Module Introduction

Hi. My name is Phelan Vendeville, and I'm a Systems Engineer in the Site Reliability Organization at Google. I'm really excited to be your instructor for the next few lessons. Before we jump in, I'll kick things off by telling you a little bit about myself. My passion for technology began in high school which was located in a geographically isolated part of California. This isolation meant that technology and the Internet played an important role in bringing the outside world to students and connecting them with ideas and opportunities by things like virtual field trips and remote learning. For example, I remember preparing for the SATs through digital classroom sessions, which would have been impossible to attend in person. After high school, I enlisted in the US Navy as an Information Systems Technician responsible for maintaining computer and network systems. I continued to witness the ways technology brings people together, whether that meant coordinating ship movements during training exercises or connecting loved ones on long deployments via video chat. Lots of people use technologies in various ways every day, but relatively few understand how it works. A career in IT can be challenging, as I can attest to personally. I can still remember the horror I felt after blowing up the power supply of a master chief's computer by using the wrong voltage switch. But a career in IT can be incredibly rewarding when you can do things like recover irreplaceable family photos from a failing hard-drive. As an IT support specialist, you'll be in a position to not only know how a given piece of technology functions, but also how to help fix it when it breaks. This means you'll have a direct impact on the flow of information going between people. Which is pretty cool. I'm excited to teach you about the third layer of computer architecture, known as software. Software is how we, as users directly interact with our computer. The operating system that we interact with is just software. The music programs, word processors, and more that we use every day are also software. But what exactly is it? If the hardware is the physical stuff that you can pick up and hold, software is the intangible instructions that tell the hardware what to do. In the next lesson, we're going to deep dive more into what software is, how we install it, and how it works.

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