MARACH TREEKUNPRAPA
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Counting On It: A Programmer Takes His Passion Around the World

Fresh out of engineering school in Thailand, Marach Treekunprapa landed a job in Bangkok and thought his life was set. But after several months of dissatisfying work, Treekunprapa realized he’d need to head down another path. He renewed his passport, traveled to New York City, where he knew not a soul, signed up for English classes and tried to figure out what to do with his life.

Three years later, after enrolling in a Touro master’s program for web and multimedia design in New York City, Treekunprapa is now the proud developer of “Mo’s Adventure,” an educational app that teaches counting to young children. “Back in Thailand, I’d made an animation video for some friends’ wedding and loved the work,” he said. “I began researching New York schools that offered training in digital media.”

Treekunprapa learned about Touro, discovered the master’s program and was intrigued. At a school open house, he met Assistant Program Director Prerana Bhusel, who described the course offerings and encouraged him to follow his passion. “I had been trained as an engineer. It was a big change for me. But after looking at the school and meeting the people there, I knew it was what I wanted.”

During his first class, Design and Theory, Professor Jesse Epstein helped Treekunprapa learn design basics. “A lot of the students arrived to Touro with more of a design background than I had,” he said. “But Professor Epstein supported me and helped me to develop my abilities.” From then on, Treekunprapa’s confidence in his decision and his abilities grew, along with his enthusiasm for web and multimedia studies.

By the time he reached his second year in the program, Treekunprapa was developing a counting app for young children. “My mother was a teacher and so I naturally gravitated toward the educational aspects of multimedia design,” he says. Turning one of his boyhood “doodles,” whom he calls “Mo,” into the application’s main character, this digital game for two-to three-year-olds, Mo’s Adventure, came into being.

“When I was young, my dad asked me to memorize all the times tables, even though we were studying the much easier addition and subtraction tables at school,” he explains. When the time came to learn multiplication, Treekunprapa already knew them all. “When my friends saw how much I knew, they called me a ‘Multiplication Ninja,’ and I felt really good about myself,” he recalls.

Treekunprapa believes this experience gave him the confidence to pursue many goals, including relocating to New York and learning an entirely new field. He hopes that his app will impact children in the same way. “My dream is that their experience with ‘Mo’s Adventure’ will help them develop a confidence in themselves that they’ll carry with them throughout their lives.”

Every scene in Mo’s Adventure is designed to help preschoolers learn to count. This is from the opening scene.