33.3 Your Life

The Power of Software

Unlike other engineering disciplines, software is effectively unconstrained by the laws of physics.

- Programming is an act of almost pure creativity!

The greatest limitation we face in building systems is being able to understand what we're building!

The Limiting Reagent

You are a rare commodity.

Revenue per Employee:

Meta	$1.639 million
Alphabet (Google)	$1.598 million
Amazon	$302,177.86
Microsoft	$897,194.32
Apple	$2.517 million

Profits per Employee:

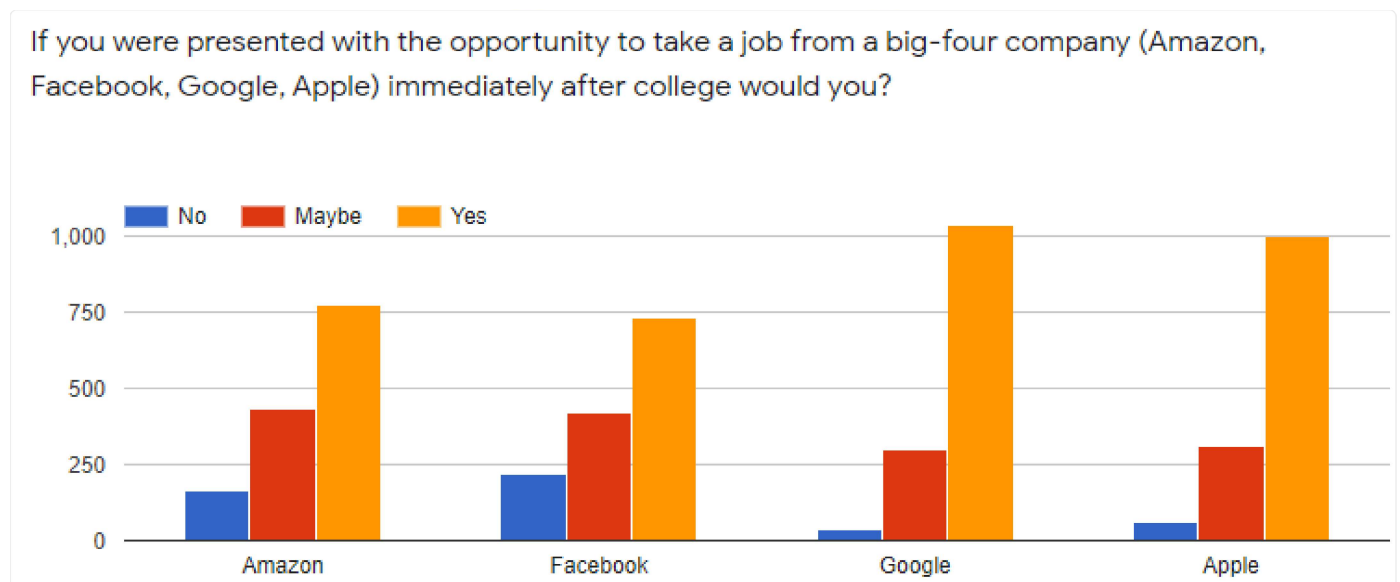| Meta	$547,033.49
Alphabet (Google)	$413,851.76
Amazon	$7218.28
Microsoft	$329,131.22
Apple	$646,967.53

Sources: Link, Link

The skills you are building will be in high demand from companies, non-profits, government agencies, educational institutions, and more.

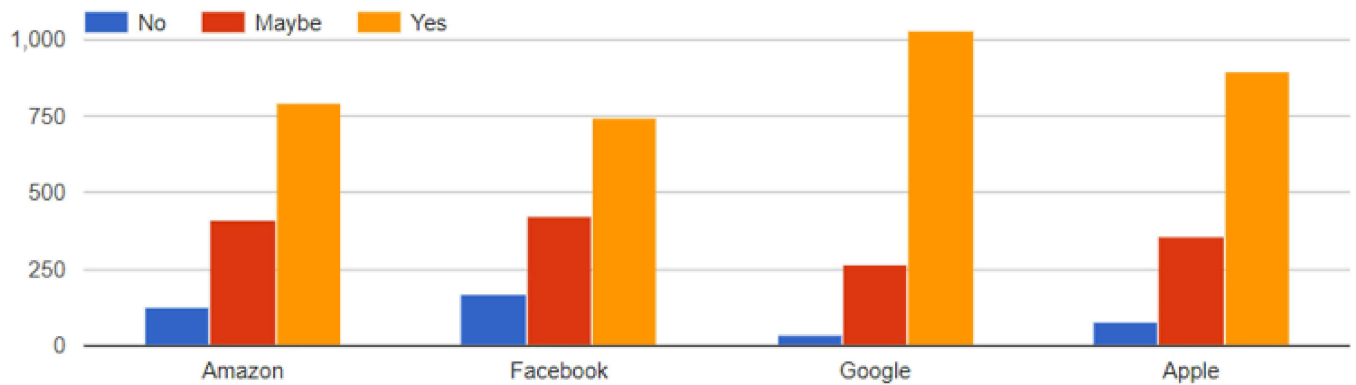- The choice of how to spend your career is yours.

Some CS61B Data (Spring 2019 vs Spring 2021)

Spring 2021:

If you were presented with the opportunity to take a job from a big-four company (Amazon, Facebook, Google, Apple) immediately after college would you?

Spring 2019:

If you were presented with the opportunity to take a job from a big-four company (Amazon, Facebook, Google, Apple) immediately after college would you?

Steering the Course

Quite a lot of you will likely end up working at some sort of technology company at some point in your life.

There's nothing (IMO) wrong with working at profit driven tech companies.

- Please do realize that even as a rank and file employee, you have the power to effect change, particularly if you are paid in stock (because then you are a partial owner).

Let's see some examples.

Example 1: Google and the Censored Chinese Search Engine

From 2006 to 2010, Google operated a censored version of Google in China.

- Withdrew in 2010 in response to cyber attacks by the Chinese government on users of Google's services: "These attacks and the surveillance they have uncovered--combined with the attempts over the past year to further limit free speech on the web--have led us to conclude that we should review the feasibility of our business operations in China. We have decided we are no longer willing to continue censoring our results on Google.cn."

In Oct 2018, leaked documents published in The Intercept revealed a secret project by Google to re-enter the Chinese market.

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- This new search engine would be censored, and also allow government officials to hypothetically track Chinese residents making undesired queries.

Some employee responses:

- After the leaks, access within the company to documents related to the project were curtailed: "Everyone's access to documents got turned off, and is being turned on [on a] document-by-document basis," said one source. "There's been total radio silence from leadership, which is making a lot of people upset and scared. ... Our internal meme site and Google Plus are full of talk, and people are a.n.g.r.y." [Link]
- Over 1400 employees signed a letter demanding more transparency, and at least five employees resigned in protest [Link].

Jack Poulson (a senior scientist who resigned): (Link)

- "There are serious worldwide repercussions to this... what are Google's ethical red lines? We already wrote some down, but now we seem to be crossing those."
- Poulson said that he "very much agree[s] with the case Sergey made in 2010. That's the company I joined, the one that was making that statement." If the anti-censorship stance is shifting, he said, then he could no longer "be complicit as a shareholder and citizen of the company."

Ultimately, in response to employee outcry, the project was canceled [Link].

Example 2: Amazon and Climate Change [Link]

In 2020, 6,772+ employees at Amazon publicly signed a letter demanding better responses to climate change by Amazon.

- Specifically, they want the company to adopt a shareholder resolution (link) to study how the company will adapt to and reduce its contribution to climate change.
- "Amazon is not a mere victim of climate change—its operations contribute significantly to the problem... Coal still powers Amazon data centers. Diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel still power package delivery."
- "Amazon has the resources and scale to spark the world's imagination and redefine what is possible and necessary to address the climate crisis."

"Like other shareholders, they can file a resolution urging a particular corporate change that investors vote on at a company's annual meeting."

Time

You get some number of decades on the planet.

Each week is 168 hours.

- ~40 hours of work.
- ~56 hours of sleep. (Anecdotally, most of you will have much more free time after college than you do now)
- ~72 hours for everything else.

Spend your time wisely, in both your career and personal life.

Last updated 1 year ago