Statement of Purpose

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." —*Arthur C. Clarke*

Selected Doctoral Program: Doctoral Program (Fall 2016)   DSU website   Attending: 2016-2020
Current Program: Masters in Science in Information Technology, will be completed August 2015.

Technology is my passion, playground, and laboratory. For as long as I can remember, computers and technology have fascinated me. Even as a child, I was captivated by the way I could feed a set of coded instructions into a computer, and something magical would occur. I received my first computer in the 1980's, a VIC-20, and something amazing happened to me. At only 11 years old, I knew understanding more about computers would become a life-long endeavor.

My academic experience with computer science started off quite modestly. In elementary school, I took computer programming classes on the Apple IIe. I learned how to plot graphics and create simple input and output programs. Once I reached high school, I was programming on an IBM PS/2, where I began building random access and sequential filing databases, along with designing and coding a long list of practical programs. For example, I created amortization tables and recipe programs. My mathematics and programming skills were good enough [for me] to be asked to attend the Tri-State Math Olympiad at George C. Wallace State Community College. The Tri-State Olympiad is a three state competition where high school and college students—with outstanding academic achievement—compete by taking math and computer administered tests. Two years in a row, I was awarded certificate awards at the state level. After high school, it was only natural that I attend college to continue learning about computers. From 1994-1996, I attended Chipola College, a local community college in the Florida Panhandle. I took many computer science classes, along with all the base requirements. I was exposed to high level programming languages, and began learning object oriented programming. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen financial circumstances, I had to leave school and enter the workforce.

I worked for a couple of years as a network administrator at AMI, Inc., a motorcycle mechanic training school. I received a plethora of hands-on training, where I managed a small network of 20 computers. Because I was the only technical person on-campus, I was responsible for all aspects of the computing, networking, and telephony environments. It was a valuable experience, to say the least. In 1999, I realized the need to become industry certified. I wanted to obtain a recognized, professional credential. At the time, the A+ Certification from CompTIA was very popular. I looked into taking computer classes, but the program costs were much more than I could afford. Thus, this led me to *self-studies*. I had never attempted such an endeavor, where I purchased the A+ certification books, and other study material, and learned all the objectives myself. After 6 months of dedicated studies, with butterflies in my stomach, I sat for the hardware and software portions of the A+ certification. I passed with high marks. Not only was I a newly certified professional, I realized I could use this study process to obtain other certifications, along with acquiring all the knowledge that the textbooks and labs provided. In trying to gain computer knowledge, I had learned something very important about myself; I had discipline, and lots of it. I

began paving a new professional life for myself. I ended up taking most of the CompTIA certifications, many Microsoft certifications, a few security certifications, and even was able to garner the much sought after Cisco Certified Networking Associate (CCNA) credential.

The industry certifications, and impeccable customer service skills, made me a respected IT professional. However, some 25 certifications later, I realized how much I missed having a college education. Although my professional career was incredible, I felt as though I was not a well-rounded person. To resolve this matter, I enrolled in a Liberal Arts program in 2010. I specifically chose liberal studies, with an emphasis in philosophy, to learn more about the world I lived in. I went through many subjects and courses, which were all new and very interesting to me. I learned about ethics, politics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, humanities, and a long list of psychology and sociology classes. If I thought the course content was lacking in any way, I would register in free online education. I actually ended up taking several free Yale classes and a University of Edinburgh certificate program course. The overall educational experience was wonderful. In 2013, I graduated summa cum laude. I was extremely happy with the academic accomplishment. But, being me, I am always looking towards the future. So I decided, after a little introspection and consideration, that a master's degree in information technology would further strengthen my professional knowledge base, and allow me to contribute to the computer science and information technology fields. Thus, at the end of 2013, I enrolled in a Master of Science in Information Technology degree program.

The undertaking of the graduate degree was not easy, but it yielded great results. The concentration in technical studies really developed my understanding of enterprise systems, IT management, and business operations. The master degree courses were fairly intense, and required that I work upwards of 30+ hours per week in research and dedicated studies, of which, I excelled at. I had multiple professors that wanted to use my research as the new benchmark for other students. This recognition was rewarding in and of itself, but I also received letters of recommendation from professors; my professors and instructors really believed in me. With this sort of academic adulation, I was encouraged to go even further with my education; that meant seeking a PhD. Hence, towards the end of the master's program, I began researching what would be required to become a PhD candidate. I hit the GRE books hard, read up on other people's PhD experiences, and began compiling program submission materials.

Of course, this leads to the question: Why should I be granted an opportunity to pursue a PhD? I believe my whole life has led up to this very moment. I take pride in what I do, and over the past 21+ years have developed an enduring pattern of academic and professional excellence. Technology is my passion, and I would love to have the privilege of reaching my academic potential. But that is not all. Considering the industry value a PhD in technology would have, I truly believe that a doctoral education would allow me to further the advancement of computing and technology, on a global scale. What would I do once I received a PhD? Ultimately, I would like to split my time between the workforce and teaching (and eventually instruct full-time); I want to teach graduate-level technology courses. Additionally, because I am a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), it is my goal to submit original research and to publish information technology articles in peer-reviewed journals. It would be an honor to accept the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to become a doctoral candidate.

To learn more about me, please feel free to browse my professional website at http://eddiejackson.net.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eddie Jackson
LinkedIn
407-702-9233
MrNetTek2000@yahoo.com

Server 2012, Windows 8, Windows 7, Server 2008, A+, Network+,
Security+, MCP, SQL Admin, Server+, MCSE, I-Net+,
CCNA, CEH, MCP 2003, MCDST, MCSA, MCTS,
HP-Q2, Business Desktop Deployment, Brainbench