

I must be crazy – but I enjoy it!

Earl F. Burkholder – November 2012

This item is written in response to a question posed on “Surveyor Connect” about how surveyors use programming. Good question - my observations include:

The interests of programmers and surveyors may have many synergistic overlaps. Some have suggested it is easier (better) to make a programmer out of a surveyor than it is to make a surveyor out of a programmer. The overlap is huge and includes talent and persons from both camps – that is good. But, pushed to the ultimate, I’m not sure either is possible.

I’ve enjoyed teaching surveying at the college level since 1980. And, I’ve done a fair amount of programming since my first FORTRAN course in 1969. But, I’ve gotten way behind on GUI and object-oriented programming and philosophies.

So, in my retirement, I’ve enrolled in a freshman (beginning) level Java programming course (subsequent courses will follow). The younger students who grew up digital are “cleaning my clock” but I am enjoying the challenge and am convinced that the Java foundation opens up many possibilities not available otherwise.

Parting comment – do what you enjoy with an eye toward finding a way to contribute your talent to the betterment of society (and your profession). I’ll never be a “real” programmer, but I am blessed with the opportunity to do what I can to get a handle on the huge issue of handling and working with 3-D digital spatial data – life is good!