Bham Tech Scene
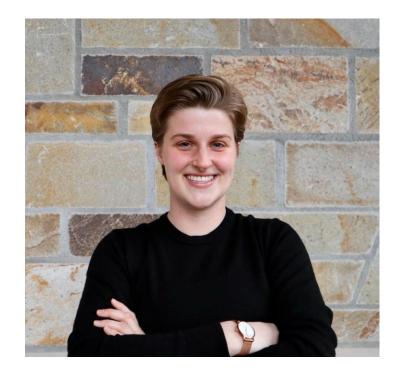
+ Getting Into Tech

About Me.

- From Chicago/Evanston
- University of Michigan Class of 2020
  - Organizational Studies + French
- → Bham in 2021 through Venture for America
- TechBirmingham
- Other interests: Arts (theatre + music), water sports, exploring new places, being outdoors

Anna Topping *(they/them)*
Sr Manager, Ops & Impact

About TechBirmingham.

TechBirmingham is the 501(c)(6) technology trade association for Central Alabama founded in 2002 as the Birmingham Area Technology Leadership Alliance.

Today, TechBirmingham serves as the collective voice of the ecosystem, representing 140 organizations and 10,000 members of the regional workforce.

Our Work.

3 buckets

- Programs/Events
    - TechTuesdays, Affinity Groups (BWIT + Tech Equals), Sloss Tech, Southeast Cybersecurity Conference
- Tech Ecosystem Initiatives
    - Collaborative projects with many other organizations
    - Birmingham Tech Council - brings employers, education training providers, young adults together to work on our tech talent 'pipeline'
- Membership
    - 140 members who want to be more involved with the tech scene

Who's in the room?

Ways to get involved

with the Birmingham tech scene

Newsletters.

- [TechBirmingham](#) (bottom of homepage)

- [Innovation Depot](#) (bottom of homepage)

- [AI Exchange](#) (top right "free newsletter")

Events.

- TechTuesdays (email me!)
    - Next Tuesday 11:30am-1pm @ Regions downtown "Hardware & MedTech in Birmingham"
- Tech on Tap @ Innovation Depot
    - Next one 11/16 4:30-6:30pm
- Affinity Groups
    - Birmingham Women In Technology, Birmingham Black Techies, Tech Equals, NCWIT
- Sloss Tech

[Link](#)

Resources + Groups.

- TechBirmingham Community Resources page
- Sloss Tech Next in Tech
  - sloss.tech/next-in-tech (old application)
  - Fill out interest at bit.ly/tb-nit
- Birmingham Tech Council - young adult committee
  - Fill out interest Here - Upcoming Jan / Feb employer mixer and incentivized survey
  - Are you interested in being involved on a monthly basis? We also have some room for students on our Workforce subcommittee- Apply here.
- Meetup.com
  - Great way to find affinity + interest groups

Resources + Groups pt 2 - Slack.

- Slack groups (more generally)
  - Suchhh a good way to meet new contacts online - there are ones for all sorts of interests and identities
  - **Resource - [a repository of tech community Slacks](#)** spanning countries, regions, interests, etc.
    - From Virtual Coffee (developers) to Out in Tech (LGBTQ+) to [Magiccitytech](#)* (Bham)

      *MCT Slack link expires in 30 days
  - You can also Literally Google "{your interest} Slack channel" and you will find some
- Hackathons
  - Look for those - great way to meet people and get experience

What managers are looking for

Soft Skills.

- Responsible
  - Can complete application process in a timely manner, on time to interviews, responds to emails, etc.
  - Translates to will be able to manage job responsibilities
- Quick / dedicated learner
  - Many skills won't align with the specific tools or languages you'll need on the job; it's important to employers to know they can train you
- Open minded
  - Important for integrating feedback and any collaborative experiences you may have
- Personable
  - Depends on the position (less important with Software Development roles), but it's always a bonus

Experience.

- Real world projects
    - You can even reach out to local companies with project ideas
    - Nonprofits / startups are often strapped for resources!
    - Short term projects are great if you have a hard time finding an internship or want additional exp.
    - *Hackathons!*
- Translatable skills
    - Any job experience you have is valuable and will have transferable skills!
    - No tech experience but you've worked at a restaurant? You had to quickly learn how to function in that role, manage your responsibilities, and more – directly relatable to your future tech role!

Getting into tech (general)

Tech is broad!

- Soooo many types of jobs are possible in tech
    - Software Development, Web Development, Database Management, Data Analytics, Digital Marketing/Communications, Cybersecurity, Computer Help Desk, Operations/Project Management, Business Analyst, Quality Assurance, AI/RPA, Other
- Tech spans all industries
    - Health care, finance, nonprofits, sports, etc.

Job searching is hard.

- Especially in this economy

- It's not a reflection on you / your worth if you're having a hard time securing a job!
- Know that getting your "foot in the door" is the hardest part
    - Once you get that first tech job, it's on your resume as long as you want it to be

Job search tips.

- Outline your needs

    - Get clear on what you need out of a job so you can search + negotiate for it

- Connect with recruiting companies - they want to find you!!

    - Recruiters are hired to find the right talent for the companies that come to them

    - Send them your resume + let me know if you're interested in any contacts for couple recruiters I know

Job search tips.

- Informational interviews (15 min)
  - Utilize LinkedIn
    - Reaching out to potential employers or fellow employees is a great way to find out more and stand out – Even if you don't see job opening, it puts you on their radar
  - Make it easy for them
    - Send a *short* but clear message expressing interest with some possible times or a link for them to schedule a time on your calendar
  - Resource - the 20 minute networking meeting - a 5 step structure

Job search tips pt 2.

- Ways to find companies
  - LinkedIn / Google browsing
  - Browse [TechBirmingham](#) and [Innovation Depot](#) member companies
- (personal fav) Include an interest section at the bottom of your resume
  - Including fun facts or additional interests will set apart your resume
  - It can also help connect you with employers who are intrigued or share your interests
- Consider a visual component to your application materials
  - Portfolio, website, etc.
  - Makes you stand out and adds depth to your resume
- Be open to moving
  - You might find an awesome experience elsewhere or it might be needed for the role you're looking for and able to secure

Job interview tips.

- Interviewing / applying goes both ways!!
  - Finding a job you're going to excel in is hard; use the interview and application process to figure out how _**you**_ feel about the company + its people
- Utilize LinkedIn
  - Reaching out to potential employers or fellow employees is a great way to find out more and stand out
- Practice interviewing with friends or professors/peers/people in the field!
- Negotiate
  - Recognize your worth !!!
  - Again - outline your needs and advocate for them!

Questions?

Thank you!

I'll send follow up resources to the organizers :)

anna@techbirmingham.com