Choosing worthwhile projects

On Hard & Meaningful Projects

• Watch Randy Pausch’s last lecture: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo
Some tips on a successful career

• Take responsibility
• Take initiative
• Take chances
• Seize opportunities
• Follow your passion

• Don’t wait for someone to tell you what you have to do
• Don’t try to get by on the least possible amount of effort=

http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~pattrsn/talks/BadCareer.ppt (part 1&2)
http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds1-2/advice1.html

What constitutes a good and worthwhile project?

Personal
• Scratching an itch
• Opportunities for creativity
• Opportunities for growth
• Opportunities for advancement
• Creative/other input
• Doing something well

Organizational
• Growing customer base
• Positive Risk/benefit tradeoff
• The right place at the right time with the right tool
• Patents/IP protection
• Protecting reputation
• Has a market/fills a need

Any
• Make a living
• Novelty/pushing the envelope
• Boredom
• Learning opportunities
• Head start – market advantage
**Pitching a project**

- What is the basic problem you are trying to solve?
  - Some circumstantial evidence that this is really a problem helps here

- Why should anyone care?
  - Is this really an important problem to fix?

- Who are the target users?

- The basic idea
  - Basic sketches or rough prototypes help

- Why you think your approach is the right one to address your problem
  - Are you open to other approaches?

- How much work/money do you think this will require?

- What are some metrics for success?