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Re: Email for July 10th, 2023

To: "Division, Criminal (CRM)" <Criminal.Division@usdoj.gov>, civil.feedback@usdoj.gov

"Creativity for the most part cannot be taught."

- for my first clients, I programmed a bin packing algorithm that packed wreaths and garlands into boxes in a way that minimizes the shipping cost. It would pack the boxes and then price them according to usps and ups rates.

I was too wet behind the ears to use the UPS API or the USPS API, both of which, at that time, relied heavily on sending XML to endpoints. XML is mostly simple, but at the time I knew not one thing about it. I was already working on being a year past my first estimation, and I didn't want to get stuck on yet another thing.

So instead of using the API, I downloaded csv files and pdfs from each delivery services website. These were files about their fees and their pricing for each zone. I loaded all of this into a database. Having the stuff loaded into a database and working with it from there was in my repertoire. Building XML documents and then sending them to an API endpoint was not.

The final result was that my calculated shipping prices matched usps and ups down to the penny. It was very rare that it didn't pick the most cost effective packing method too. I found extremely few instances of that. It is hard to be perfect with bin packing algorithms.

Warmest Regards,

Clint Williams

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