



John Cabot University

ALUMNI PROFILE



John Holden
JCU Study Abroad, 2005
Software Developer, OnForce, Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts
Interviewed March 2009

What did you enjoy most about JCU?

I loved the wonderful days spent learning Italian on the rooftop patios of the campus. Many colleges promise such experiences in their admissions brochures, but at John Cabot this really happens.

What was your favorite landmark in Rome?

I always enjoyed walking the hill to Piazza Garibaldi, any time of the day or night. It could be a tough

walk, but the view of the city was terrific and there were plenty of great places to sit, talk with friends, and watch people.

What was your career path after leaving JCU?

I completed my business administration degree at Babson College in 2007. Since then, I've worked as a software developer for two startups, including my current position at OnForce. As a software developer, I'm challenged creatively on a daily basis. My work requires a lot of focus and can be mentally exhausting, but it also comes with flexibility that allows me to enjoy my life outside of the office to pursue my many other interests.

What is the most interesting part of your job?

Beyond a full-fledged fascination with programming and software engineering, there isn't much about my work that I don't find interesting or challenging. A major part of my job involves evaluating my peers' work. Doing this requires fully understanding the problem they were attempting to solve, solving it myself, and deciding if they came to the right solution. We work in a heavily team-oriented environment, and learning to leverage that in a meaningful way has been a valuable, ongoing challenge.

What is it like living in Boston?

Boston is terrific. There is always a lot going on here, and even with the unpredictable weather, people find creative ways to have fun. I've enjoyed volunteering with local organizations that connect me to the community, such as the Boston Photography Center and Habitat for Humanity.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would that be?

My next vacation will be in Barcelona, Spain, and over the next few years, I hope to spend time in many different countries so that I can see what the world has to offer. I've always wanted to live permanently in Italy and hope I will eventually settle there one day. For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated with Italian culture and found it the most beautiful part of the world.

What was the last good book you read?

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote. It is a spectacular story recreated by a spectacular author. I find Capote's insight into the human psyche second-to-none, and this book was no exception.

What's your favorite website?

That would have to be digg.com. It points me to thousands of other interesting sites throughout the year, and the discussion (can be) both amusing and intelligent.

What advice would you give to students studying abroad at JCU today?

Don't cut corners on an experience like this. If possible, take a full year (or full summer) to spend at JCU. It may be challenging and frustrating at times, but you'll look back fondly and will never regret it.

How have you given back to John Cabot?

I've made a small donation to the University's annual fund, and I hope to contribute more and in more ways in the future.