Discovered Drupal, hooked a new career

It's been an interesting path to finding professional and personal fulfillment for the decidedly bold and curious Cindy Garcia. She graduated with a degree in biomedical engineering from Florida International University in 2012, landed a job as a Quality Assurance Engineer in the medical device industry shortly thereafter, and then realized she was more interested in, and really well suited for IT; specifically web development.

This time of transition was not just one of wrestling with her professional journey, as she was also starting to pivot her athletic interests, explaining, "I started participating in an adult wrestling class because I wanted to enhance my jiu jitsu." She had been competing in Brazilian Jiu jitsu during and after college, and was preparing for additional competitions.

She was also readying herself to move into the web development space, and so enrolled in an application architect program, which led into her first foray in web development using WordPress; quickly becoming a Wordpress site builder/SEO strategist. Turns out Wordpress, according to Cindy, has limits that made her realize it was, for her, a stepping stone and not a career destination. She was still on the hunt for the platform that would satisfy her interests, provide a challenge and offer a fulfilling career.

Concurrently, she explains, "a friend of mine who I practiced jiu jitsu with and was a college wrestler asked me to become a referee with her." She completed that program, worked, gained experience and quickly earned a spot refereeing for USA Wrestling at venues all over the United States.

After some considerable research, she found Drupal, and realized she had also found her professional passion, but admits "I found it very difficult to learn Drupal on my own…" She heard about the Drupal Association's Discover Drupal program, applied and so began her formal Drupal training when she applied and was accepted to DrupalEasy's 12-week Drupal Career Online certificate program.

In addition to devouring the Drupal Career Online materials, fully engaging in class and religiously attending the DrupalEasy office hours, she connected with several Drupal mentors, for whom she clearly has boundless appreciation. "...I would have never grown as quickly as I did without their help," she muses of Ryan Price, Darren Oh, Phil Frilling, Matt Obert and Mike Anello, who all mentored her during her Discover Drupal experience.

Once she completed the DCO, she fed her ongoing desire to learn more and advance by registering for DrupalEasy's Professional Module Development program. It was just the course she needed to feed her hunger for coding challenges, interest in module development, as well as her love of networking and connecting with other developers. She also believes community is another key to

her success, citing DrupalEasy office hours, virtual meetups, and attending a DrupalCon once a year as the most important elements of community that those new to Drupal should prioritize.

Additional advice she has for aspiring Drupal developers considering applying for Drupal Career Online is "Don't be afraid to ask questions; reach out to your mentors as much as you can. Network as much as you can and build your Drupal profile on drupal.org," she says. She added, "Having good communication skills is important to be successful in Drupal. Being able to explain what the problem is, how to solve it, and how long it will take is crucial."

She also feels a positive mindset, even when things are tough, is a huge contributor to learning and building a Drupal career. Which, she is doing with a part-time gig at Ironistic, a full-service digital agency that assists organizations with strategy consulting, website design and development, integrated marketing and hosting and maintenance services. She hopes to get into module development, with a long-term goal "to write a module, get it published on drupal.org and be a module maintainer," she explains.

Meanwhile, through her other passion, she also now travels all over the country for USA Wrestling as a referee in the Fall/Winter season for Folkstyle and women's college Freestyle Wrestling, and during the Spring and Summer season for mostly freestyle and Greco wrestling events.

She looks back on the journey and contemplates where she is now, and can't help but reflect on the connections that becoming a referee and her career shift to IT & Drupal have. She explains, "Wrestlers are grinders. They never quit no matter how hard something gets, and I have used that mindset to overcome my feelings of imposter syndrome." She continues, "In less than 10 months I have worked on 4 professional Drupal sites, have two contribution credits on drupal.org and meeting credits and have attended a DrupalCon!"

Her full schedule of sessions and events at DrupalCon Pittsburgh included DrupalEasy's alumni-community lunch bash. Asked about her favorite part of DrupalCon, she quickly responds that it was the code sprint with "My favorite was contributing to open source because I was able to enhance my knowledge of writing single directory components." Adding, "I look forward to traveling to DrupalCons all over the world and deepening my knowledge of Drupal."

Like Drupal, refereeing wrestling continues to inspire her and enrich her life. "I like that it challenges me physically, mentally, and emotionally. It challenges my decision making as well, as I always have to make split second decisions in regard to how I score the bout. I get to travel all over the country and some of my closest friends are referees."

Her gratitude to everyone who has helped to guide her along the path to becoming a Drupal developer is evident as she adds about Discover Drupal and Drupal Career Online, "Thank you for creating this program. It added so much value to my life and changed it for the better."

Learn more about *Professional Module Development Course* *and* *Drupal Career Online* *at* DrupalEasy.com.