Meet Scott Collens!
Head of Product Development and Project Delivery, Covers

Initially, Scott Collens was intimidated by technology and the tech sector, but after a friend exposed him to a year-long tech program, he was hooked. Building a tech career step-by-step, Collens changed positions several times but finally landed where he wanted to be. He combined his job with his favourite hobby, sports, and is now working at Covers, an online sports betting company, as Head Of Product Development and Project Delivery.

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I graduated from Prince Andrew High School in Dartmouth in 1991, a year when laptops were considered cutting-edge and the first website was built and put online. Technology wasn't really a part of a high school education back then — we're talking a handful of computers in the entire school.

High school technology basically consisted of CD-ROMs, but when I got to SMU, there were entire computer labs. I took an introduction to computers course and I freaked out.

To be honest, halfway through I wanted to drop out. I was completely intimidated by it.

I wound up passing the course and graduated from Saint Mary's in 1995. With my business degree in hand, I dove into sales and marketing, but quickly realized it wasn't for me.

One of my good friends then convinced me to check out the Information Technology Institute (ITI), a now-defunct technology school in Halifax. At ITI, I could take a one-year diploma that would allow me to move into a technical field and into an in-demand industry. I jumped at the opportunity!

After graduating from ITI, I moved to Toronto and worked at an IBM solutions provider for two years. Soon after, I found the opportunity I was looking for back home in Halifax.

I love sports, so when I heard about Covers – a digital media sports company – it felt like a great fit. I had heard good things about the company; they were in business for seven years before I joined and had built the company up to 30 people. It was local Halifax entrepreneurs that started it, and they wanted to build something big. From the

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minute I walked in there was an excitement to the place, and there still is. We're all interested in sports here - we're especially big into NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, college football and college basketball.

I worked for 10 years as a programmer and web developer at Covers. I didn't have a computer science degree or possess deep technical knowledge, but I learned every day by asking questions and learning from my colleagues. I think it took me seven or eight years to reach the level of my peers.

I've now been at Covers for 17 years, and am proud to have helped build Covers into the top sports betting website in North America. But staying on top will not be easy as the American sports betting industry enters a period of rapid growth following the reversal of a federal law in May 2018.

Covers is now one of the largest sports betting companies in North America, and a lot of people don't realize that. When you hear people talking about sports there is always a lot of passion, and that translates here. We compete hard, and we want to be number one in our industry. There are a lot of new competitors, including large national sports brands entering our space, but we are still able to maintain our position as a market leader.

I think my story is a good example that it's never too late to change your career path. Just because you didn't start taking coding classes in junior high, doesn't mean you can't have a career in technology.

"People define themselves too early when it comes to tech — it's not too early to decide what you want to do, but high school is too early to write anything off. Anyone can learn anything, and you can learn at any age."

Computer science isn't the only way into the field – one of the first things to do is be curious about the tech around you now. If you like Fortnite, think about how it was built, how it makes money, how it works on your phone, and how they make those types of games. People define themselves too early when it comes to tech — it's not too early to decide what you want to do, but high school is too early to write anything off. Anyone can learn anything, and you can learn at any age.

About Covers NS Sports Media Pros Ltd is a Halifax-based digital sports media company operating and managing web-services for ProSportsDaily.com and Covers.com. ProSportsDaily.com is one of the most visited sports sites on the web, where sports fans come for daily big rumours & news. Online since 1995, Covers.com is a sports information site designed to entertain sports lovers everywhere, providing indispensable information and state-of-the-art statistical analysis. Thousands of people visit Covers.com daily to gather the data and news they need to stay informed. NS Sports Media Pros is wholly owned by Nexstar Media Group.

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