I noticed that the main lobby and office of the firm was focused around the business solutions and was a layout of many cubicles and side offices. However, once the pictures began to show the

Geography solutions department, I began to recognize the familiar feel of a technologically centered workplace. The layout was small, but included an open floor plan, a flagship feature of a workplace of this type. There were a few side offices and desks that housed multi-screen computer setups and large tables for old reference maps and timeless document examination. Even though this section of the office was small, it was ample space for the small staff of six or seven analysts to work as a team and have their own “stake of land” at the same time. Overall, the environment was what I had expected as it was an office of GIS Specialists and Geographers. This being said, the surroundings were very much to my liking and I am excited to further pursue this company. After discussing the minute details about the office space, Jordan and I moved on to the topic of his education and interest in Geographic Information Systems.

While conversing about his time in college, Jordan talked to me about his four years in college and what they consisted of academically and socially. He talked specifically about how Geographic Information Systems is a relatively new field, one that didn't have its own major until his junior year, and how the skills that he learned in college are essential to being successful in the industry and in the workforce in general. After staying on this subject for a while, it is very clear that two things are lacking in the technology world and in firms today – digital mapping and geographical knowledge. What makes a GIS Specialist so desirable is their familiarity with multiple types of mapping software, their spatial awareness and their global mindset. Those with an education in geographic systems and software have a reputation of reliability when it comes to consultation services for businesses, governments, and residents for things like digging projects, construction, documentation, urban planning, national defense, and logistics. Recognizing the areas where these specialists prosper can lead to the

acknowledgement of possible careers in the field. Things like a drone specialist and operator, a digital cartographer, and global positioning technicians are practical alternative options aside from simply a GIS Specialist. However, some lesser known careers exist for graduates with this particular training. Careers in politics and democracy are prominent and deal with redistricting for the state, and demographics to give an edge to different candidates. There are also many opportunities in logistics for a GIS major. Companies such as Amazon and UPS hire many GIS Specialists that will assist logistics departments on effective types of delivery, delivery time frames, and global positioning. At Amazon, GIS certified employees are spearheading the Amazon Prime drone projects in recent news. As many of these things are happening as we go about our daily lives, it is reasonable to conclude that, while GIS is a relatively new field, it will not be removed from society any time soon. According to Mr. Springer, someone with the knowledge in GIS software is highly marketable and wanted in many different industries and companies. There is a very large need for professionals like this and the employment outlook is considerably higher than that of other fields.

After speaking with Jordan about the skills needed, outlook and the position and general, we conversed about internships and Co-ops at Irth solutions. As of right now, Irth Solutions does not do internships for college students, however they employ many recent graduates because of the skills that they possess over those already in the workforce. With GIS being a particularly young field, college graduates are the most qualified for the job of GIS Specialist and hold a unique knowledge of new technologies and innovations that would help a company such as Irth. Therefore I plan on staying connected with Jordan Springer and Irth Solutions in the future in order to open the possibility of landing a job at their firm. I was also

informed however of the other positions that the company hires Computer Scientists for.

Currently, Irth is creating a cloud based storage system that monitors labor and the workforce through databases and analytics. This means that with a degree in Computer Science and Engineering (my current track), that I also have the option of applying for the position of Software Engineer at the firm. Because of Jordan's insight, I now realize that my horizons are broader than expected.

In conclusion I have learned many things about the GIS major, the job of a GIS Specialist, the outlook of technology based careers, and the Irth Solutions firm. By meeting with Jordan Springer I have found many of my opinions as well. Personally, the job of GIS specialist seems very creative, and interesting. It lines up perfectly with my interests, and has an amazing job outlook and salary. By coming out of college with a GIS degree I am almost ensured at least one job offer before graduation as long as I remain proactive in my career search. However, I feel that this career may get very tedious and tiresome with very long days and boring projects. I believe that eventually, I will become bored with my career and unhappy as well, which are both bad feelings to have about a life-long commitment. Because of these realizations I have figured out two main points about myself and my interests. First, I am very interested in a career in GIS and would enjoy pursuing this area of study and work. Second, however, I feel that I would have to explore other options within the Geographic Information Systems field. Things like digital cartography, national defense and drone technologies to name a few. This may be a better option because the work place is more dynamic in these settings and are also more interesting to me personally. Fortunately, I have close to four more years to find who I am and what I am interested in as a person, and another semester or two to decide exactly

what it is I want to pursue. Taking both of these decisions to heart is very important because once I choose the path to take my choice could dictate the rest of my life and what I invest my hard work into.

Below are pictures of the thank you card sent to Jordan Springer:

