URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/parallels-between-policy-and-programming

Jack Dorsey, co-founder of Square and Twitter, explains his decision to study computer programming in college, rather than political science. Dorsey saw many parallels between writing government policy and computer programming, with the only difference being the time-scale it takes to see the impact of your work.

Transcript

I went to college.. I went to University of Missouri-Rolla initially.. I was deciding between political science at the time and computer science because I have always been fascinated by cities and at some point want to maybe potentially go into government.. I'm still not quite sure if I have more effect there or more effect in programming.. But I went away from political science because I realized that there are a lot of parallels between what you do in politics and what you do in government and writing policy and laws and what you do in programming.. But the difference is the time scale.. So, I could write a policy as a senator or as a mayor and I could see the effect maybe in eight years.. But I could write that same policy and write a simulator around it and write populations around it and I could see that effect instantly with a computer.. So, I went down the computer science route...