

Integration Software Architect

Rob Phippen, IBM

For my PhD, I did Monte-Carlo/Molecular Dynamics simulations of Liquid Crystals - I liked the idea that some very theoretical research could have practical application in the real world. I also happened to love the elegance of how statistical mechanics can derive bulk properties starting from a small number of starting assumptions.

Several years of writing programs to simulate the physics involved gave me an interest in the programming itself and I wanted to scratch that itch. As a physicist, I found that I had a skill that, at the time, was in short supply in the software industry - the ability to write programs that actually calculate things rather than just do logic. This is rather more mainstream now.

Over time I found myself drawn towards a role in software architecture, which is really just a grand word for 'large scale software design'. It presents a level of intellectual challenge that I found appealing - even though it is a long way from where I began. Be prepared for the world of software development to be a very 'human' activity, with a huge amount of communication in every direction with team mates and stakeholders of every kind.

"You can be certain that you have technical aptitudes and this will stand you in very good stead in the software industry."

