



Ori Schwartz (CAS '03) always felt comfortable around computers, and although he had never programmed before he enrolled in CS111, an introductory computer science course, from that point on, he says he was “pretty much hooked.” Schwartz earned a joint degree in computer science and mathematics and a BA in economics, and soon found a way to combine his love for computers with another

passion—football—by launching FleaFlicker.com, a free, ad-supported online fantasy football service.

After graduating from BU, Schwartz moved to Durham, North Carolina, where he worked for IBM as a software engineer on the performance team of a product called WebSphere Application Server. He left IBM in 2004, spent a few months traveling around Europe with fellow BU alumni, and says he realized “I’d be a lot happier working for myself.”

The popularity of fantasy football “exploded” in the 1990s with the rise of the Internet, Schwartz says, and football now attracts over 12 million fantasy players annually. He explains the game as one based on statistics, where users develop imaginary teams comprised of professional football players; these teams then compete against each other based on the players’ real-life statistics.

“I’ve always been a football fan,” Schwartz says, “and over the years I tried nearly all of the major online services. My friends and I paid for what was supposedly a premium service, but we were ultimately disappointed. I thought I could do better.” Schwartz launched FleaFlicker in August 2005 after 10 months of initial development, and has since received praise from users who had grown dissatisfied with other big-name services.

Schwartz admits that maintaining such an intricate site does not come without its own hurdles, and says his most important challenge was in “presenting users with a simple and easy interface to powerful, customizable software.” Today, motivated by all of the positive feedback from satisfied users, Schwartz is now developing a version of FleaFlicker for the upcoming 2006 season. “Software is never complete,” he says. “There are always more improvements to be made.”