

# Quit school, learn online

Michael wyvale the recently turned 17 years old. He lives in Tallinn and almost a year working in Estonian IT startup VitalFields. Programs Mike 14 years and learned everything myself. After 9th grade he left school for the opportunity to learn on the Internet, enter did not — didn't see the point. As it turned out, it was the right decision. Now, in addition to regular work, Mike has also developed its own IT-project and helping my parents with their business. In the future he intends to start his own company, and while actively exploring startups and venture investing, participates in hackathons and win contests.

## **Tell me where you studied before started programming computers? And when she moved to Estonia?**

Third through sixth grade I was in Kyiv, Lyceum '171 "Leader". He is considered one of the most prestigious in Ukraine, provides more opportunities. But the base of the Ukrainian school curriculum is so overloaded that take advantage of these opportunities just not enough time.

In addition, the "Leader" had all the disadvantages of conventional Ukrainian schools — voluntary-compulsory collection of money, the attempts of some teachers to persuade students to private tutoring, some students went there not because of knowledge but because of connections and money of their parents. It made a certain negative impact on the efforts to learn.

After 6th grade, our family moved to Estonia. Estonian I do not know, and in the Russian school did not want to go because I heard stories about teachers propagandizing Soviet ideology. In the end, the best option, where I could continue secondary education, has become an international Ukrainian school. This is a remote school, where mostly children of diplomats living abroad.

In this school I studied three years — with 7 on 9 class. There is such a system: they give you the materials (textbooks) online, you their own studying, once a quarter they send you a test job. Every six months you go through an interview with a teacher one on one. It lasts 1-2 hours, during which the teacher is chasing you through the material all semester. In just six months, I took a test 14 and 28 personal interviews — it took a very long time.

The first year was to study hard. At school it's simple: teachers you all chew, though some knowledge we would not want to hit you in the head. And then you do it all by myself. But this school gave me something I could not give no other school — self-organization. I learned to work independently.

## **When interested in programming? Where you started?**

Interest in programming instilled in me a teacher of computer science in the "Leader". I was 12 years old on extra classes we began to study Web design and I liked it. Later, when I moved to Estonia, I started to learn the programming languages: the first was Python, Scala, and on the last year and a half JavaScript. At the age of 15 I started to use in practice the acquired knowledge — my parents gave me small tasks in real projects, which I solved using Python.

By the end of grade 9 I have already completed several programming courses on Coursera, including 'An Introduction to Interactive Programming in Python', Rice University; Functional Programming Principles in Scala, cole Polytechnique Fdrale de Lausanne. And when I did my certification, I understand that going to University does not make sense. Technology is constantly changing, and universities teach outdated program, they will not change it every year because evolutsioniruet technology.

Question: why learn an obsolete technology? This is, first, interesting second, then it will be harder to find a job.

I decided that I would learn programming on the Internet — there is everything you need. And if I don't need to go to University, why do I need a full secondary education? So I didn't finish 10-11, so as not to waste another two years. I just freed up a bunch of time that I could fully devote to self-education. I decided to gain knowledge from the best professors from different universities of the world in a convenient time for me.

## **What resources did you study? How many courses and that it was for courses?**

My father has a Master's Degree in Computer Science (a master's degree in computer science) — he got it in America. It was in 2000-ies, then the Internet has not been so many different courses and community as it is now, and get specialized education in the University was the only option. Father guide me in my self — prompted, what technologies to better understand which courses are better to take place.

Needless to explore programming on the Internet, you need to know English, because almost all courses in English. I started with Python course on Coursera. But for programming this is not the best resource — it for everything: physics, mathematics, literature.

Then there Pluralsight — there are hundreds of courses on different programming languages and technologies. This is a more specialized resource. It is constantly updated as new technologies emerge. Access to the site is paid, but it's worth it. If you count how much knowledge I took out and how much money is spent, the benefit is obvious. Subscription costs \$25 per month to \$500 a year for full access.

Also a good site Udemy. In my opinion, these two resources are the best for programmers today.

To learning JavaScript I started in the summer of 2014. Already about a year got a job

I finished more than 30 online programming courses from different universities and MOOC, most recent Algorithms: Design and Analysis from

Stanford University. All the free time I had due to the fact that I dropped out of standard school, I have dedicated programming: theory and practice. This allowed me to become a good programmer. Today I can write a complete project myself.

### **How did you get the first job? Worked somewhere besides VitalFields?**

In May 2014 in Kiev, carried out Garage48, and I decided to take part in it. In my opinion, this event is more suitable for Dating and not something serious. The real team was there to collect difficult, and the most successful are those who come there are already at least partially formed teams. I joined one of these teams, which have done service for designers. In the end we won.

In the spring I participated in GreenTech Garage48 in Tallinn on the theme of environmental technology. I liked it more: there was a lot of interesting ideas and projects, and in Kiev there were only 8.

In Kiev I met with the founder of Garage48 Ragnar Sass, which is then recognized me and GreenTech in Tallinn. He was amazed at how many I know at 16, and he invited me to participate in his new project. After discussing details, we decided to organize a weekend hackathon "for their" somewhere in nature. We spent two intense days at the lake, which suited the brain storming, and a day to implement our ideas. Although we did not continue to work on (I already had a better offer), it was a very useful experience for me.

Also at Garage48 in Kiev, I met with the CEO of VitalFields, Martin Rand, he was one of the mentors. After learning that most of the web front-end service for designers I wrote, he invited me to chat. I showed him one of his projects, spoke about the details of the technical implementation and after the interview got the job.

Now I am working on the position of the Front-end Developer. I like that in a startup you can influence the product. In large companies it is very difficult, you a small detail in a big car.

### **Had no problems with employment? Due to the fact that you're an immigrant, because of young age or lack of higher education?**

No. In Estonia I have a residence permit and have permission to work. Incomplete secondary education and the fact that I'm only 16, they were not interested. It is important for them, *what I know as* this knowledge is used.

Now in our little Estonia a lot of startups, so it is difficult to find programmers. Alternatively, bring employees from abroad. Recently, the demand for specialists from Ukraine. Some companies allow programmers to work remotely. Attitudes towards foreign employees are very loyal, especially to the Ukrainians.

### **What are your Hobbies outside of work and how to spend free time?**

Parents have a business in the field of IT-services that I help them. Also I have my own project website for individual selection of cars. With the move to Estonia the need arose and, in the process of finding a suitable service the idea for my project.

I read a lot about how to build your business, to monetize a startup, right to manage etc. My favourite book — "0 to 1" Peter Thiel. In the future I want to work on our project and develop it into an independent company. I work for the experience. To build your company, you need to understand how other.

In free from work and projects of the time doing sports archery.

### **Tell me what you like and don't like in Estonia.**

I don't like the weather in Estonia. It is a Northern country, there is very good summer — not too hot, the white nights, but bad in the winter because of its absence. Two years ago, there was snow, and I regularly went skiing, and in the last couple of years of almost no winter, it always rains. Combined with the short daylight hours, it's depressing and bad for the performance.

Another factor that I don't like in Estonia, especially in light of recent events in Ukraine there are many Russian speakers with a Soviet mentality and Pro-Russian views. According to statistics, in Tallinn 40% of the population is Russian — speaking, many of them have Estonian citizenship, mental was left in another country and culture. We try to avoid communicating with such people, but, unfortunately, it is not always possible. I always speak Ukrainian or English, [essays for sale](#) Estonian is taught.

Also in Estonia I like the fact that there is almost all government services available electronically. The ID card allows you to watch the tests that you took in the hospital, to pay taxes, register a business etc. It is very convenient and saves a lot of time.

### **Often come to Ukraine? Did not think of ever returning?**

We regularly arrive in Ukraine. Came, when there was a revolution. In Tallinn his community strongly supported the Maidan, arranged here pickets, meetings, collecting humanitarian assistance, conducted a joint Ukrainian-Estonian events to help and support Ukraine. I miss my family and friends, to friends who remained in Ukraine.

Of those countries where I was, I liked in Switzerland. There is very beautiful nature, friendly people. But, unfortunately, a fairly expensive country.

Lately we often go to Spain. This is a very large and diverse country and, most importantly, there is a lot of sun, which is so lacking in the winter.

Sunny days motivate me to new achievements.

Maybe I will return to Ukraine, but now it's hard to say. For business development, which I plan to do, in Ukraine, unfortunately, not the best conditions.

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