University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Presents

Sean Haneberg, Microsoft Studios

What is software engineering all about?
Unexpected lessons from a decade at Microsoft, Xbox, and HoloLens

Many study computer science and engineering with the goal of working professionally as a software engineer. To the talented, persistent, and curious, a career in software engineering is especially appealing. It is an opportunity to have a day job where you work to delight consumers, to empower individuals, and to collaborate with peers while solving interesting and challenging problems.

So what is writing software professionally actually like?
What moments are just the best and what moments are just the worst?
What—if anything—turns out as expected?
What do you wish you knew before you started?

Since it's impossible to predict the answers to these questions for each prospective software professional, I will offer some data-points—surprises, successes, failures, and lessons learned from my first decade of professional experiences. I hope that others can leverage my observations to improve their own academic and professional journeys.

Starting at Microsoft in 2004, I've been privileged to work on product teams which include the Xbox 360, Xbox One, and HoloLens groups. The challenges in these spaces have yielded several teachable moments. Focusing on the most unexpected and disruptive learnings, I will cover a broad range of areas relevant to software engineering including: technical development, rapid prototyping, self-assessment, emotional intelligence, health, leadership, and teamwork. The experiences I am most excited to share are the ones which have forced me to tear down and rebuild my own mental model around a question I've been asking for a while now: "What is software engineering all about?"

Bio: Sean Haneberg is a software developer living in Seattle, Washington and working at Microsoft Studios. A Buffalo native, Sean studied at the State University of New York at Buffalo from 2000 to 2004. At that time, he suspended his studies to move to Seattle and to contribute to Microsoft's then-upcoming Xbox 360 game console. Sean spent nine years collaborating with his peers to create, test, and deliver user-facing and game developer-facing social features for the Xbox 360 and Xbox One consoles. After the release of Xbox One, Sean left the Xbox team for "State of the Art"—a Microsoft studio focusing on user experiences for cutting-edge technologies. There, he and the team explored the incubation, prototyping, and delivery of enterprise and consumer experiences for the Microsoft HoloLens. In 2011, Sean earned a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science from SUNY Buffalo, after resuming his studies. In his spare time, Sean pursues his own personal and professional growth, focusing on communication, collaboration, and software engineering methodologies, as well as gaming, social media, feminism, music performance, and the occasional programming puzzle.

Wednesday, November 18, 2015 @ 4:30 pm

University at Buffalo – North Campus – Student Union 330

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