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Sennett '16 Interns With Shopify

Aug. 6, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— When Illinois Wesleyan University **computer science** major Cale Sennett '16 (Bloomington, Ill.) was looking for a summer internship, he put as much emphasis on company culture as he did on the technology the company uses.

So Sennett was excited to join Shopify as much for the employee engagement as he was for the opportunity to improve his skills. Canadian-based Shopify works with merchants who want to offer their own online checkout services. Small- and mid-size businesses can use Shopify's software to handle sales through mobile phones, websites and physical stores.

Sennett is a software developer on the Financial Operations team, a group responsible for writing software such as the billing system and accounting tools. The internship has given him experience in working with relevant software tools he'll use on his own projects. Sennett is the co-founder and chief technology officer of Omicron Financial, a winner of the 2014 Chicago College Startup Competition. He is also the chief technology officer of MajorClarity, a site that helps students test drive majors in a quick and easy manner. Sennett built platforms for both sites using Ruby on Rails, an open-source web framework also used by Shopify.



Cale Sennett '16

Named a *Fast Company* Magazine Most Innovative Company in 2012, Shopify provides financial benefits for employees' fitness activities, housecleaning and other services. Many of these benefits extend to interns, said Sennett.



"The company culture is incredible," Sennett added. He noted Shopify's F-1 filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission includes the company's statement on Culture and Employees: "we value people who get shit done, build for the long-term, focus on simple solutions, act like owners and thrive on change."

The company also values innovation and experimentation, Sennett said. Every few months every employee has free reign to work on whatever project he or she wants, as long as it adds value to Shopify. During the most recent "Hack Days" event, Sennett and three other interns formed a team to expand Shopify's functionality into event ticket sales. "By the end of the two days, we had a working prototype and presented it to the whole company. Shopify is a place of do-ers," he said.

Those values exemplify the atmosphere, said Sennett. "It's an amazing place."

He was prepared for the internship, he said, because he has become a better programmer through courses at IWU, and particularly values a recent independent study with Associate Professor of Computer Science Mark Liffiton. "I've also improved my ability to think critically and apply those skills to another field," he said.

Sennett is one of more than 200 Illinois Wesleyan students interning at locations around the globe this summer. Illinois Wesleyan students increasingly participate in internship opportunities; the **most recent data** shows more than 70 percent of the Class of 2014 participated in at least one internship.