

From college dropout to Web developer and Internet entrepreneur: Roilan's story

April 16, 2015

Failing isn't the end of the world. In fact, you're probably going to do it from time to time, and that's okay.

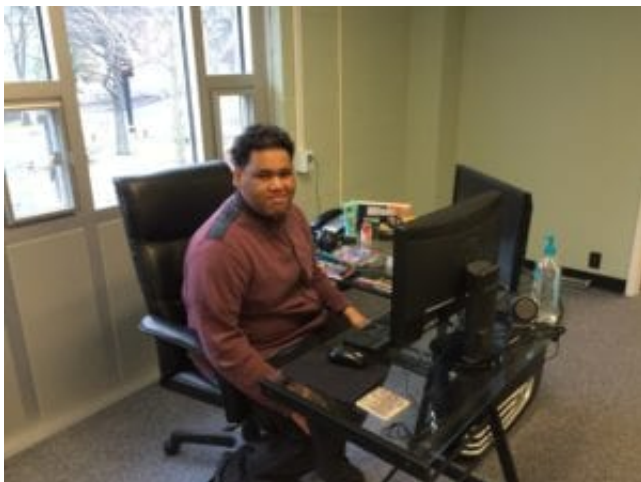
That was the message Roilan Salinas had for teens at a recent STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) workshop held at Binghamton University. Roilan, who will graduate from SUNY Broome in May with an associate's degree in Business Information Management – Web Development, knows the lesson well.

He's a talented web developer who started his own web-related business – but didn't have the best start when it came to higher education.

"Prior to coming here, I dropped out of college twice. I didn't know what I was going to do," said the New York City native.

In the end, he packed his bags and headed to SUNY Broome alone. He learned about the school because his cousin once lived in the Binghamton area, he said. It turned out to be an excellent choice.

"Being in a different environment changes the way you do things," he said. "I meet so many great people."



Roilan Salinas

Web entrepreneur

After Salinas dropped out of the City University of New York for the second time, he stumbled into web development.

At the time, all he wanted to do was play video games for free. His hobby gave him an idea for a business. Video game aficionados playing Minecraft or other games need a central location – virtually speaking – to play with their friends.

“That’s how I support myself through school,” Salinas said of his company, which provides game server hosting.

All businesses, however, need a professional storefront. For virtual businesses, that storefront is a webpage – and Salinas didn’t want to pay someone to set it up.

At the time, he needed an elective and opted for an HTML and CSS class. He found he enjoyed website development, and a personal connection he made through a web developer friend further sparked his interest.

“After that, I just loved it. I did as much as I could outside of class,” he said.

In BIT 186: Interactive Web Sites, Instructor Ciara Cable remembered Roilan as a student with considerable web skills – as well as a willingness to help his fellow students and an eagerness to learn. He often lingered after class to discuss concepts.

“He wasn’t just there for the good grades, which he earned,” Cable said. “He was there because he genuinely wanted to know more.”

During his time at SUNY Broome, Salinas also took part in an internship, an important part of the Web development program, noted BIT Chair Sandra Wright. During his internship, he was helped by the knowledge he obtained in his project management class, he told Wright.

Roilan doesn’t have the time to play video games now, as he continues to hone his skills. He recently interviewed at a New York City firm, an opportunity he didn’t anticipate. Initially, he didn’t feel that he was good enough as a developer – but learned otherwise.

“Once you’ve gotten compliments from someone you never met before at an interview, it just clicks,” he said.

BIM job prospects

When it comes to STEAM – or the more popular acronym, STEM – Business Information Technology (BIT) might not immediately spring to mind. While firmly rooted in business and entrepreneurship, technology is the heart of the BIT department, said Wright.

The BIM degree – and especially the Web Development emphasis – is a perfect example of STEAM. And popular acronyms aside, the program leads to real employment, as well as entrepreneurship opportunities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates a 20% growth in web developer employment from 2012 to 2022, driven by the

rising prevalence of digital commerce and mobile devices.

“The programs in BIT are interdisciplinary by design,” Wright said. “We bring technology, business, entrepreneurship, art and communication together in a way that we are very proud of and excited to share.”

Now that Roilan has found his career path, he’s preparing for employment after graduation. As with all talented web designers, he expects to continually learn more during the course of his career.

“I believe school has changed my life,” he said.

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