

Figuring out my next steps

In the upcoming weeks I have to pick what I want to do for my next semester and indirectly the direction I want to take for my career. I have been struggling with the choices a lot and it's quite difficult to pick what I want. in this document I'll take you through what I've been doing to figure out my next steps in this course.

Contents

Figuring out what I can choose	3
Narrowing it down	3
Talk with some teachers	4
Talk with Pim.....	4
Another talk with jan	4
Conclusion/reflection.....	5

Figuring out what I can choose

A few weeks ago, the semester 3 teachers sent us an email with a link containing all the different topics that you can pick for the next semester. As it stands there are 12 different topics to pick out of. Some of them are new and some have been there for a while. The topics are:

- AI, machine learning
- Applied generative AI
- Business IT & data analysis
- Cyber security essentials
- Front-end development
- Full stack development
- Game design
- Industry 4.0 & internet of things
- Intelligent devices
- Media creation
- Mobile apps development
- Network & cloud automation
- Open learning s4

I know, it's a lot. Basically, the main ones I'm interested in are Media creation, Front-end development, and Game design.

Narrowing it down

I've already ruled out that I probably won't do game design. I love playing games and I have developed a few games before but sadly, the market for it in the Netherlands is small. If I want to get a job in game development/design, I'll have to probably look abroad, and I don't want that.

My decision currently lies between Media creation and Front-end development. I really enjoy doing both. I love combining the two as well. My passion really lies in the designing part of it though. I really enjoy designing things such as posters, UIs, cards, flyers, etc. I love doing it and I want to continue growing in it.

But I mentioned before, I am stuck between this and Front-end development. I also really enjoy making interactive experiences. Coding and creating something visual, is very enjoyable for me as it kind of feels like I'm playing with Legos. I also think the market for front-end development is a bit more valuable and bigger.

Talk with some teachers

To figure out more about this I decided to talk to my semester coach, Jan about it. I went to him to ask what the right choice could be. Jan mentioned that he wouldn't recommend it normally but if I was really passionate about it, he wouldn't hold me back from doing it. If I were to choose media creation, I should set higher goals for myself to make sure that I won't stall in my learning progress. Semester 4, media creation is very similar to the third semester in media design. Structurally, it's basically the same.

During the talk, Jan showed me some ideas they have been making for what the semester might look like. From what I remember, they're very design and production based and there's very little if any development. I don't particularly mind not coding but I will probably do so anyway by making a portfolio.

Finally, Jan also told me to talk to Pim or Petra to get more information on front-end development and see if they could bring any additional information to the table. So, I went to Pim to ask him about the topic.

Talk with Pim

I had a talk with Pim and he showed me what the semester will be about. So, to sum it up where I'm at after the talk, I am even more conflicted than I was before this talk. Pim summed up what the semester was about and that they're trying to learn the students how to work with AI. The semester itself will look quite like semester 2 with a lot of theory being taught at the beginning of the semester. There will also be a passion project, and there will be 2 weeks to make a professional portfolio.

Essentially, the hybrid that media and design is trying to create is something Fontys is trying to get rid of. They want us to be either full-fledged conceptors or developers. This semester tries to focus on the development part of that.

Another talk with jan

Skiping a few weeks, right before the holiday I had one final talk with Jan to get a second opinion on my choice. I knew that Jan couldn't make choices for me but I just wanted to know if my choice was the right one for me from an outside perspective. I wrote a feedpulse about it and this is what I wrote:

I talked to Jan about my topic choice for the next semester because I was still unsure what direction I wanted to go in. I was stuck between front-end development and media creation. These two directions overlap a lot with my current knowledge and skills already but after the career day and the talk with Pim, I really got convinced to go to front-end. I think personally there will be more opportunities for me there not only in the work field, but also in being a creative developer, which is my ideal direction.

I talked to Jan, and I talked to him about some of my worries. I am worried about the fierce competition with other designers in the field. As an ICT student you have less to bring to the table as a designer than a designer coming from a creative/art study.

Jan basically reassured me that, whatever I do in my study now, may not be what I end up doing later. He mentioned this before in our earlier talk. I can do something like front-end this semester but I may do a completely different internship or something else in my free study field.

Conclusion/reflection

I am fully sure of my decision which will be front-end development. I have always liked developing in front-end a lot and I want to learn more about it. I wrote a letter to the exam board to ask for permission to follow the course next semester and they approved of it. I told them that there's still a lot of areas from which I can learn a lot.

I want to go into the creative side with front-end though. That means specializing in CSS and JavaScript a lot more as well as learning ThreeJS and blender to go with it.

I think I did a good job with really thinking about my choice and not just going for something that seemed fun. I really looked into everything I could and took my time, so much that student desk had to contact me to remind me that I have to sign up for a course. I'm excited to see what front-end holds in store for me!