

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/do-vcs-need-tech-backgrounds>

Computer science is now “the language of technology,” explains Lightspeed Venture Partners founding partner Ravi Mhatre, and studying a technical field like CS can give you an edge in many fields, including venture capital. That sort of technical background, he finds, is especially important for VCs who invest heavily in technology-driven enterprise companies. On the other hand, he adds, there are now plenty of tools that enable less-technical founders and investors to build businesses around web applications and data.



Transcript

- We've hit a point where technology, 00:00:05,210 whether it's because of the cloud or mobile technologies or interconnectivity, I really believe that the foreign language requirement for every student in any college should be computer science.. It is the language of technology and I think, not just venture capital but almost any field that as a Stanford student you want to go into whether it's as a minor or some way, being comfortable and versed in the language of computers is critically important for having a foundational grounding for the future of whatever you're going to do.. In my particular case, I have always been, it's just been always a personal passion point, even before I went to Stanford, in computers in tech, I really wanted to know how technology worked.. And even in a lot of my investing career, I've invested in companies and in parts of the markets that are more focused on selling deeper technology products to enterprises.. And I think if that's an area of the investing landscape that you have interest in, then having a technical degree, a deeper technical degree absolutely matters, because it's very hard to understand, if there's a, in a sea of companies that are building next generation infrastructure for the cloud, and you have to get deep into, the stack, really knowing whether something can be special or can be differentiated, it's hard to do that without a true technical educational foundation.. But I think in the investing world today, and we may talk about it later, such a broad amount of the opportunity are actually in companies, which are much further up the stack.. I mean the tools that, today versus when I was graduating from Stanford in the 80s, that are available, I mean, you can be relatively non technical and in Amazon cloud.. You can stand up a computing infrastructure that deals with literally petabytes of data, you have all the ability to create sort of on demand a very scalable and friendly, web application experience for users.. So I think really that the requirement to have a technical degree to go into venture capital is less today and I think it's more about choosing a degree where you learn to think critically...