

Career Sheet: Web development expert



Alan Baudoin, senior web developer, Perpetuum Mobile

My name is Alan Baudoin and I am 28 years old. I graduated from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in 2017 and studied one year at the RWTH Aachen University in Germany. I currently work as a web developer in one of the oldest IT companies in Croatia – Perpetuum Mobile. I started as a student researcher in March 2016 and have since made it to mid/senior level web developer.



OVERVIEW OF THE JOB

My job is developing and maintaining web sites and applications. Knowledge and skills about mathematics, engineering, and technology in general I got in my formal education help me decide how to approach the tasks that are given to me. The clients I work, or have worked for range from small culture festivals, government entities to big corporations such as banks. I work in close cooperation with sales managers who need me to estimate the duration of a project so they can calculate the price for which it should be sold. I also provide technical support to end users. Sometimes they need help adding content or some other information about how the product is used and sometimes they report a bug they had found and want me to fix it.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU

Since I was a kid, I always loved PCs, gaming consoles and pretty much everything that had a computer of any kind in it. I knew that one day I would like to get to know more about computers and technology in general so that is what motivated me to go down this career path. Later, during my studies I discovered my passion and interest for the web.



TYPICAL WORKING DAY

I get to the office between 8 and 9 am and usually start with a cup of coffee. I read new e-mails that arrived since the day before, have a quick meeting with other team members regarding that day's assignments and by 9:30-10 am I start working on my tasks.

Some tasks I do daily are implementing new functionalities in an application, developing building blocks on a page, (re)defining a website's architecture and other. Since clients mostly focus on the visual part

of the final product and not so much on what is happening in the background of the application, I also cooperate with the designer team to get the best possible ratio of “nice looking” and “difficult to implement”. Around noon I have a lunch break and usually by 5 p.m. I am all done, very rarely do I need to work overtime.

In 2020. many things have changed and so did my typical working day. Most of the year I have been working from home which has many advantages such as no commuting, even more flexible working hours but also has some setbacks.



STUDY & CAREER PATH

After graduating from high school, I enrolled to the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing where I got my bachelor’s degree. On my first year of master studies, I participated in the ERASMUS+ student exchange program and spent 1 whole year at one of the best technical universities in Europe – RWTH Aachen. After returning from Germany, I had one more year left to finish, and I obtained my master’s degree. Already during my last year of studies, I started working for the company I currently work for.

The only thing that I would maybe change if I had another chance is staying in Aachen for the entire master’s studies instead of returning to Zagreb for the last year. That is also the experience that helped me the most because I had the chance to get to know many colleagues from all around the world, study in one of the best universities in Europe and not only improve my technical skills but, in my opinion equally important, social skills.

There are many ways of becoming a (web) developer and mine is only one of them. Even though there are many self-taught (web) developers, I would definitely recommend pursuing a formal education in one of the STEM fields because it gives you a much wider picture of how things work and where exactly you want to position yourself.



KEY SKILLS

- Research – learning about new technologies, how they help me solve specific problems presented to you.
- Active Listening – listening to the client’s needs and wishes.
- Web Architecture and Development – core of my everyday work. Deciding the best fit for a new project regarding the architecture and knowing how to implement it.
- Programming – self-explanatory, right?
- Tech Support – besides developing new solutions, I work on maintaining previously developed ones, which includes helping the client with using their product.

COORDINATOR

PREMIUM PARTNERS

GENERAL PARTNERS

- Coaching – since I am already a mid/senior in the company, most new junior developers have my support when they are just starting so I must provide the best possible help I can.
- Openness towards feedback and criticism – when working in a team it's very important that I know how to respond to feedback from other developers and/or clients and to not take it personally but instead try to improve.
- Personal responsibility – deadlines must be met. You must show everybody that you are responsible enough to either do everything in time or ask for help if you see things are not working out.
- Team spirit – rarely do developers (aside from freelancers) work solo. You must adapt to work with other people and actively participate in the team effort.



CAREER PROSPECT

My skills allow me to work in almost any kind of web development company or company that has their dedicated IT sector, regardless of the industry. Some examples could be telecommunication companies, corporations such as Google or Facebook, small private businesses and similar. There is also a great possibility for creating my own business where I could start from working for smaller clients, e.g., creating reservation web applications for hair salons, presentational websites for companies and so on. From where I am now, I can pursue to further improve my development skills in the technology stack I am working with currently, make a change and switch to some other technologies such as mobile application development, go more for a team-lead, manager position and so on. There are really quite a lot of options.



CHALLENGES

My main challenge is balancing between working on many different projects all at once, as well as managing younger colleagues and helping them with their problems. One of the biggest challenges is the day an app or website must go live. Everything must be perfect so that end users do not see a faulty or buggy version of the application. Occasionally, a project demands the implementation of a concept or functionality which I have not yet encountered so I have to figure out the best way to do so. Also, since the IT sector is rapidly changing and improving, every developer must constantly learn about the best principles, new technologies and how to use them.

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YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS

Find something that really interests you and start learning everything about it on your own, from the Internet, videos, books etc. but do not hesitate to also ask your professors for help. Many of them will very gladly help you in any possible way they can, be it concrete or general advice. But what is also, in my opinion, very important is that you still maintain a healthy and active social life. Some people in our industry neglect that and find it unimportant. I strongly disagree.



YOUR ADVICE TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Support your students/children in their decisions and career paths and provide them with all the possible real-life experience you can. That is the only thing they cannot find on the Internet.



LEARN MORE

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