

***“Who or what was the inspiration for choosing your current course of study?”***

I’m currently studying in my final year of a Software Engineering (MEng) degree, and I have absolutely no disappointments or regrets in having chosen to study this course. Hopefully, by the end of this essay you will have gained some idea of why I chose to study this particular course, and also see that the decision was not as simple as you would think. I will show that the above question, in my case, isn’t “who or what”, but really a combination of both, “who **and** what”.

Going to university is a big decision for anybody, because it literally changes your perspective on life in one way or another. This is why it is really important, I mean, really, REALLY, **REALLY** important you study something that you’re interested in. The main reason for this is because our strengths tend to lie in what we’re normally interested in. So when the course starts getting tough, we can find that extra motivation to make the extra effort to keep going.

Of course, it also helps having an idea of what type of person you are, and what your future aspirations (i.e. career direction) are. As it is these two aspects that represent the “**what** was the inspiration for choosing your current course of study”. In my case, as long as I can remember from a very young age, I have loved to solve problems. Whether they are logical puzzles, or fixing appliances and furniture, I have always been an engineer at heart. As I like to solve problems, and help people in a real beneficial way, I came to realise that technology can help me achieve this. As we continue to make technical advancements through history, society continues to become more reliant on technology.

As you can see from above, the type of person I was had helped me understand that I wanted to do an **engineering** degree course. Of course, that still means that there are lots of possible fields that I could enter into: Aeronautical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical Software, etc... So this is where the “**who** was the inspiration for choosing your current course of study” came to play its part in my life...

Having completed a Higher National Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at North East London Polytechnic before I was born, I’m proud to say my Dad is now a Communications Engineer for the London Underground. I was a very curious boy when I was growing up (I still am come to think of it!), which meant that I would be thrilled when my Dad would tell me stories of what he had done at work that night. Even now, when I go back home during the holidays, we will relive past habits of sitting at the dinning table and discussing how Dad’s work had gone last night.

Professionalism is one of the first things that struck me about being an engineer when I was younger. I saw my Dad updating a massive thick file (there’s so much work that files are used rather than books!) with work that had been carried out the night before. When I asked my Dad why he did this, my Dad explained that the log file was a record to show as proof to the IEEE (Institution of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) that work was being carried out worthy of an Incorporated Engineer. This is when I found out that institutions existed to help engineers carry out their roles in a professional manner. I found out from my Dad that you needed certain academic

qualifications and experience to attain the level of an Incorporated Engineer (IEng). I then came to find out that to achieve the highest level, a Chartered Engineer (CEng); you were required to have a minimum four years education and four years professional job experience.

Whilst I was studying A-Levels, the time had come to start applying to universities. Both my parents fully supported my decision to pursue a career in engineering, but as I had later found out, my Mum had been secretly hoping that I might have chosen to do Medicine as a degree course, as Mum had liked the idea of having a doctor in the family!

However, I was still undecided on what type of engineering course to do. I was tempted by the Aeronautical Engineering degree course, as I might be able to work on spaceships one day... I was tempted by the Civil Engineering degree course as I might be able to help build amazing buildings one day... I was even tempted by the General Engineering course, as this would let me learn a bit of all fields of engineering! But it was when I asked my Dad the question that it really all of a sudden became very clear which course I really wanted to do.

My Dad knew that I was studying Mathematics, Physics, and Information Technology at A-Level. I had a passion for all three subjects, but my Dad knew that I was just that little more interested in computers and technology than Mathematics, and Physics. So my Dad advised that I should follow that passion for computing technology by doing an engineering degree related to computing!

I realised that I had now narrowed down the search to two degree subjects: Computer Engineering and Software Engineering. It now felt even harder to pick the degree course, as both were related to engineering and computers! Having had experience for many years in the engineering industry, my Dad explained that he felt that the future of technology was going to excel on the Software side rather than Hardware side. Dad even said that Software Engineering was the 21<sup>st</sup> century engineering discipline, and that I should continue to move into the future with it!

I took my Dad's advice, and having nearly completed my course, I believe that software is a vital technology (without any software, a computer doesn't do anything), which is why it will continue to develop to a level that will mean society will rely on using computing technology even more in the future. This is why I chose to do a Software Engineering degree; to help lay the foundations in my knowledge and prepare me for the future.