ROMY GREENFIELD

Job: Senior Software Engineer and Technical Lead

Company: Adaptavist

I build and maintain a plugin for Jira called Enhanced Search. I write JavaScript, TypeScript and Java using the React, Ratpack and Atlassian Connect frameworks. I configure and create infrastructure as code using AWS Sam and CDK. I configure and build CI/CD pipelines to automate deployment of our app to AWS. I manage a small team of engineers, running agile ceremonies, making technical decisions for the product, writing tickets and prioritising the backlog. I create and run training sessions.

Creative	Stubborn	Sociable

The skills I use most in my job... Communication

- Problem Solving
- Technical knowledge (JavaScript, TypeScript, Java, React, Ratpack, AWS)
- Analysis

The most interesting thing I've worked on in my career so far... What I found most interesting was teaching other people to code as part of a bootcamp. I love people. Every student learns at a different pace and asks you unexpected questions that make you learn something new. It also made me realise what I did not know so well, so improved my knowledge and skills, whilst helping others. This is also why volunteering and mentoring are great for your personal development.

What inspired me into digital and tech...I studied Aerospace Engineering at university but I didn't really want to study, I was not interested in the course and almost failed. I then worked in a variety of industries where my roles included selling clothes, watching films for airlines, researching the benefits of energy efficiency solutions for long term health conditions, investigating complaints about parliamentary bodies and the NHS. I was tired of putting in a lot of effort at work for no career progression. I saw my boyfriend at the time do very little work, get paid a lot more than me and get paid to travel the world for conferences. He was a software engineer and I wanted that. Because I had got passed up for promotion one too many times, I took some time off, researched what I wanted from a job and found matching jobs/industries that fulfilled my criteria. I wanted to always be in demand so I would always find it easy to get a job, I wanted work flexibility, a good salary, to be able to work in any industry, anywhere in the world and not get bored of what I was doing. Software engineering seemed to tick all of those boxes. So I went to free coding meetups for women and met lots of inspiring women who were doing well and had great jobs. They told me about bootcamps and some of them had been through them.

My educational background is... Art and Maths were my favourite subjects at school. I studied Aerospace Engineering at university which did have a Matlab module, which included some coding, but I was not interested in it at the time. When I was 27, I decided I needed to seriously reconsider my career. I practised HTML, CSS and JavaScript on CodeCademy/free code camp, went to free code meetups and met lots of female engineers and asked them a million questions about their jobs and journey. I researched how to become a software engineer and various coding bootcamps. I then quit my job to do a 12 week JavaScript coding bootcamp with Northcoders. I also volunteered at meetups for women in my spare time once I got my first software engineering role.

What advice I'd give to girls thinking about a career in digital and tech... Make the switch. The tech industry is booming. The opportunities are amazing. Why should you be left behind? You can do a job you love, that challenges and excites you, as well as getting unbelievable benefits and huge salaries. Go and read up about the different roles you can get, practice in your free time, speak to as many people you can about their companies, go to free meetups and network. The more you learn and speak to people, the more you realise that there are others just like you, who have weird and wonderful routes into the industry. Who might have thought they were not clever enough, or that it's too hard. But you are and it is not. If you really want it, you commit and you dedicate the time. Practice makes perfect. The industry wants and needs more diversity. Take advantage of being an underrepresented group and then pave the way for others to join you.