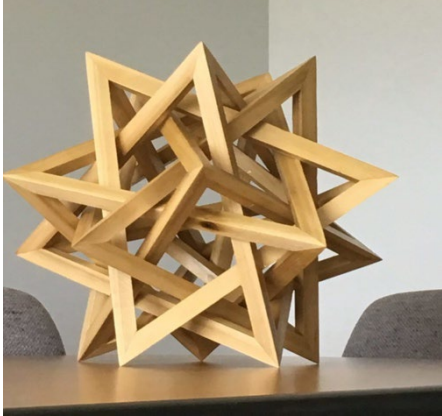


Joe Epplin

VP Technology, Object Computing

B.S. Computer Science, 1983



My studies at UMSL

I always loved mathematics and technology but invested my early college education in the Saint Louis area Roman Catholic seminary system; liberal arts and theology. Once I realized that priesthood was not for me, I could focus fully on my love for mathematics and technology. I chose UMSL to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science because ex-seminarians are poor, UMSL education quality is excellent, and its location made it possible for me to attend college while also holding down a full-time job.

Once I began attending classes at UMSL, I was impressed by the faculty's understanding of their domain, their grasp of our current industrial and commercial context, and their very effective teaching skills. I particularly enjoyed Profs. Schwartz and Connett's puzzles and real-world simulated challenges.

My work and life

1983 was a tough year to look for a job after graduation. The U.S. economy was struggling, and businesses were being very conservative regarding hiring. Moreover, I believe that my non-conventional academic path (study in Philosophy and Theology) was unattractive to the few companies that were hiring. I took a job as a teacher at Saint Mary's High School in south Saint Louis in order to pay the bills while serving my community. This also afforded me the time to pursue graduate Mathematics studies at Washington University, with a focus on group and ring theory. That foundation of philosophy, liberal arts, computer science, and mathematics has served me very well ever since.

I have had the opportunity and privilege to be on teams doing amazing things. We applied inverted bitmap searching to chemical compound research (Tripos drug discovery) and early internet text-based searching (EDS intranet). We widened the curve and surface definitions available to a major CAD/CAM system, developed graphics software tools in support of the creation of digital electrical schematics, and developed a topological analysis of graph representations of wireframe models of machine parts with an interest in automatically identifying the surfaces of these parts (Unigraphics). All of these were directly related to my previous UMSL coursework. I was able to participate in the development of an ISO standard (10303) for the computer-interpretable representation and exchange of product manufacturing information.

These successes led to being accepted as a software architect on many levels (application, solution, system, product, enterprise) and at several Saint Louis area iconic businesses (McDonnell Douglas/Boeing, Anheuser-Busch/InBev, Elsevier, Maritz, Object Computing). Helping Elsevier to

architect their amazing healthcare learning platform (Evolve) and Maritz migrate to a 90% open source based incentive platform were highlights. Again, these were born out of concepts I learned and owned through my education at UMSL.

Message to UMSL students

Learn everything! Harvest your curiosity into growing in understanding and knowledge. Not just facts about computer science and information technology. But real understanding; why do people care about this domain or that domain? The facts are going to be “commodity” and broadly accessible. Your edge will be your deep and broad understanding of the world and its communities.

Here for you!

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