



Name: Jeroen van Grondelle
Age: 35
BSc: Mathematics
At: Utrecht University

Master's programme: **Scientific Computing**
Subject: **Working as a professional**

Jeroen van Grondelle works at Be Informed, a software supplier that provides infrastructures for businesses, with which to record and manage their knowledge. His job is to match the latest ideas in scientific modelling to the product portfolio. In a dynamic field of work that requires intensive knowledge, Jeroen's background in Scientific Computing gives him a real edge, he explains.

Science provides the basis for solutions

"After my graduation I had several jobs in IT, developing applications that supported knowledge workers", Jeroen says. "Their apps typically focus on the processes and provide little support in the most important part of their work: the decision making. As these apps are developed by software engineers and difficult to change, it is hard to keep up with the demands of an ever changing working environment."

Conceptual overlap

So Jeroen asked himself a question: how can an owner of knowledge - say, an insurance underwriter - capture his knowledge in a form that is much closer to his everyday work? And how can we solve this in a way that can be applied generically? "That's why I've always been searching for the conceptual overlap in the different projects I executed", says Jeroen.

Universal models

Jeroen found this common ground in scientific models, not unlike the ones he used as a student in Scientific Computing. Jeroen: "For example, I've been involved in the automation of a lot of decision making processes, be it for subsidies, insurance claims or permits. Basically they're very much alike. The basic questions are: are you entitled to it? And if so: what do you get? When you take out the specifics, you get a fairly universal decision making model."

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Drawing on science skills

Although Jeroen reckons Scientific Computing can get quite abstract, he does make use of the knowledge and skills from the programme in his present job. Jeroen: "I've been trained to envisage abstract situations and think them through before I actually apply them to a real world situation. And I did my thesis research on algorithms design: large scale calculations similar to the ones I use now."

Springboard

A research Master's degree can be a great springboard for a career in business, Jeroen believes: "Working in a professional business environment can be a bit of a culture shock, but there are ways to prepare yourself. For example, I did a group project in my second year and learnt useful skills by involving in various student activities. But it has been the Scientific Computing programme that has proven to be most valuable. After all, it's science that provides the basis for the solutions my company supplies." ■

Master's programme:
Scientific Computing

URL:

- www.uu.nl/programmes/scicomp for international students
- www.uu.nl/masters/scicomp for Dutch students

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