

How programming term search turned into his first day at Google

August 28 2015, by Nancy Owano



Google is seldom boring; its hiring strategies can be as refreshing as its product launches. One would assume you get any job through a job board, website with relevant listings or through recruiters, hoping to be asked for a resume, portfolio of some sort and three references. Cut to Google.

The Hustle, which is a weekly newsletter, [said](#), "Google sees that you're searching for specific programming terms, they'll ask you to apply for a job. It's wild."

Max Rosett, who has a degree in mathematics from Yale University,

lived to tell the tale of coming into contact with Google's recruiting watch. "Three months ago," he wrote in *The Hustle*, "I thought I wasn't ready to apply for a job at Google. Google disagreed."

He was earning a Master's in computer science through Georgia Tech's online program but he lacked the confidence to apply for a full-time software position. That was before the morning he entered into his search bar, "python lambda function list comprehension."

Besides the search responses he got a box: "You're speaking our language. Up for a challenge?" (He could hit I want to play; no thanks; or don't show me this again.)

He was up to it, and he got a problem; he was allowed to code either in Python or Java. After the sixth problem, he had the option to submit contact information. A recruiter emailed asking for his resume. They set up a phone call; eventually he received the news: Google extended him an offer and he accepted.

Engadget's Sean Buckley went on to say just what when down: "If you search the right [terms](#) often enough," said Buckley, "Google might interrupt your quest for knowledge with a question: 'You're speaking our language. Up for a challenge?'" Those who are gain access to foo.bar. This, said Buckley, is a Unix-like interface where users are presented with programming challenges. Rosett's six different challenges each had specific requirements and time limits.

The test is invitation only, said Buckley. ("Been here before? Log in.")

Mark Bergen of *Re/code* made a [note](#) that this was not the first [time](#) Google used this knock-knock-couldn't help-noticing-you're into-our-kind-of-work recruiting approach. He wrote on Wednesday that users had posted comments about the practice on *Hacker News*.

One such account sounded similar to Rosett's experience: "I was Googling some Python topic when my search results page suddenly split in the middle with some text saying something to the effect of "You speak our language, would you like to take a test?", linking to [google.com/foobar/" target="_blank">www.google.com/foobar/](#). I followed it and was led to a pseudo-shell, where I then found some coding problems. I can return to the page to continue working on them."

Rosett, meanwhile, has no complaints that Google did a recruiting search based on his own [search](#), "Foo.bar is a brilliant recruiting tactic," he wrote. "Google used it to identify me before I had even applied anywhere else, and they made me feel important while doing so. At the same time, they respected my privacy and didn't reach out to me without explicitly requesting my information."

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