

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Do I need College to become a web-developer or app developer?](#)

ITZRat - January 25, 2016, 5:51 pm

If I want to become a web-developer, or perhaps an app developer, do I need to go to College? I'm currently in College and will be getting my associates. However, after College I was thinking of majoring in Computer Science, just not sure I want to take on another 4 years of school. I'll be taking programming in College now, but what if I want to be a programmer for video games, or perhaps just a web-developer, or programmer. Would I need to go to a university after my associates for that?

Update: Also, would it be wise to do both, web-development and app-development?

6577657534735 - January 25, 2016, 6:02 pm

Web and app development are easier software sub-fields to get into without a computer science degree than other fields. As far as I'm aware they can go more towards the side of "my portfolio is my resume" than traditional software engineering roles

That being said, there are many important things you need to learn to become a successful and high paid software developer. And these are often skimmed over by people who self study rather than getting a degree in Computer Science

I'll redirect you to my extensive thread on the topic here though it is not specific to web/app development:

How to land top developer jobs as a new grad

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5087829>

N1nT3n_Dud3_1121 - January 25, 2016, 7:45 pm

Well. I'm currently in 9th grade and I've already started learning how to code. I'd just say that in order to become a web developer, well, first off you need to take classes in coding that help you build skills (the more you do it, the more you'll remember). Also when you want to learn how to code there are many many things you have to learn, functions, variables, how applications are created, how to create webpages, how to publish websites/applications. There's also many things in JS that you must learn before you start actually creating. You see, you need to memorize the language to get applied for a job specializing in it like HTML development, application development. Programming is one of those hard subjects to master, also math which some algebra elements are in programming.

Second off... well, if you are looking for a job focusing in coding/computer science, you would need to of course get a degree in that field, to have a chance of being hired for that job. Well I don't know much how applying for jobs work but I know that for a lot of jobs you have to have a bachelor's degree in that field, you'd have to have graduated from college. Hope I helped.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 25, 2016, 8:49 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 08:45 PM)N1nT3n_Dud3_1121 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) <snip>

No offense, but anyone who is still in high school doesn't exactly have enough information to be a credible source for this topic.

I've found that the opposite of what you said is true. The truth is, you don't need a tech-related degree to get a job as a web developer. I have a few coworkers that have degrees that have

nothing to do with technology at all, and yet they're excellent developers.

Many companies nowadays are realizing that a lot of colleges simply don't teach you anything that is actually used in the industry. Technology evolves fast, and professors at universities who have been teaching the same material for a decade do not. I mean, just two years ago jQuery was the defacto JavaScript library for building user interfaces and client side functionality. Now, people are moving away from jQuery (and quickly) and moving towards more scalable libraries like Angular or React.

OP - the answer is no, you don't need a tech-related degree from a four-year college to get a job as a web developer. My advice is to get a two-year degree at a community college so you aren't drowning in debt, and spend that time focusing on the material you learn in school while simultaneously keeping up with some of the newer libraries that school inevitably won't cover. That kind of experience will land you a job, not a degree from a four-year college.

6577657534735 - January 25, 2016, 9:34 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 09:49 PM)Mrparkers Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No offense, but anyone who is still in high school doesn't exactly have enough information to be a credible source for this topic.

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Thing is though you're boxing yourself in by not getting a degree and focusing on these web based technologies

There's a reason the highest paying employers don't give a shit about:

- Which languages you know
- Which frameworks you know
- Which technologies you know

And instead only care about your knowledge of Computer Science fundamentals, because languages, frameworks, and technologies are trivial to learn for any decently competent person.

Don't limit your potential, get a CS degree and earn hundreds of thousands more, even millions more, over the course of your entire career.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 25, 2016, 9:39 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 10:34 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thing is though you're boxing yourself in by not getting a degree and focusing on these web based technologies

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Don't limit your potential, get a CS degree and earn hundreds of thousands more, even millions more, over the course of your entire career.

I'm not sure I understand your point. If your resume includes knowledge of widely used web frameworks and libraries, and you can demonstrate this knowledge, then it should be implied that you already know the fundamentals of computer science.

You can learn these fundamentals without having to spend four years or more at a public college. Community college can cover that just fine.

6577657534735 - January 25, 2016, 9:44 pm

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You can learn these fundamentals without having to spend four years or more at a public college. Community college can cover that just fine.

No, web frameworks and libraries literally have nothing to do with computer science fundamentals. In fact the more libraries and frameworks you use the more actual computer science stuff is literally abstracted away and hidden from you.

Computer Science isn't programming, it's a branch of math where the relevant sub-topics are largely: data structures and algorithms, discrete math and algorithmic complexity analysis, then things like finite state machines, turing machines, and other computational machines, then computability theory. NP completeness and proofs regarding that. Then more practical things like programming language design, database design, OS internals, networking concepts, then even basic digital logic design from flip flops up to simple ALUs and memory banks, etc.

Like I said earlier in this thread, see this thread here for a more detailed overview of actual CS topics you need to become a successful entry level developer at any high paying company:

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5087829>

neightworks - January 25, 2016, 10:00 pm

College wont make you an expert, but it will 100% help.

Also most jobs require at least bachelors degrees.

An Associates is better than nothing though.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 25, 2016, 10:02 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 10:44 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No, web frameworks and libraries literally have nothing to do with computer science fundamentals. In fact the more libraries and frameworks you use the more actual computer science stuff is literally abstracted away and hidden from you.

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My bad, I misunderstood what you were saying.

After taking a look at your post, I would say I agree to a point. Yes, many technical interviews cover data structures and basic algorithms, but from my experience, these topics are usually not required knowledge for the actual work that you would be doing past the interview stage. Obviously, it depends on what you do with your CS degree, but as far as web development or app development goes (and keep in mind, this is what the OP is asking about), stuff like NP-Hard and NP-Complete problems are literally never touched, and data structures or sorting algorithms are rarely used, if at all.

I know that you said that these kinds of things are typically used for software development, which seems to imply that web development is not software development, but honestly a lot of top paying companies which primarily use the web to operate most of their business aren't going to care about these kinds of things. Major software companies like Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft invest a lot into web technologies, and they're happy to hire people who have experience with the kinds of technologies that they use on a daily basis, even if they can't write up a proof for an NP-Complete problem. Not only that, but there are tons of large companies who you wouldn't normally associate with web development that are actually quite active in the web scene (such as the company that I work for), and they don't really care all that much about these "important" topics either.

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No. Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft (the "Big 4") are the exact types of companies I'm talking about that literally don't really care much at all about specific languages or technologies you know, and instead ONLY drill you on pure CS fundamentals: data structures and algorithms as well

as OS concepts. I know this first hand from my interviews with them. Some care more than others but it's really all about pure CS knowledge.

And yeah NP complete proofs are never relevant but I'm just saying, that is what CS is. I have heard of people being asked to write proofs in interviews though lol but luckily that's not common.

ITZRat - January 25, 2016, 10:44 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 10:44 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No, web frameworks and libraries literally have nothing to do with computer science fundamentals. In fact the more libraries and frameworks you use the more actual computer science stuff is literally abstracted away and hidden from you.

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Like I said earlier in this thread, see this thread here for a more detailed overview of actual CS topics you need to become a successful entry level developer at any high paying company: <https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5087829> So, if I wanted to be program apps and video games, I shouldn't go with CS; Computer Programming would probably be my choice.

6577657534735 - January 25, 2016, 10:47 pm

(Jan 25, 2016 11:44 PM)ITZRat Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) So, if I wanted to be program apps and video games, I shouldn't go with CS; Computer Programming would probably be my choice.

I don't know what "Computer Programming" is, lots of countries and schools have different names. But yeah you can probably get by without a full on CS degree if you want to program apps or be a video game designer

For any hardcore development position though, like working on very "elite" apps at top companies, or being a video game engine designer, then you WILL need to have a CS degree or study all the CS stuff on your own time anyway (which is way harder to get your foot into the door then)

g4143 - January 26, 2016, 12:35 am

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Most elite programming fields have a graduate/doctorate degree attached to it or 10 - 20 years experience plus a undergraduate degree.

The truth is most undergraduate software engineers/CS holders work for small start-ups making apps with PHP/SQL/Apache/Ruby/Rails.

Stl Missouri - January 26, 2016, 12:37 am

I got a web development job less than a week out of high school. I also had offers from a few other companies. I live in St. Louis which is supposedly an up-and-coming technology city, so perhaps there are more companies looking for work here.

6577657534735 - January 26, 2016, 12:57 am

(Jan 26, 2016 01:35 AM)g4143 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Most elite programming fields have a graduate/doctorate degree attached to it or 10 - 20 years experience plus a undergraduate degree.

The truth is most undergraduate software engineers/CS holders work for small start-ups making apps with PHP/SQL/Apache/Ruby/Rails.

Not really true, most developers with 10-20 years experience and PhDs will not touch code anymore, they will be software architects or product managers or similar

And a very small percentage of undergrad software engineers/CS holders work for small startups with PHP/SQL/Apache/Ruby/Rails. Like a very small percentage

The vast majority of all programming jobs are at either large software companies, or large non-software companies. startups are a thing but you either get huge pay from successful ones or you become a slave working for shitty stocks at shitty ones.

Sunquyman - January 26, 2016, 1:11 am

Not at all. I know some people who skipped college and went straight into freelancing and self-learning. One of them works in a high position at Kickstarter for web development.

g4143 - January 26, 2016, 5:20 am

(Jan 26, 2016 02:11 AM)uberCross Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Not at all. I know some people who skipped college and went straight into freelancing and self-learning. One of them works in a high position at Kickstarter for web development.

How can you freelance when you know nothing?

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 5:42 am

(Jan 25, 2016 11:43 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No. Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft (the "Big 4") are the exact types of companies I'm talking about that literally don't really care much at all about specific languages or technologies you know, and instead ONLY drill you on pure CS fundamentals: data structures and algorithms as well as OS concepts. I know this first hand from my interviews with them. Some care more than others but it's really all about pure CS knowledge.

I disagree. In fact, I personally know people who have used React in public Github repositories and have received a call from Facebook with a job offer.

Like I said earlier, these companies might care about these concepts during interviews, but rarely do you actually need to know that material after the interview stage.

Sunquyman - January 26, 2016, 9:28 am

(Jan 26, 2016 06:20 AM)g4143 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) How can you freelance when you know nothing? Attending a university != knowing nothing. Given the rapid development of various technologies, it is possible to work and learn your way up. Of course, networking for opportunities is key.

6577657534735 - January 26, 2016, 9:46 am

(Jan 26, 2016 06:42 AM)Mrparkers Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I disagree. In fact, I personally know people who have used React in public Github repositories and have received a call from Facebook with a job offer.

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Nobody at Facebook gets hired without a basic level of competency in data structures and algorithms. I guarantee you his usage of "React" is not the only reason he got hired and there's more to the story

There's another story of the guy who created Homebrew being rejected by Google based on poor performance on an algorithm interview, followed by him crying about it on social media. So anecdotes don't mean much.

<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=9695102>

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 2:00 pm

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I've heard about that too. I can't tell you much more about the whole Facebook/React thing without revealing where I am employed, so you will just have to take it at face value and interpret it how you want. But I am telling the truth. Usually it's easy to tell when people have been in the industry for a long time, and stuff like algorithms and data structures aren't used as frequently in interviews.

This is just my experience, and yours is probably different.

6577657534735 - January 26, 2016, 3:53 pm

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Look whatever

The fact that you literally don't even know what "Computer Science" is and keep giving bullshit advice just makes me doubt your supposed credentials and the fine details of the story about your friend.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 5:08 pm

(Jan 26, 2016 04:53 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Look whatever

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I don't think you're understanding the points I'm trying to make, so I suppose I will try to explain them again.

Yes, computer science is important, and I fully understand that you need to understand some key concepts like data structures and algorithms if you want to pass a standard interview given by most tech companies nowadays. These interviews test people on data structures and algorithms because they are pretty much common knowledge between all programmers. While some people may exclusively use Java, and others exclusively Python, those two groups of people still know how data structures work and how to implement them in the language of their choice. Thus, they make

for good interview questions.

Data structures and basic algorithms are not difficult to understand by any means, and you can read pretty much everything you need to know about them by picking up a copy of Cracking The Coding Interview. Yes, they are important, but, depending on where you are employed, what project you're working on, and what tools you are using, there is a good chance that you won't be using most of these on a daily basis.

While employers do care about CS fundamentals (mostly for interview purposes), they care a lot more about the kinds of technologies that you've worked with. If you are intimately familiar with React, for example, Facebook is more likely to hire you because they built React, and they use it to power most of Facebook and all of Instagram. To Facebook, a developer who knows the tools they use daily is much more valuable than a developer who can write out the merge sort algorithm by heart.

Does this make sense to you?

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Dude just stop talking, you don't know what the fuck you are talking about and are giving misinformation. What you're saying is unhelpful to people, in fact it's harmful, since it's wrong and BAD advice. Nobody gives a fuck about React, what the fuck is React?

You clearly have not even read CTCI it is not a data structures and algorithms book at all. You are clueless so please stop giving people advice because all of your advice is wrong

Literally are you trolling?

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 5:42 pm

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In your opinion. Again, I'm speaking from my experience. Depending on where you have worked, you might have experienced something different. But if OP really wants to do web development, my advice is pretty on-point. Not sure why you are so hostile.

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React is a library that is used to build user interfaces. It was made by Facebook, hence why I said that Facebook is interested in developers who use it (believe it or not, Facebook does actually give a shit about the library they wrote - go figure), and it is used to power websites like Facebook, Instagram, Netflix, and Yahoo, to name a few of the more popular ones. It's almost exclusively used at my place of employment, and one of the reasons I was able to get that job was because of my familiarity with React.

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Are you? You seem to be awfully angry during this entire exchange.

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Look maybe "React" will help a person get a job but it's not a replacement for pure CS knowledge, unless you're working at some halfass startup that pays peanuts.

Your advice about CTCI being "all you need to know" about data structures and algorithms is ridiculously wrong. It has some cool little puzzle programs in it but that's about it, nothing about data structures and algorithms in any in-depth way.

Yeah, maybe someone can get a job just by knowing "React" and having only read CTCI, but it won't be a good job. Your advice is harmful and is in line with the people who suggest those retarded "coding bootcamps". Complete misinformation that will harm the futures of the people reading if they listen to you.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 5:55 pm

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Funny how on page 1 of this thread, you consider Facebook to be part of "The Big 4" and a high paying company, but on page 3, its as good as a startup that pays peanuts.

You know, if you want an example of people who work at Facebook that don't use these fundamentals that you have such a hard-on for, all you need to do is [look at their Github profiles](#).

Like I've been saying, it depends on what you do for a living. There are CS jobs out there in which knowledge of algorithms and data structures is very important. And there are also highly paying jobs out there that don't require this knowledge. It just seems like you are too dense to understand that not everyone has the same opinion as you.

6577657534735 - January 26, 2016, 6:02 pm

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Nobody will get hired at Facebook by knowing "React" and having no knowledge of data structures and algorithms. I don't know why you keep touting this nonsense. It's extra hard without a CS degree as well unless you have a proven track record with lots of work experience. And even then you still need to know your CS fundamentals even better

You've suggested that your friend got hired at FB just for knowing React, now you're suggesting you have. I don't know which it is but I'm extremely skeptical to say the least especially given the other BS you're spouted here for instance "CTCI is all you need to know about data structures and algorithms" when it's not even a data structures and algorithms book

Just stop spewing misinformation and potentially fucking up other peoples futures with your BAD advice.

Name me one company that looks for specific language and framework knowledge and is okay with you knowing nothing about data structures and algorithms. The more reputable a company is, the less they care about what specific languages you have experience with because they realize languages within the same programming paradigm are ridiculously easy to learn once you've learned one if you have a firm foundation.

JIM NASIUM'S GYMNASIUM - January 26, 2016, 6:25 pm

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Nobody will get hired at Facebook by knowing "React" and having no knowledge of data structures and algorithms. I don't know why you keep touting this nonsense. It's extra hard without a CS degree as well unless you have a proven track record with lots of work experience. And even then you still need to know your CS fundamentals even better

I didn't say that someone would get hired with absolutely no knowledge of data structures or algorithms. I said that there are some companies that value the knowledge of the tools they use more, and such, you should know enough about data structures and algorithms to get past the first one or two interviews.

You really need to work on your reading comprehension skills.

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) You've suggested that your friend got hired at FB just for knowing React, now you're suggesting you have. I don't know which it is but I'm extremely skeptical to say the least especially given the other BS you're spouted here for instance "CTCI is all you need to know about data structures and algorithms" when it's not even a data structures and algorithms book

To clarify, I was not hired by Facebook, I said that I know someone who got an offer from Facebook because of the work he was doing with React. He turned it down.

I feel like this is the 3rd time I've stated this, but since you are not particularly good at reading, I will say it again. I know that Cracking The Coding Interview is not an algorithms and data structures book. It is a book that helps you prepare for interviews and gives you common interview practice questions that are mostly made up of algorithms and data structures. Since I have the opinion that these topics are only really useful during the interview process, it makes sense why I would recommend it to give someone the knowledge of data structures and algorithms that they need.

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Just stop spewing misinformation and potentially fucking up other peoples futures with your BAD advice.

My advice is based on the experiences that I've had. You might not have had the same experiences, and that's okay, because I know that not all CS related jobs are equal. But there are some developer jobs out there that do not require the knowledge of data structures and algorithms.

If you had read my previous post and looked at some of the Github profiles of Facebook employees, you'd realize that not everyone in the software industry has as much of a hard-on for this stuff as you.

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Name me one company that looks for specific

language and framework knowledge and is okay with you knowing nothing about data structures and algorithms.

Again, I never said that you should have no knowledge of data structures and algorithms, but just enough to get through the first few interviews. Reading comprehension.

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The more reputable a company is, the less they care about what specific languages you have experience with because they realize languages within the same programming paradigm are ridiculously easy to learn once you've learned one if you have a firm foundation.

Not really. A lot of web technologies require you to think in different or non-conventional ways in order to use them effectively. A lot of websites for specific frameworks have sections that describe this. In fact, [here's one for React](#).

You know, this started off as a discussion between two people with different opinions, and quickly turned into you yelling at me because I dared challenge your idea that data structures and algorithms are the absolute most important thing to every single major software company. Are you really so dense that you can't even consider the possibility that this isn't always the case?

Feanor - January 27, 2016, 4:56 am

(Jan 26, 2016 07:02 PM)Abraluna Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Nobody will get hired at Facebook by knowing "React" and having no knowledge of data structures and algorithms. I don't know why you keep touting this nonsense. It's extra hard without a CS degree as well unless you have a proven track record with lots of work experience. And even then you still need to know your CS fundamentals even better

You've suggested that your friend got hired at FB just for knowing React, now you're suggesting you have. I don't know which it is but I'm extremely skeptical to say the least especially given the other BS you're spouted here for instance "CTCI is all you need to know about data structures and algorithms" when it's not even a data structures and algorithms book

Just stop spewing misinformation and potentially fucking up other peoples futures with your BAD advice.

Name me one company that looks for specific language and framework knowledge and is okay with you knowing nothing about data structures and algorithms. The more reputable a company is, the less they care about what specific languages you have experience with because they realize languages within the same programming paradigm are ridiculously easy to learn once you've learned one if you have a firm foundation.

Tldr;

I read your other posts and your on track but didn't bother reading this one.

OP: In short having a college education in your chosen field really, really helps. It is only not essential to the higher jobs in the field if you are good will hunting. Just pay the bill and do it if you can afford to do it and your passionate about it and you are confident in you abilities, if you just want to do web apps and other easier high level stuff just finish whatever courses you've started but keep learning the complete ins and outs of your scripting language and don't debt yourself out with more education, but keep in mind if you ever want to work on projects at google and facebook you'll most likely have to go back to uni but go to the job interviews before you go back to uni if you ever want those jobs.