

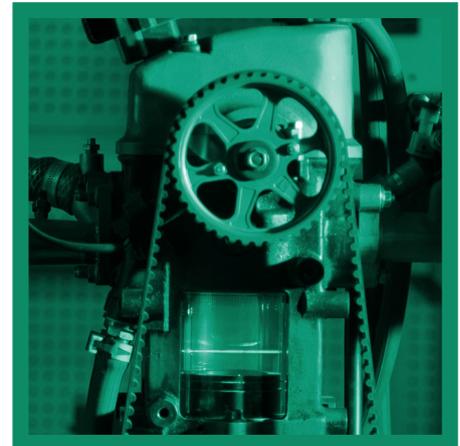
Case Study: Alumni

Julia, MSc Communications and Signal Processing
Graduation Year: 1992

Job Title: Technology Manager

Employer: Red Bee Media

Department: New Media and Interactive Broadcast



What has been your career path up until now?

After graduating, I won a contract at the European Space Agency, within the telecoms department, and conducted research on data protocols for DAB (digital broadcast). Then I won a 2 year contract, my role being Technical Specialist on a project to deploy VSAT nodes across the globe for UNEP (i.e. satellite ground stations deployed in Nairobi, Moscow, New York, etc) so that they could set up a TCP/IP network between their HQ centres. I then returned to the UK and took up full time employment at a technical consultancy advising defence and government projects in the area of comms (rather than IT), so the work focussed on deployment of TCP/IP, GSM/UMTS in field and satcomms. After that I decided I wanted to work in strategy because it seemed like it might be more about setting the direction of things (plus the pay is much higher than technology), and so got a job in a Dutch telecoms strategy consultancy, based in London, building up business, specifically in the area of mobile comms and business modelling for 3G licenses. Spent a couple of years there, then won a job as a Senior Strategy Manager at Vodafone Group and spent 4 years trying to get the hang of what strategy is all about and why it's useful, only to conclude that strategy at strategy department level (rather than a CEO inspiration setting level) is all about number crunching and drawing power points. It was then I decided to move back into technology (which is much more interesting, but lower paid) and am now doing a great job as a Technical Specialist in a broadcasting company.

“I had a bee in my bonnet about going to Imperial even whilst I was doing the degree in Auckland”

- Julia

What does your job involve?

It's very varied. Some days I'm helping win new bids by putting tech architectures together; other days I'm carrying bits of kit around the building, setting up proof of concepts; and at other times I'm researching and learning about standards and suppliers' technical advances and how I can apply them to the problems I have to solve.

Did you choose your course with this particular occupation in mind?

My career has been quite varied, which is because I tend to not set long term goals but consider what interests me at the time. I took the MSc because I wanted to do a qualification at Imperial College. My degree in engineering had been at Auckland University (I grew up in NZ), and I had a bee in my bonnet about going to Imperial even whilst I was doing the degree in Auckland. So going to Imperial was really



about fulfilling a dream rather than anything else. I chose the course in Communications because it had been one of the electives I'd chosen in my final year on the engineering degree and had been mildly interested in it. The year at Imperial was fantastic and a brilliant boost to my career. It was in 1991 which was just at the time that the GSM standards were ratified and starting to be implemented, so I kind of got in at the ground level, found the subject fascinating and that took me through several years of career in mobile comms.

What skills did you develop within your degree that you find useful in your present role?

The course was quite diverse (image processing - neural networks - communication protocols), and even now I find bits of it useful. For example my current job has taken me away from mobile comms and into television/media. In this area the stuff I can dredge up from my brain about image processing (video compression, image segmentation, AV transport) that I learnt at Imperial has been a good grounding to springboard from and further my understanding. Imperial college is very well recognised throughout the world and an excellent thing to have on your CV.

Could you give us one or more career tips for Imperial graduates?

Work hard, but take the time to enjoy university. You'll make friends that will stay with you for many years. Don't be afraid to ask the lecturers questions if you don't understand anything.

