

Hello, World!

Howdy, and welcome to “The Data Dump.” You may be wondering why you bought this book (or why you *should* buy it, if you haven’t already). “What’s in it for me?” you ponder, as you carefully weigh the pros and cons of forking over your hard-earned moolah.

Well, I’m glad you ask! This tome has a *lot* to offer, as long as you’re interested in the world of software development. Whether you’re just now considering diving into coding, or you’re a grizzled programming veteran looking to revitalize your programming passion, this book is for you.

My goal is to help at least one person get into software development who otherwise wouldn’t have – whether that’s because they learn that no programmer’s perfect, or because they pick up some handy tips on what kind of teammate programmers look for in interviews, or because another point in this book spurs them to take that leap into the world of software.

If you’re intent on getting an insider’s view of what it’s actually like to work in software engineering, then give this book a go! It will shed light on what it’s like to be in this profession, as well as impart gems of wisdom gleaned from the combined experiences of over 50 professional programmers.

I’ll start with a brief introduction of myself, Joseph M. Peck. You may have already perused a short biography of me on the book jacket (it might be hidden under the big, shiny “Best Seller” label, or perhaps behind an ignominious “Bargain Bin” sticker).

I’ve been working as a programmer since I graduated from N.C. State University way back in ‘06 (after only five short years!). Since then, I’ve had the privilege of coding alongside some of the most talented people this side o’ the Mississippi.

A few years ago, I realized how valuable it would be to collect, distill, and distribute all that software experience into one book. There are countless books about computer science, how to learn different programming languages, how to manage a team's tasks, and so on. But, there aren't enough books that pull the reader right into the midst of a bunch of software professionals to learn the hard-won lessons that have helped them in their careers.

I wanted a volume that harvested *real-life lessons* from the exceptional people I've worked with (and even some I haven't) in the software biz over the past fifteen years. I had taken (and even passed!) an "Intro to Fiction Writing" course in college, so I felt up to the task of authoring a world-class book that definitely wouldn't be an utter embarrassment.

Thus, I started scribbling down a list of questions to email my colleagues (past, present, and aspirational) in the hopes that some of them would reply with something more illuminating than "unsubscribe." But before I go over these questions, here's a brief note about the wide variety of software experts whose wisdom I've included.