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The Parrot



Special Issue

My Journey into Computer Science and Technology

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

INTERVIEW



Issue by Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Technology had been part of my life long before I understood what the word "computer science" meant.

I still remember being in eighth grade in Afghanistan when my parents bought our family

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10 THINGS EVERY NEW COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT SHOULD KNOW

You've got
this! ♥



1

You do not need to be a math genius to start.

Logic and persistence will take you far.



2

Problem-solving matters more than memorization.

Computer science is about solving real world problems.



3

Google is a skill, not cheating.

Knowing how to find the right answers is a superpower.



4

Everyone struggles with bugs and errors.

Even the pros! Debugging is part of the journey.



5

Start building projects early.

Projects turn ideas into skills and make your resume stand out.



6

Learn Git and GitHub.

These tools help you collaborate and track your progress.



7

Practice consistently, even 30 minutes a day.

Small daily habits lead to big improvements.



8

Communication skills matter as much as technical skills.

You'll work with people—explain, listen, and collaborate well.



9

Technology changes constantly, so keep learning.

Stay adaptable and open to new things.



10

Being curious is your greatest advantage.

Ask questions, explore, and never stop wondering!



KEEP CODING. KEEP GROWING. BELIEVE IN YOUR JOURNEY.

The future
is yours to
build! ♥

Top 10 General Windows Shortcuts

1. **Ctrl + C: Copy** - Copies the selected item to the clipboard.
2. **Ctrl + X: Cut** - Cuts the selected item and copies it to the clipboard.
3. **Ctrl + V: Paste** - Pastes the item from the clipboard to the current location.
4. **Ctrl + Z: Undo** - Reverses the last action.
5. **Ctrl + Y: Redo** - Repeats the last action that was undone.
6. **Ctrl + A: Select All** - Selects all items in the current window or document.
7. **Ctrl + F: Find** - Opens the search or find window in most applications.
8. **Ctrl + S: Save** - Saves the current document or file.
9. **Ctrl + P: Print** - Opens the print dialog to print the current document.
10. **Ctrl + N: New** - Creates a new document or window in most applications.

Top 10 Windows Management Shortcuts

1. **Alt + F4: Close Window** - Closes the current application or window.
2. **Win + D: Show Desktop** - Minimizes all open windows and shows the desktop.
3. **Win + M: Minimize All Windows** - Minimizes all open windows.
4. **Win + E: Open File Explorer** - Opens File Explorer to browse files.
5. **Win + L: Lock Computer** - Locks the computer and returns to the login screen.
6. **Win + R: Open Run Dialog** - Opens the Run dialog to execute commands.
7. **Win + S: Search** - Opens the search bar.
8. **Win + PrtScn: Screenshot** - Takes a screenshot and saves it to the Pictures folder.
9. **Win + Plus (+): Zoom In (Magnifier)** - Opens Magnifier, makes screen bigger
10. **Win + Minus (-): Zoom Out (Magnifier)** - Opens Magnifier, makes screen smaller.

ChatGPT — A PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI

APP REVIEW

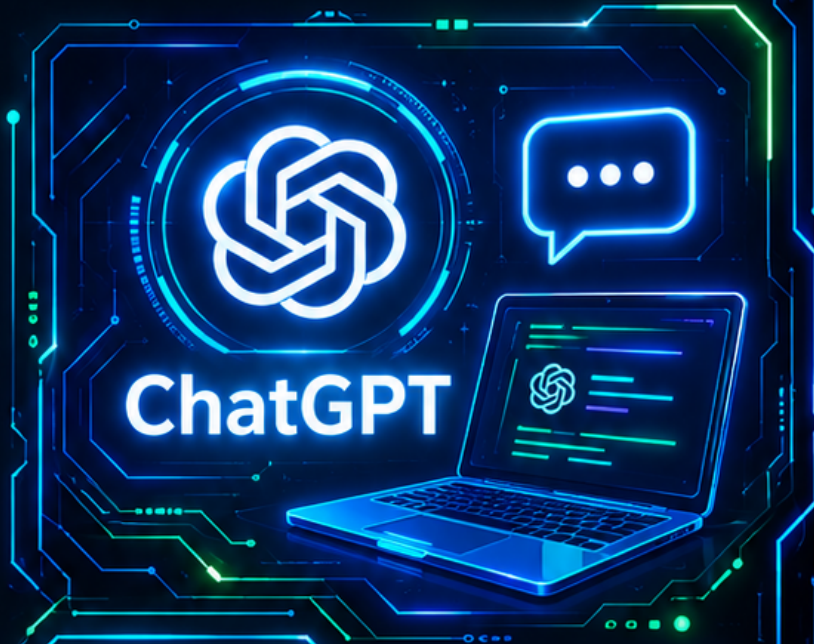


Artificial Intelligence has brought a revolutionary change to the tech world, and to our daily lives. It wasn't too long ago that I first heard about ChatGPT. Like many others, especially in academic spaces, I initially had a negative impression. There was a common belief among students and educators that tools like ChatGPT would make people overly reliant on AI, leading to less effort and less learning. But over time, as I started exploring ChatGPT and other AI platforms, my perspective began to shift. I realized that, like any resource, AI can be used both positively and negatively. It's not the tool itself that defines the outcome, but how we choose to use it.

At first, I thought ChatGPT was just another shortcut, something students might use to get through assignments, quizzes, or even exams. That changed when I enrolled in ENG-WR 301, where our professor encouraged us to use ChatGPT as a tool to deepen our understanding of course material. Using it alongside other class resources helped me engage with the content in a completely new way. It didn't replace my learning; it enhanced it.

Now, I see ChatGPT and similar platforms as powerful tools for growth. They make complex ideas easier to grasp, help streamline tasks, and offer new ways of thinking. Of course, as with anything, it depends on the user. AI can be misused, but it can also open doors to better understanding, creativity, and personal development.

In the end, it's not about fearing the technology, it's about learning how to use it wisely.



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Robinhood: A Simple and Easy App for Investing

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI

APP REVIEW

Robinhood is a free application available in the App Store, and anyone can download and use it. I personally found it really easy to use. It is designed especially for beginners who want to start investing in stocks and cryptocurrencies. The application is simple to navigate, and you don't need to be an expert to understand how to make trades.

One of the best things about *Robinhood* is that there are no fees when buying and selling stocks or crypto. This makes it great for new learners because you can start investing without worrying about extra costs. The application makes trading easy to learn, and you can start with small amounts, which is perfect if you are just getting into investing.

Another thing I like about *Robinhood* is that it feels secure and trustworthy. You can invest with peace of mind knowing that your money and personal information are safe. The application also has useful features like price alerts and real-time market updates, which help you stay on top of your investments. I also like that *Robinhood* allows you to buy fractional shares. This means you don't have to buy a full share of an expensive stock; you can invest whatever amount you want, which makes it really flexible.

Please remember that, before you start investing, it's really important to first understand how the stock market works and how to make a profit. Make sure to follow daily news trends and learn about stocks and cryptocurrencies so you know what you're getting into. If you invest without knowing how the market

works or without staying updated on the latest news, there's a good chance you could lose your money.

Overall, I think *Robinhood* is a great application for people who are new to investing. It's easy to use, there are no extra fees, and it's a secure platform. If

you're looking for a simple way to start investing, I'd definitely recommend trying *Robinhood*.



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TECH JOKES

Why do programmers hate nature?



Too many **bugs**...
zero documentation.



My computer science professor said **debugging** is like being a **detective**.

Except the crime was committed by **you**... and you're also the **main suspect**.



I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT'S WRONG.
BUT LET'S
FIND OUT!

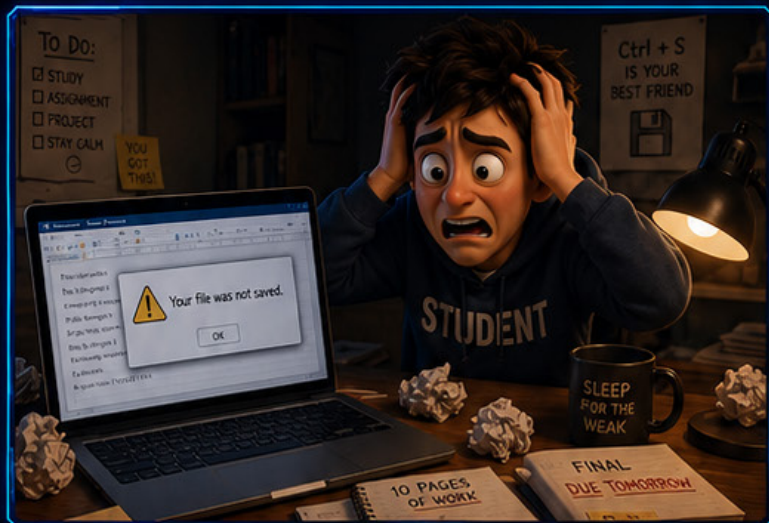
It's not working.
I don't know why.
I didn't really
do anything.



Being in IT means fixing a problem you **don't understand**...

...for someone who has already tried **nothing**.

TECH JOKES



Nothing stresses a student out more than

"Your file was not saved."

Working in IT means...

...people think you can fix anything... including their bad decisions.



IT rule #1:

If you fix the problem **too quickly**, they don't believe you actually **did anything**.



MORAL: SPEED = SUSPICION. DRAMA = TRUST.

The ABCs of Technology and Computer Science for Everyone

Many of us hear terms like AI, coding, cloud computing, and cybersecurity all the time. They're everywhere: in class discussions, job postings, social media, and even casual conversations. Sometimes it can feel like everyone already knows exactly what these terms mean, except us. The truth is a lot of people are still learning too.

When I first became interested in technology, I realized that the tech world has its own language. At first, all the buzzwords can seem overwhelming, but once you break them down, most concepts are easier to understand than they sound. Learning technology isn't about knowing every term or being an expert from day one. It's about being curious, asking questions, and taking the time to learn something new.

Whether you're a Computer Science major, thinking about a career in technology, or just someone who wants to understand the digital world a little better, this A-to-Z guide is a simple place to start.

Letter	Term	What It Means
A	Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Computers performing tasks that normally require human intelligence.
B	Binary	The language computers use: 0s and 1s.
C	Coding	Writing instructions for computers.
D	Data	Information collected, stored, and analyzed.
E	Encryption	Protecting information by converting it into a secret code.
F	Firewall	Security system that blocks unwanted access.
G	GitHub	A platform where developers store and collaborate on code.
H	Hardware	Physical computer components like keyboards and processors.
I	Internet	The global network connecting computers worldwide.
J	Java	One of the most widely used programming languages.
K	Keyboard Shortcuts	Quick key combinations that save time.
L	Logic	The step-by-step thinking used to solve problems in programming.
M	Machine Learning	A type of AI that learns from data.
N	Network	Connected devices that communicate with each other.
O	Operating System	Software that runs your computer (Windows, macOS, Linux).
P	Programming	Creating software and applications.
Q	Query	A request for information from a database.
R	Router	Device that connects you to the Internet.
S	Software	Programs and applications you use every day.
T	Technology	Tools and systems designed to solve problems.
U	User Interface (UI)	What users see and interact with on a website or app.
V	Virtual Reality (VR)	Computer-generated immersive environments.
W	Website	A collection of web pages available online.
X	XML	A language used to organize and store data.
Y	YouTube Learning	One of the most popular places to learn tech skills for free.
Z	Zero-Day Vulnerability	A newly discovered security flaw before a fix exists.

Osher Scholarship Winner: Gratitude in a Time of Growth What This Scholarship Means to Me



OSHER SCHOLARSHIP
American River College

2025 COHORT

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

Sayed Edres Sadiqi

OSHER SCHOLARSHIP WINNER 2025 •
COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR

"I'm truly grateful to the donor behind the ARC Osher scholarship. Their support means more than they probably realize. It's not just about the money; it's about the encouragement, the motivation, and the message that we're not alone on this journey. This scholarship is a real boost, and I carry that gratitude with me moving forward."

APPRECIATION

"This scholarship reminds me that I'm supported and uplifted. It's a commitment to continue mentoring others and advancing innovation through computer science."



AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE
Osher Scholarship Winner
2025

"Receiving this support fuels my ambition to innovate in computer science and to lift fellow students as we pursue our dreams together."

When I found out I had received the Osher Scholarship, the first thing I felt was pure happiness. In that moment, nothing else mattered, just the joy and excitement of being recognized and supported. It's one of those moments that reminds you why you keep pushing forward, even when life gets busy and overwhelming.

It's called the Osher Scholarship because it was created by the Bernard Osher Foundation, a private charitable foundation dedicated to supporting higher education and lifelong learning.

As a student, a parent, and a full-time employee, balancing everything isn't easy. So, receiving this scholarship felt like more than just financial help; it felt like someone out there believes in me and wants to see me succeed. The amount I received will allow me to invest in IT certifications that can help me grow in my field, open doors for better opportunities, and move closer to my long-term career goals.

More importantly, it gave me a renewed sense of purpose. It reminded me that my hard work and commitment are noticed, and that there are people and organizations willing to invest in students like me. In a time when many students face financial challenges, these funds are like wings, lifting students like me during challenging times. Their support means more than the donors probably realize. It's not just about the money; it's about the encouragement, the motivation, and the message that we're not alone on this journey. This scholarship is a real boost, and I carry that gratitude with me moving forward.

Thank you,

Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Photo designed by Builder.io

Top 13 Computer Shortcuts

Make Daily Tasks Easier

These days, computers aren't just essential for work, they play a big role in our daily lives, from managing tasks at the office to handling things at home. The more we know about useful shortcuts and tricks, the more time we can save, making our workflow smoother and more efficient.

One thing I've noticed is that even experienced computer users, people who've been using computers for years, can struggle when switching to a Mac if they've only ever used Windows (or vice versa). It's a frustrating situation, especially when you need to get work done quickly.

So, to help with that, I've put together a list of essential shortcuts for both Windows and Mac that will speed up your daily computer use and make your workflow much more efficient. Check them out below!

General Shortcuts (Windows & Mac)

Action	Windows	Mac
Find	Ctrl + F	Cmd + F
Open a new tab (Browser)	Ctrl + T	Cmd + T
Switch between open apps	Alt + Tab	Cmd + Tab
Quit an application	Alt + F4	Cmd + Q
Force quit an application	Ctrl + Shift + Esc	Cmd + Option + Esc

File Management & Navigation

Action	Windows	Mac
Open File Explorer / Finder	Win + E	Cmd + Option + Space
Rename file/folder	F2	Enter (while selected)
Delete file permanently	Shift + Delete	Cmd + Option + Delete
Go to Desktop	Win + D	Cmd + F3 (Mission Control)
Lock Screen	Win + L	Cmd + Control + Q

Screenshots & Clipboard

Action	Windows	Mac
Take a full screenshot	Win + PrtScn	Cmd + Shift + 3
Screenshot of a selected area	Win + Shift + S	Cmd + Shift + 4
Copy to clipboard without saving	PrtScn	Cmd + Control + Shift + 4

FOUR COMMON TYPES OF NETWORKS:

PAN

(PERSONAL AREA NETWORK)

- A small network used by one person. Covers a few feet/meters around a person.
- Connects personal devices such as smartphones, laptops, smartwatches, and wireless earbuds.
- **Example:** Connecting your phone to a Bluetooth headset.



LAN

(LOCAL AREA NETWORK)

- Covers a small geographic area such as a home, office, or school. Devices share resources through a router or switch.
- Usually provides high-speed connections.
- **Example:** The Wi-Fi network in your house or a computer lab at a college.



HIGH SPEED



DEVICES SHARE RESOURCES THROUGH A ROUTER OR SWITCH

MAN

(METROPOLITAN AREA NETWORK)

- Covers a city or large campus area.
- Connects multiple LANs within a metropolitan region.
- **Example:** A city government's network connecting offices across town.



CONNECTS MULTIPLE LANs WITHIN A METROPOLITAN REGION

WAN

(WIDE AREA NETWORK)

- Covers a large geographic area, such as a country or the entire world.
- Connects multiple LANs and MANs.
- **Example:** The Internet is the largest WAN.



CONNECTS NETWORKS ACROSS LARGE GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCES



GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

SIMPLE HIERARCHY



The Top 10 Majors in Computer Science & Tech

OPINION ESSAY



Choosing a major is more than just picking a subject; it's choosing a path that will shape your future. Being a computer science student myself, I've often wondered: which areas of tech are not only exciting but also filled with strong career opportunities? With technology shaping everything from healthcare to finance to entertainment, it's no surprise that certain fields stand out more than others.



I've put together a list of the top 10 majors and sub-majors in computer science and technology, why they matter, what kinds of jobs you could land with them, and where some of the best universities to study these fields are. Think of it as both a guide and inspiration if you're considering your next step in tech.

Top 10 Majors / Sub-Majors in Tech



1. Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning (AI/ML)

AI and ML are the engines behind self-driving cars, recommendation systems, and voice assistants like Siri and Alexa. This major prepares you to work on predictive systems, robotics, and advanced automation.

Career paths: Machine Learning Engineer, AI Research Scientist, Robotics Engineer.



2. Data Science & Big Data Analytics

We live in a world powered by data, from social media to healthcare records. Data Science teaches you how to analyze and interpret massive datasets to solve real-world problems.

Career paths: Data Scientist, Business Intelligence Analyst, Data Engineer.



3. Cybersecurity / Information Security

With rising cyber threats, cybersecurity has become one of the most critical fields. Students in this major learn how to defend systems, networks, and sensitive data.

Career paths: Security Analyst, Penetration Tester, Chief Information Security Officer (CISO).



4. Software Engineering

At its core, software engineering is about designing and building reliable programs and systems. It's the foundation of nearly every tech product you use today.

Career paths: Software Engineer, Backend Developer, DevOps Engineer, Cloud Engineer.



5. Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) / UX Design

Technology should be easy and enjoyable to use. HCI focuses on usability, design, and accessibility. It's where creativity meets problem-solving.

Career paths: UX Designer, UI Researcher, Product Designer.



6. Computer Networks & Cloud Computing

Cloud services power platforms like Netflix and Google Drive. This major emphasizes distributed systems, scalability, and cloud infrastructure.

Career paths: Network Engineer, Cloud Architect, Site Reliability Engineer (SRE).



7. Embedded Systems, Robotics & IoT

From smartwatches to autonomous drones, embedded systems and robotics are everywhere. This field combines hardware and software to build "smart" devices.

Career paths: Embedded Engineer, Robotics Developer, IoT Engineer.



8. Theoretical Computer Science / Algorithms / Quantum Computing

The math and theory behind computing are just as important as applications. This specialization focuses on algorithms, optimization, cryptography, and even quantum systems.

Career paths: Algorithm Engineer, Cryptographer, Research Scientist, Quantum Developer.



9. Bioinformatics / Computational Biology

This major combines computer science with life sciences. It's at the forefront of personalized medicine, genetics, and pharmaceutical research.

Career paths: Bioinformatics Scientist, Computational Biologist, Health Data Analyst.



10. Emerging Fields: Blockchain, AR/VR, AI Ethics

These areas may be newer, but they're rapidly growing. From blockchain in finance to virtual reality in gaming and AI ethics in policy, these fields shape the future of tech.

Career paths: Blockchain Developer, AR/VR Engineer, AI Policy Analyst.

Top Universities for These Majors



- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** – consistently ranked #1 worldwide in computer science.



- **Stanford University** – located in the heart of Silicon Valley, with strong AI, HCI, and startup culture.



- **University of California, Berkeley** – world-renowned for data science, AI, and cybersecurity.



- **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)** – famous for robotics, AI, and human-computer interaction.



- **Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)** – strong programs in systems, software engineering, and cybersecurity.



- **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** – well-known for research in computer systems, networking, and data science.



- **Harvard University & Princeton University** – both strong in theoretical computer science and emerging tech research.



Technology is constantly evolving, and the beauty of studying computer science or tech is that you're never limited to just one direction. Whether you're fascinated by AI's power to think, cybersecurity's mission to protect, or robotics' ability to move and create, there's a major out there that aligns with your passion.



For me, exploring these fields has shown just how many doors computer science can open. My advice? Follow your curiosity, look at where the industry is heading, and don't be afraid to dive into a specialization that excites you. After all, the future of technology is being written by students like us.



Thank you,
Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Technological Transition: From Fish Nets to Internet



HISTORY



Do you know how the tech journey from telegraph to Silicon Valley took place? If not, then let me tell you.



When we think of today's smartphones, laptops, and artificial intelligence, it's easy to forget that our modern digital world grew out of simple discoveries in communication. The transition from early technologies like the telegraph and telephone to today's powerful computing devices is a story of innovation, persistence, and collaboration.



Telegraph & Telephone

The first breakthrough in long-distance communication came in the 1840s, when Samuel Morse developed the telegraph, sending messages using electric signals and dots and dashes. Suddenly, information could travel across continents in minutes rather than weeks. This laid the foundation for the idea that technology could connect people across vast distances.

A few decades later, in 1876, Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone, transforming how humans interacted. Instead of codes, people could now transmit their actual voices over wires. The telephone didn't just change communication; it created the infrastructure and companies (like Bell Telephone, which evolved into AT&T) that would fund and inspire future research in electronics.



Transistors and Integrated Circuits

Fast forward to the 20th century; the invention of the transistor at Bell Labs in New Jersey in 1947 marked the next big leap. Transistors replaced bulky vacuum tubes, making electronics smaller, faster, and more reliable. This single invention is considered the building block of all modern electronics.



The momentum continued in California, where Robert Noyce at Fairchild Semiconductor developed the integrated circuit in 1959, followed by Intel's 4004 microprocessor in 1971, the world's first "computer on a chip." These breakthroughs turned Northern California into the epicenter of technological innovation.



The Birth of Silicon Valley

But why California? The answer lies in a unique combination of Stanford University, visionary entrepreneurs, and a culture that encouraged risk-taking. In the 1950s, William Shockley, one of the transistor's inventors, opened Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory in Mountain View, California. His team of young engineers, later called the "Traitorous Eight," left to form Fairchild Semiconductor. From there, a wave of spin-off companies, including Intel, AMD, and later Apple, Google, and Facebook, emerged.

This cluster of innovation became known as Silicon Valley, named after the silicon material used to make computer chips. Today, it is home to the world's most influential tech companies and thousands of startups, making it the global heart of technology.



Silicon Valley isn't just a place; it's a symbol of innovation. Its culture values creativity, risk-taking, and collaboration. Venture capital firms fuel daring ideas, while universities and research centers supply talent and discoveries. From the microprocessor to social media and artificial intelligence, many of the technologies shaping our world either began in or were transformed by Silicon Valley.

It's called the "heart of technology" not just because the region makes products, but because it sets the direction for how technology evolves worldwide. What happens in Silicon Valley today often becomes the standard for tomorrow.



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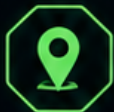
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PARROT STAFF WRITER:

Sayed Edres Sadiqi



10 Computer Skills Every Student Needs!



Starting college means more than buying notebooks and figuring out your class schedule. Whether we like it or not, most of our academic life now takes place on a computer. Assignments, research, emails, presentations, and even exams depend on how comfortably we can use technology. The truth is, being a student today isn't about being "good at computers," it's about knowing how to use them effectively.



Here are ten essential computer skills every student should learn early on to make their educational journey smoother, less stressful, and more successful.



1. File Organization

One of the first skills students need is learning how to organize their files properly. Creating folders by semester and by class, and naming documents clearly, can save a lot of time and frustration. Instead of searching through downloads minutes before a deadline, organized files make it easy to find exactly what you need. This simple habit helps students stay focused and reduces unnecessary stress.



2. Basic Keyboard Shortcuts

Knowing a few basic keyboard shortcuts can completely change how you use a computer. Copying, pasting, saving, undoing mistakes, and switching between apps become much faster once you stop relying only on the mouse. These shortcuts might seem small, but over time they save hours and make every day academic tasks feel more efficient and manageable.



3. Cloud Storage and Backups

Every student should understand how to use cloud storage like Google Drive or OneDrive. Computers can crash, files can get deleted, and flash drives can get lost. Cloud storage creates a safety net by keeping your work backed up and accessible from anywhere. Learning this early can prevent one



OPINION ESSAY

of the most stressful situations a student can face: losing important work right before a deadline.



4. Email Etiquette

Email is still one of the main ways students communicate with professors, counselors, and future employers. Knowing how to write a clear subject line, a respectful message, and a professional sign-off makes a strong impression. Good email etiquette shows responsibility and maturity, and it helps students communicate more confidently in academic and professional settings.



5. Browser Skills

Using a web browser effectively goes beyond opening tabs. Students should learn how to bookmark important websites, manage multiple tabs, and search efficiently. These skills make research easier and help students stay organized when juggling assignments, readings, and online resources.



6. Understanding Computer Ports and Cables

Knowing the basic ports on your computer, such as USB, HDMI, and charging ports, is more important than many students realize. Whether it's connecting a flash drive, charging your device, or presenting in class, understanding your computer's ports can save you from last-minute technical problems and awkward situations.



7. Basic Document Formatting

Content matters, but presentation does too. Students should know how to format documents properly using tools like Word or Google Docs. Understanding margins, spacing, headings, and page numbers helps assignments look clean and professional. These skills are often expected but not always taught, making them especially important to learn early.



8. Screenshot and Screen Recording Tools

Screenshots and screen recordings are extremely useful for students. They can be used to save lecture slides, capture instructions, report technical issues, or keep visual notes. Knowing how to quickly capture your screen can make studying and problem-solving much easier.



9. Digital Security Basics

Basic digital security is an essential skill in today's academic environment. Students should know how to create strong passwords, recognize suspicious emails, and avoid unsafe downloads. Protecting personal information and academic work is part of being a responsible computer user, and learning this early can prevent serious problems later.



10. Basic Troubleshooting

Finally, students should learn basic troubleshooting skills. Restarting a computer, checking connections, updating software, and searching error messages online can solve many common issues. These skills help students stay calm and independent when technology doesn't work as expected.



Why These Skills Matter

These ten computer skills are not about being an expert or knowing advanced technology. They are about building confidence, independence, and efficiency in everyday academic life. When students understand how to organize files, communicate professionally, protect their data, and solve basic problems, technology becomes a helpful tool instead of a constant source of stress.

Learning these skills early allows students to focus less on technical issues and more on learning, creativity, and growth. In an academic world that depends so heavily on technology, mastering these basics is one of the smartest investments a student can make in their educational journey.



Would you like to
contribute to *The Parrot*?



If you want to share your work, art, opinion, or
anything else with *The Parrot*, please email us at:

TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu



We would be happy to hear from you and
will try to respond ASAP.



The Parrot welcomes all ESL student matters!





My Journey into Computer Science and Technology

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

Continued from page 1



a desktop computer. At the time, this was a big deal. In our extended family, my siblings and I were among the first teenagers to have a computer at home and regular access to it. That machine became more than just a piece of technology. It became my curiosity engine.

From the very beginning, I was fascinated by how things worked. I spent hours experimenting on my own, creating charts and schedules, practicing typing, and even drawing in Microsoft Paint. I was not just using the computer for entertainment. I was using it to make

daily tasks easier, to organize schoolwork, and to explore ideas. Without realizing it, I was already learning what technology is really about: problem-solving, creativity, and efficiency.

When our family later got Internet access through old Internet credit cards that allowed only a few hours at a time, my curiosity grew even stronger. Google became my window to the world. I searched for answers to questions I had always wondered about, and new questions appeared just as quickly. My interest in computers and technology grew every day, and by the time I graduated from high school, I knew what I wanted to study.

After finishing 12th grade, I planned to pursue computer science through the *Kankor*, Afghanistan's national university entrance exam. The exam was highly competitive, and only a limited number of students could earn seats in their desired fields. Fortunately, as one of the top-ranked students in my province's high schools, I passed the exam and earned the required score to enroll in the Computer Science Faculty at Herat University in 2006.

That dream, however, did not come true. Life circumstances, economic hardship, and other serious obstacles made it impossible for me to continue my higher education at that time. I had to stop before I could even begin, leaving my passion unfulfilled and my goals on pause.

In 2016, I immigrated to the United States. I settled in Oakland and shared an apartment with four other Afghan immigrants who had arrived shortly before me. I remember clearly that one of the first questions I asked them was how I could enroll in a university to study

INTERVIEW



computer science. Their answer was discouraging. They explained that education in the U.S. was expensive and asked if I had the money for it. At the time, I had about \$2,000 to my name.

They told me that the only realistic option was to work. Like them, I was encouraged to get a driver's license, buy a car, and start driving for Lyft or Uber. While I understood their advice, it was heartbreaking. I felt like my dream of earning a degree in computer science was slipping away once again.



When the COVID-19 pandemic spread, life became even more difficult. I was living in Concord in the East Bay, where the cost of living was high and work opportunities were limited. Eventually, I made the decision to move to Sacramento, where my sister lived and where life was more affordable. That move changed everything.

In Sacramento, I connected with community members who introduced me to opportunities I did not know existed. I learned that even without significant financial resources, I could attend a community college and begin my education. This information was life-changing. I acted quickly, enrolled at American River College, and chose to pursue an associate degree in computer science.



The journey was not easy. I faced additional obstacles that forced me to pause my education more than once. But this time, I did not give up. I returned, stayed focused, and continued moving forward. In May 2026, I finished my final semester for my Associate's Degree in Computer Science at American River College. I have applied to transfer and will begin working toward my bachelor's degree at Sacramento State University starting in Fall 2026.



Looking back, my path into technology has not been direct or simple. It has been shaped by displacement, financial hardship, immigration, and resilience. What never changed was my passion for technology and my belief that education can transform lives.



This special tech issue is not just about innovation, devices, or digital trends. It is about access, opportunity, and persistence. Technology has the power to open doors, but only if people are given the chance to learn,

explore, and grow. My journey is proof that even when dreams are delayed, they do not have to be abandoned.

For students who feel unsure, overwhelmed, or discouraged, I hope my story serves as a reminder that obstacles do not define your future. Persistence does. Technology changed my life by giving me a second chance, and I am determined to keep moving forward, one line of code and one opportunity at a time.



By Sayed Edres Sadiqi



Photo Source : Gemini AI.



Get Familiarized with Computer Ports:



USB Type-A

- Define the port:** A standard rectangular USB port.
- What the short form stands for:** Universal Serial Bus – Type A
- Where you'll see it:** Desktop computers, older and mid-range laptops.
- What it's used for:** Connecting keyboards, mice, flash drives, printers, and external hard drives.
- Why knowing it matters:** It's the most common USB port, so recognizing it helps you quickly connect everyday devices.



USB Type-B

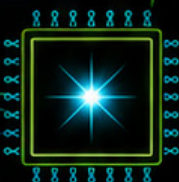
- Define the port:** A square-shaped USB connector.
- What the short form stands for:** Universal Serial Bus – Type B
- Where you'll see it:** Printers, scanners, and some external hardware devices.
- What it's used for:** Connecting large peripherals like printers to a computer.
- Why knowing it matters:** Knowing it helps you easily identify printer and scanner connections.



3.0

USB 3.0

- Define the port:** A high-speed USB port, often marked with blue color.
- What the short form stands for:** Universal Serial Bus version 3.0
- Where you'll see it:** Modern laptops and desktop computers.
- What it's used for:** Fast data transfer with external drives and devices.
- Why knowing it matters:** It saves time when transferring large files such as videos or backups.



USB Type-C

**Define the port:**

A small, oval-shaped, reversible USB port.

**What the short form stands for:**

Universal Serial Bus – Type C

**Where you'll see it:**

New laptops, tablets, smartphones, and docking stations.

**What it's used for:**

Charging, data transfer, video output, and connecting accessories.

**Why knowing it matters:**

One cable can do many jobs, making modern devices simpler to use.



Ethernet (LAN)

**Define the port:**

A port used for wired internet connections.

**What the short form stands for:**

Local Area Network

**Where you'll see it:**

Desktop computers, some laptops, and docking stations.

**What it's used for:**

Connecting directly to the internet or campus network.

**Why knowing it matters:**

It provides faster and more stable internet than Wi-Fi.



HDMI

**Define the port:**

A digital port that carries both video and audio.

**What the short form stands for:**

High-Definition Multimedia Interface

**Where you'll see it:**

Laptops, desktops, TVs, monitors, and projectors.

**What it's used for:**

Displaying your screen on external monitors or projectors.

**Why knowing it matters:**

Essential for presentations, streaming, and dual-screen setups.





Mini HDMI



Define the port:

A smaller version of the HDMI port.



What the short form stands for:

Mini High-Definition Multimedia Interface



Where you'll see it:

Tablets, cameras, and compact laptops.



What it's used for:

Connecting small devices to larger displays.



Why knowing it matters:

It keeps devices portable without losing display quality.



DisplayPort



Define the port:

A high-performance digital display connection.



What the short form stands for:

DisplayPort



Where you'll see it:

Desktop PCs, high-end laptops, and monitors.



What it's used for:

High-resolution and high-refresh-rate video output.



Why knowing it matters:

Popular with gamers and designers who need sharp visuals.



Mini DisplayPort



Define the port:

A compact version of DisplayPort.



What the short form stands for:

Mini DisplayPort



Where you'll see it:

Older MacBooks and some compact laptops.



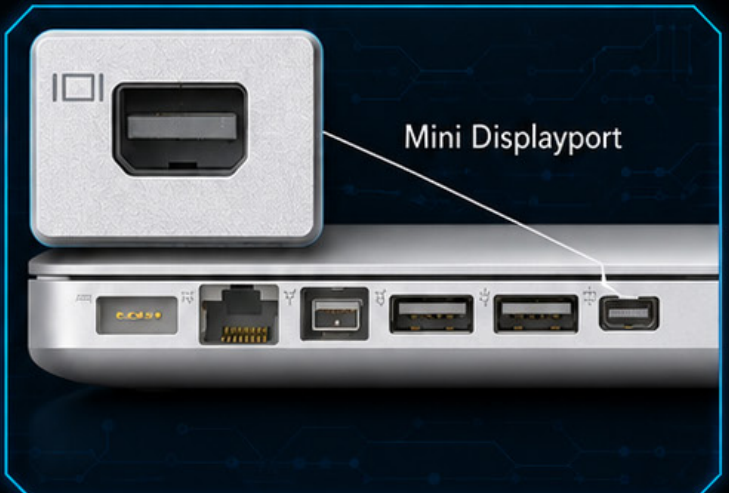
What it's used for:

Connecting to monitors and projectors.



Why knowing it matters:

Helps identify compatibility with older Apple devices.



VGA



Define the port:

An older analog video port with pins.



What the short form stands for:

Video Graphics Array



Where you'll see it:

Older computers and classroom projectors.



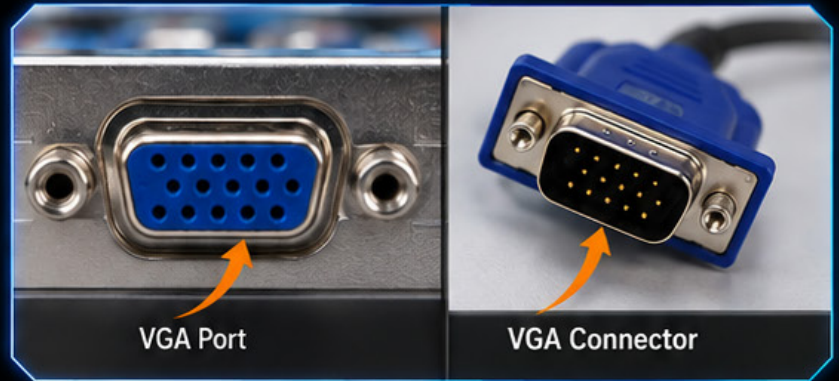
What it's used for:

Video display only (no audio).



Why knowing it matters:

Still useful when working with older campus technology.



DVI



Define the port:

A digital video connection.



What the short form stands for:

Digital Visual Interface



Where you'll see it:

Desktop computers and older monitors.



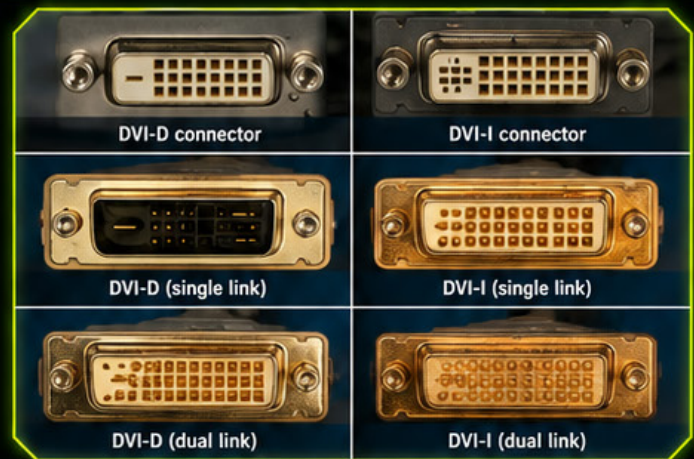
What it's used for:

Displaying higher-quality video than VGA.



Why knowing it matters:

It offers clearer images on older displays.



Audio / Headphone Jack



Define the port:

A small round port for audio output and input.



What the short form stands for:

Audio Jack (3.5mm)



Where you'll see it:

Most laptops, desktops, and mobile devices.



What it's used for:

Connecting headphones, speakers, or microphones.



Why knowing it matters:

It's a simple and universal way to manage audio.



Microphone Jack



Define the port:

A dedicated audio input port.



What the short form stands for:

Microphone Input Jack



Where you'll see it:

Desktop computers and some laptops.



What it's used for:

Connecting external microphones.



Why knowing it matters:

Improves sound quality for online classes and recordings.





DC-In (Charging Port)

- Define the port:**
The main power input port for laptops.
- What the short form stands for:**
Direct Current Input
- Where you'll see it:**
Most laptops.
- What it's used for:**
Charging and powering the device.
- Why knowing it matters:**
Without it, the computer cannot function.

Dell DC Jack Charging Ports



USB-C

7.4mm

4.5mm



Lightning

- Define the port:**
Apple's proprietary charging and data port.
- What the short form stands for:**
Lightning Connector
- Where you'll see it:**
Older iPhones, iPads, and Apple accessories.
- What it's used for:**
Charging and transferring data.
- Why knowing it matters:**
Helps identify compatibility with Apple devices.



Thunderbolt

- Define the port:**
A high-speed data and display port (uses USB-C shape).
- What the short form stands for:**
Thunderbolt
- Where you'll see it:**
MacBooks and premium Windows laptops.
- What it's used for:**
Fast data transfer, displays, and charging.
- Why knowing it matters:**
One of the fastest and most powerful ports available.

Thunderbolt 3 vs. USB-C


Thunderbolt 3
40Gb/s

USB 3.1 Gen 2
10Gb/s

USB 3.1 Gen 1
5Gb/s


SD Card Slot

- Define the port:**
A slot for SD memory cards.
- What the short form stands for:**
Secure Digital Card
- Where you'll see it:**
Laptops, cameras, and media devices.
- What it's used for:**
Reading photos, videos, and files from memory cards.
- Why knowing it matters:**
Very useful for photography and media students.





A Meaningful Chapter with *The Parrot*

Growth, Stories, and Gratitude

By **SAYED EDRES SADIQI**



I enjoyed every moment I spent contributing to *The Parrot*. Every article gave me something new to learn, and every experience helped me grow personally, academically, and professionally. I especially appreciate Professor Hoggan and the entire team for their encouragement, guidance, and support. They helped make my time with *The Parrot* a meaningful chapter of my life that I will always remember.

Now, I have transferred to Sacramento State University, where I am continuing my education toward a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. At the same time, I have started a new role as a part-time clerk with the CalWORKs department at American River College. Although my journey with *The Parrot* has come to an end, the lessons, experiences, and memories I gained there will continue with me.

PERSONAL ESSAY

Working with *The Parrot* has been much more than a job for me. From the beginning, I saw it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and become a better writer and communicator. It gave me a place where I could develop my skills while also sharing stories that are deeply meaningful to me. I am truly grateful to Professor Hoggan and the entire *Parrot* team for welcoming me, believing in my work, and supporting me throughout this journey.



One of the things I valued most about *The Parrot* was having a platform to share my culture and write about the experiences of immigrants and refugees. As an "immigrant" myself, I know that behind every person who starts a new life in another country, there is a story. There are struggles and sacrifices, but there are also achievements, contributions, hopes, and dreams. Through my writing, I wanted to bring some of those stories to life, inspire other immigrants who may be going through similar challenges, and help people from other backgrounds better understand the real experiences behind the word "immigrant."

As I begin this next chapter, my goal is to complete my education, continue developing professionally, and eventually build a long-term career with the Los Rios Community College District or the State of California. I am excited about what comes next, but I will always be grateful that *The Parrot* was part of the journey that helped me get here.

Thank you to *The Parrot*, Professor Hoggan, and the entire team for giving me a place to learn, contribute, share stories, and grow.