Okay. And so

that's, that's cool. I feel like that that makes a lot of sense now. Yeah, like that massive transition. And so when you're at Minnesota, and you're sort of starting to see the possibilities of mechanical engineering, what were some of the the first ideas of where you might work? What came on your radar first?

Vic Ong 05:53

Definitely robotics, I was say, that's gonna be the, that was the first one when I was in my junior year. And then I started looking a lot more into product design, actually, or design engineering, so to speak. The reason why I got into that, because I took that it took a minor in product design. And that sort of allowed me to explore how to innovate creatively. And I was learning that in parallel with mechanical engineering. So with that, combine that kind of lead, lead me to think about design engineer. So that was actually my, the first track that I went into, because I got an internship at a bed company called Select Comfort. And I was an design engineering intern there develop, developing their next generation bed system for Smart Bed 360, Smart Sleep Number. Funny enough, like I think, three years later, when I left, that Smart Bed 360 actually ended up being showcased in the CS 360. The show was kind of wild.

Marshall McCann 07:13

So cool. I did I did not know this, this piece of history.

Vic Ong 07:21

Thl Im d ara

You spoke with a little bit of, I kind of want to touch on that product design course because I feel like that's maybe your first entrance into like, "oh, I can use my engineering background to work with something like pretty substantial. And and help designers kind of create something tangible with with their ideas." And also, you know, if you have your own idea, you can create it, it feels like that, that course was pretty impactful for like, you know, not only Disney, but the rest of the stuff that you've done suits. Would you say that?

Vic Ong 09:15

Yeah, definitely. So I definitely have to give props to the professor who actually taught me a lot of things in there. And his name is Dr. Barry Kudrovitz. And so he's think today he is the director of the College of Design, and the University of Minnesota. And so he created this course called toy design. And in this toy design course, which is the final project of my minor in product design. We essentially learned to build toys. And so in this project, what was the biggest thing I learned is practical design thinking. So I mean, if you're in design, background and arts background, you might have heard you might have definitely taken a Design Thinking 101. So I learned that for the first time when I minored, in product design, and during the toy design classes when we learn to how to use that, use that design thinking framework to actually apply it in a more practical sense. And so we decided to do that. And that allows me to learn a lot of things, such as how do you actually brainstorm properly in a multidisciplinary team? How do you actually select properly? What kind of methods can you use to drill down or refine your ideas? And how can you verify them? How can you validate them? And how and how can you test and iterate it, properly? And so I learned a lot about that. And yes, so that actually carried on throughout my career actually, even till today. So in this need, particularly, I learned a lot of things that I tried to bring in to the team at Disney was what I learned when I did my, my course with with Dr. Barry Kudrovitz. He's amazing. And even to today, I still have all of the slides on design thinking and still use it every now and then to do brainstorming, or just figure out how to innovate properly in within the team.

Marshall McCann 11:18

Yeah, and I feel like that comes in into use, especially? An

Definitely. I, I love my time when I wasn't working in Disney.

Marshall McCann 15:17

I knew that but the listeners don't know that. And so, you know, you're finished up there. And, and you're kind of looking around and you're saying, maybe I don't have, you know, I don't have the visa yet. And I don't have the sponsorship. So what do you do?

Vic Ong 15:34

What I had to do at a time was to make sure I can find a company who does, who allows me to apply for the STEM extension, started applying to a lot, a lot of jobs. And then I landed a job opportunity in Hawaii. Yeah, pretty, pretty wild that I have all of all the places that I got, I got a software engineering position in Hawaii. So I say sure, why not? I guess let's make another move now from Florida, to Hawaii. So I just packed my bags again, fly to Hawaii, and then ship my car across to the island.

Marshall McCann 16:16

So you're, you're doing software development in Hawaii. What companies or company are you working at?

Vic Ong 16:23

So it is a consulting company called Data house consulting. What they do essentially, is there are a they are sort of like a software consultancy firm. What they do is they provide software services, implementation services, or just consultancy services in Hawaii.

Marshall McCann 16:44

And would you say that this is like your first full time software development position? I mean, I know Disney was sort of like half and half in a way, this is your first full time software development role. Right? Yeah. Okay, so that's cool. And was there any kind of like speed bumps getting up to... I don't know, I guess, like the expectation of a full time software developer?

Vic Ong 17:06

They definitely is, to some degree, I definitely when I started joining the company, and I thought to myself, Man, what have I, what have I got myself into? This is like really hard. You know, because when you get to be a full, a full time software engineer, it sort of comes with some expectation that you do know how to know, certain, you know, you do know how to do certain things by yourself. Right. And so that was there were definitely a lot of things that I needed to brush up, you know, because what I was trying to do is what personw how to deeded to

years in their bachelor's, and I learned by myself while I was at Disney for like a year. So there's definitely a lot of things to catch up. Besides just knowing the, like Python and JavaScript, right? I needed to know, a lot more on like, what are some of the good software coding practices? What are some of the software design principles? What are some of the algorithms that will make things more efficient? So a lot things to catch up? But yeah, I powered through all that. And I guess, I guess it worked out.

M Marshall McCann 18:19

 And so how long were you in Hawaii? At that point?

Vic Ong 18:23

 It's close to one and a half years, I would say, okay,

Marshall McCann 18:27

 And why does that end after one and a half years?

Vic Ong 18:31

 The growth just wasn't there. So I made the choice to leave a couple of months earlier before my visa ends. And I left the states and went to went back to Malaysia to take a job as a as a senior software engineer at an E commerce firm.

Marshall McCann 18:48

 I mean, I feel like this moment would have been really tough for you, you made this huge transition overseas. Did you have any expectations that you would end up back in Malaysia? Did you want to go back to Malaysia at that point?

Vic Ong 19:01

 Yeah, no, I think going back to Malaysia was definitely the last thing that was on my mind. When I left from Malaysia to to the US, for for my studies. I really wanted to stay there.

Marshall McCann 19:14

 And I guess, how long were you working in Malaysia? At that point?

Vic Ong 19:19

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Marshall McCann 25:08

That's, that's all I have, Vic. And I really appreciate you coming in and speaking on the podcast, you have any final words for some undergrads or grads looking at software development as a potential future?

Vic Ong 25:21

I mean, obviously, everyone has like their, their dream company that they want to work for. That should be your number two priority, and not aiming, not having dream companies being the first priority, because what's most important is that, whether or not, you can find a company that allows you to grow in the direction that you want to that, you always dreamed dream of. Maybe you didn't get to work in your dream company today. But if you are growing in the right direction that you want to, you will eventually get there. Or maybe when when you go, when you grow in that direction that you want to, maybe at a time, you've learned that you're your dream company has changed, and that's simply okay. But most importantly, is when you look back, you know that you're learning all the right things, and you're going to the right learning path. And I think that's definitely should be number one priority.

Marshall McCann 26:18

Thank you so much.

Vic Ong 26:20

Thank you so much for having me.

Stacey Copeland 26:27

Interested in learning more about the FCAT community? Stay tuned for a brand new episode of FCAT After School hitting your feeds on every other Wednesday this season! A big thanks to Vic Ong for joining us here on the show. You'll find links to resources mentioned and more info on Vic and the Centre for Digital Media MA program in the show notes. Our host for this episode was Marshall McCann. Production by Marshall and me, Stacey Copeland. FCAT After School respectfully acknowledges the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt (kakite), Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen peoples, on whose unceded traditional territories our three campuses reside, and where many of the stories shared in our series take place. Make sure to rate us and subscribe to FCAT After School in your podcast app of choice, so you don't miss any of our upcoming episodes. And you can follow us on social media at FCAT at SFU. That's F C A T at SFU on Twitter and Instagram. See you next time.