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What researchers need vs what they ask for

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Researchers often come to us for RSE help with quite specific technical questions, such as “how can I parallelise this Python code?”, or “why does this matlab function use all my RAM?”, and it can seem natural to dive straight into directly answering their question.

Sometimes this is the best approach to help them, but in many cases it is worth asking some more questions about what it is that they are trying to do, and how their code fits into accomplishing that goal.

It may then become clear that there are alternative solutions that the researcher did not consider, often because they were not aware of their existence, such as using an existing library, or a better suited language.

In this talk I’ll give some real world examples of this, and try to provide some suggestions for how best to help people who come to you with this kind of question.

I want to participate in the youngRSE prize

no

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