Qt Journey– Revolutionizing Networking Security

September 20, 2023 by Emilia Valkonen-Damjanovic (https://www.qt.io/blog/author/emilia-valkonen-damjanovic) | Comments

In this series, we'll bring you various career stories from people working with Qt. Today, I'm interviewing Jeremy Tubongbanua, a **software engineering student and software engineer at Atsign**, based in Ontario, Canada.

Tell a bit about yourself. Who are you, and what is your job?

I am a third-year software engineering student at Ontario Tech University in Ontario, Canada, and a Software Engineer at Atsign. Atsign is a fully remote start-up based in Silicon Valley, providing innovative and simple security solutions using Networking 2.0 technology.

In my free time, I run daily and play recreational volleyball with my friends. My favourite food is sushi, and I believe pineapple belongs to pizza.

What originally inspired you to pursue this career?

I wrote my first line of code during ninth grade for my robotics team. It was a wonderful experience, writing instructions for a robot to run a motor for a certain number of seconds. By the twelfth grade, I began writing more complicated algorithms using external libraries. I was astounded by what you could do with software that others wrote to help you write more software!

I also always admired the people who wrote the software for video editing, operating systems, and embedded systems. We developers are so grateful for the others who make the tools we sometimes take for granted. That is why I am pursuing a career in software engineering, where I am currently writing

software and libraries for other developers to (hopefully) use with great experience.

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What did you study at school, and how did it prepare you for your career?

I currently study software engineering at Ontario Tech University in Ontario, Canada.

In school, I have learned a lot about engineering software. However, it's sometimes about something other than writing code. Programming is a collection of activities like time management, task management, architectural design, and even something as simple as communication with teammates!

This semester, I am taking a class on the design of algorithms, how we can calculate the efficiency of algorithms and why algorithms are so important. Every year in university, I learn so much that I laugh at myself for how naive I was the previous year, which is a good thing because it shows my immense growth throughout my university journey.

How did you first discover Qt, and what changed as a result?

I first discovered Qt while searching for C++ libraries to help me with side projects. I found Qt through its rigorous front-end framework and the ease of use to create front-end applications in C++. I appreciate Qt immensely for its accessible framework! This enforces my appreciation for people who write software that makes software easier to write.

Can you describe a typical day or week in your job?

Every morning, I spend 15 minutes on my own to write notes on what I did yesterday and what an accomplished day would look like today, and I do that by mapping the steps and tasks I need to do. Taking time to reflect is a great exercise in becoming more productive, as you can reflect on what you did well or why you might not have been productive.

Every day, we have an architecture call, where the engineers on the team raise any pressing concerns on the architecture of our software and a 30-minute stand-up, where we update the team on what we are doing and any blockers we may have. Then, for the rest of the day, I reserve 2-3 hours to code. I do a lot of work in C, Dart, and Docker, helping write core software and tests.

What are you currently working on?

In partnership with Qt, especially Sam Davies, Atsign is building an Atsign-Qt plugin where developers using Qt can use Atsign's secure plane of end-to-end encrypted communication, securing IoT data transfer, making IoT devices have no attack surfaces. Security is one of the most important things in IoT.

The Atsign plugin I am building with Xavier Chanthavong will allow developers to completely secure their embedded devices' communications with other embedded devices and even Qt applications. For example, in a few lines of code, somebody would be able to create a front-end UI application built with Qt using the Atsign plugin and receive data from a sensor plugged into an embedded device completely edge-to-edge encrypted and fully secure with no network attack surface. If you want your device or Qt application to communicate with another device or Qt application easily and securely, Atsign can do that.

Atsign's innovative technology is built on Networking 2.0 principles. At the highest level, Networking 2.0

- makes anything addressable, with clear data ownership and control,

- allows contextual responses,

- and is inherently private and cryptographically secure.

All apps and solutions built with our SDKs automatically have these features. Everything is distributed and peer-to-peer (though it isn't blockchain), and data owners cut and store their own cryptographic keys. We often call Atsign's end-to-end encryption "edge-to-edge" encryption. We're really excited about the potential of Networking 2.0 to unlock the full potential of IoT and even AI.

What do you love most about your job?

I love two main things about my job: the people and the flexibility. Everybody at Atsign is very nice and patient. Our number one rule is to have fun, and if you are caught breaking this rule, you will get in a lot of trouble!

My work here feels fulfilling and impactful, as the software I write will help make a difference in the security of the Internet and devices.

Which skills or qualities would you say are of importance in order to succeed in your field?

It is very important to ask questions and be eager to learn. As a student, I often find myself learning on the job; I pick up a book or read straight from the documentation.

As a software engineer, you are always learning on the job and learning never ends, so be sure not to get tired of it! It is also important to ask questions because there is a good chance somebody else has a quick and easy solution and may have run into the same issue you are having. All the engineers at Atsign have tons of experience and are experts at what they do. Their wisdom and advice are something I often take for granted.

What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing a similar career?

If something feels impossible at first, try your best, and you will be surprised at what you can accomplish. As long as you keep moving forward, you will look at yourself a month from now and be impressed and accomplished that you were able to overcome the obstacles you once thought were impossible. In this type of career, you will constantly be growing and learning will never stop, so you will always be getting better at whatever you are doing!

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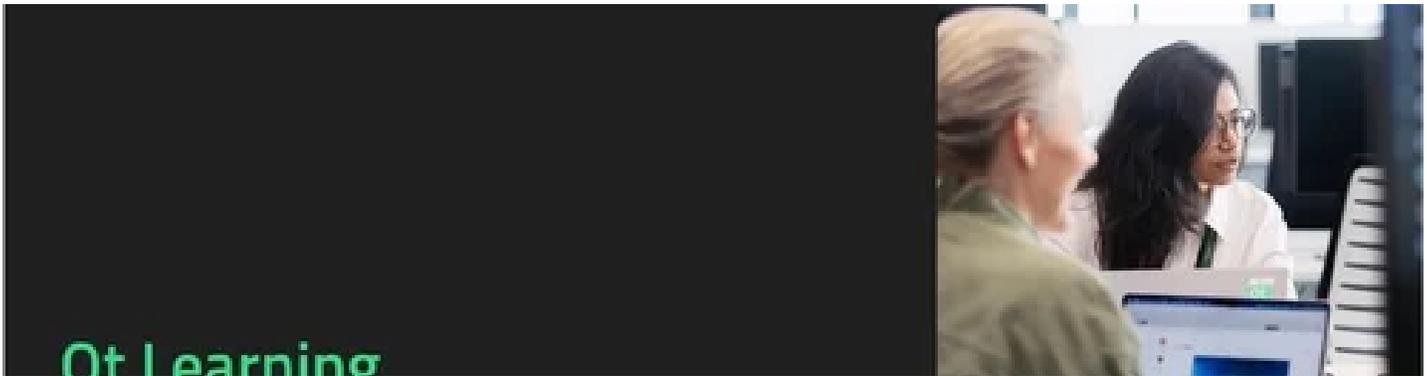
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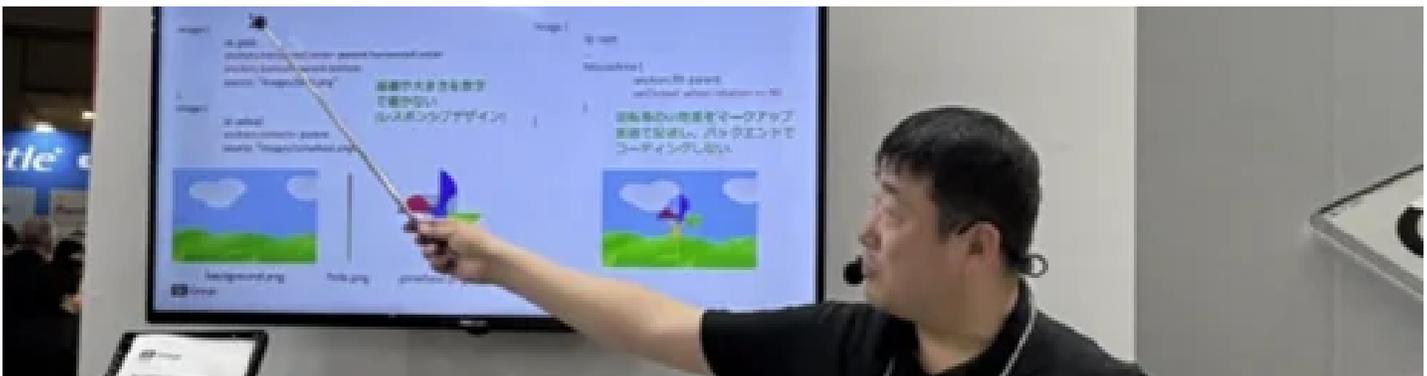
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