Reflections From

52 WEEKS, 52 PROJECTS

Jefferson Lam
May 11th, 2015
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What do I want to do in 2015?

I want to continue to hone my skills in development. I’m gonna make it a New Years Resolution to develop a small project every week, and post it online every week or before Saturday at noon. It can be big, or small. It needs to be something meaningful that challenges me and shows off my skills.

I want to re-channel that same discipline, drive, and energy that I had last year, when I pushed myself.
What do I want to do in 2015?

I want to continue to hone my skills in development. I’m gonna make it a New Years Resolution to develop a small project every week, and post it online every week, Saturday at or before noon. It can be big, or small. It needs to be something meaningful that challenges me and shows my skills.

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THE GOAL: 52 PROJECTS IN 2015
Weathery
January 11th

WEATHER IN AUSTIN TX
LIGHT RAIN
88°
52 weeks, 52 projects

You're looking at the initial draft of my page for my 52 weeks of code. I don't know how it's going to look yet, but I'm gonna pretty it up somehow. It doesn't need to be anything complicated, it just needs to work well and be easy to navigate.

Jefferson Lam
1-19-15

Fifty Two

January 19th, 2015

github

A web page built in Angular to house my 52 week code project. The fact that you're looking at this means I was successful in building my first Angular app! One of my goals is to get comfortable with the MEAN stack (MongoDB, Express, Angular, Node), so learning Angular is my first step towards that goal.
52
January 19th

52 weeks of codes.
A path to becoming a better developer.

ABOUT ME

Experiments
Messengerbot
January 25th

> Incoming! (••ω••)

> Hello, beautiful!

> Want to send a message?
Eightball
January 31st

OUTLOOK
NOT SO GOOD
Keyfighter
February 9th
Rollaball
February 28th
Flapper News
March 12th
Project Euler

April 1st
20 weeks in, and I have 9 “projects”. What happened?
REASON #1: TIME
• started dating someone

• work
• sleep
• friends
• driving and being stuck in traffic
REASON #2:
PROJECT IDEAS
REASON #3: NOT MAKING PROGRESS
Expectation

Time

Skill

Reality

Skill

Time
Some reflections...
REASON #1: TIME
24 Hours
24 Hours

Sleep

Work
24 Hours

Sleep

Commuting

Work
24 Hours

Sleep

Commuting

Work

Friends, hobbies, errands, etc.
24 Hours

- Sleep

- Commuting

- Work

- Friends, hobbies, errands, etc.

- Code
Lesson Learned #1

Not having time is no longer an excuse. You have to make time, and you have to make sacrifices.
EVERYONE WANTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL UNTIL THEY SEE WHAT IT ACTUALLY TAKES
REASON #2:
PROJECT IDEAS
Lesson Learned #2

It’s hard to build something out of nothing. Build your projects around content.
“Project”?
Q
Why am I doing this Project 52?

A
To become a better developer.
To give myself opportunities to code.
“Project”? Project.
Code snippets are fine.
In fact, anything is fine.
Just make something.
This is an experiment in creating transitions between pages. This end result is something akin to a single-page application.
Lesson Learned #3

It’s OK to **discard** old goals if they are no longer helpful. Constantly **re-assess** your goals and **move** them as needed.
Lesson Learned #4

Big projects are daunting. It’s easier to get things done if you keep your scope small.
REASON #3: NOT MAKING PROGRESS
How Skill Acquisition Works

Skill acquisition is a process that involves the development and improvement of skills over time. This can be visualized as a graph with time on the x-axis and skill on the y-axis. As time progresses, skill increases through a series of plateaus and breakthroughs.

- **Discover Task-runners!**
- **Discover CSS animations!**
Kathy Sierra: Making Badass Developers
Pile-up on B

Half-assed on C

Too sloooooow

Kathy Sierra: Making Badass Developers
I was trying to hit too many targets.
Lesson Learned #5

Develop a specific toolkit, and focus on mastering those skills. You won’t learn anything if you try to learn everything.
“Jack of all trades, master of none.”

- Unknown
Pile-up on **B**

Half-assed on **C**

Too slooooonow

*Kathy Sierra: Making Badass Developers*
I was getting really good at being mediocre.
I was coding in a vacuum.
I wasn’t reading or learning from others.
I was trying hard to create cool stuff. But as I read more, the quality of my work naturally improved.
Building Nonlinear Narratives for the Web

by SENONGO AKPEN - 7 Comments

The web operates in ways that can conflict with our traditional view of what a "story" is. Content is chunked, mixed, and spread across channels, devices, and formats. How do we understand story lines, characters, interactions, and the role of the audience, given this information sprawl? Cue nonlinear narratives—Senongo Akpem guides us past basic “scrolly-telling” to immersive, sometimes surprising experiences.
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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Try Bugherd Free: World's simplest bug tracker</td>
<td>HackerNews</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Printednest: a community built around 3D</td>
<td>Abduzeedo</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ninja Blocks - What's been happening, what's</td>
<td>Abduzeedo</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I'm Collecting Daddy</td>
<td>Abduzeedo</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>GitHub</td>
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Lesson Learned #6

Learning by doing is great, but don’t forget to take in new information. **Read**, and get other people’s **feedback**. This will help you stay up-to-date.
Lesson Learned #7

You can only create what you know. Your work is a direct reflection of your knowledge.
“Nothing of me is original. I am the combined effort of everybody I’ve ever known.”

- Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*
WHAT HAVE I ACHIEVED?
My Github activity blew up.

Repos  
~2 ➞ 18

Streak  
~2 ➞ 15

Contributions  
0 ➞ 436

Pull Requests  
0 ➞ 2
I started using Twitter more.

Followers
~12 ➞ 59

Tweets
~10 ➞ 85
I started using CodePen.

Projects 0 ➞ ~6
Followers 0 ➞ 1
I started redesigning my website.
I have a ton more dev stickers and t-shirts.
I’ve done 2 talks. This is my 3rd.
I’ve started working out more.
I’ve developed more of a toolkit.
- Gulp
- Sass
- Linters
- Normalizer
- Reset
- Pesticide
- Sublime Settings
- Codepen
My New Favorite Resources:

• Github (other people’s repos)
• Codepen
• Twitter
• Panda
• Medium
• A List Apart
• HackReactor YouTube Channel
• The FED interview question list
  • http://h5bp.github.io/Front-end-Developer-Interview-Questions/
LOOKING
FORWARD
Looking forward, I am going to…

- Read more
- Teach more
- Start blogging
- Pair program more
- CodePen everything
- Ask for feedback more
- Answer all the FED interview questions
in closing
Most days feel like failure days.
But the fact that I’ve taken any steps forward means I’ve made progress, and that is a success in and of itself.
It’s not easy to become an expert. The important thing is to keep pushing forward, intelligently. **Keep coding.**
Lesson Learned #8

Just keep coding.
Thank you!

Jefferson Lam
May 11th, 2015