Computer Science Career Advice

I can definitely offer some helpful advice to Computer Science graduates seeking jobs. I've been working in the industry for 13 years.

One thing that I would highly recommend, but that hardly anyone seems to do, is to "dig your well before you're thirsty" in your job search. (By the way, read Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty by Harvey Mackay.) Rather than starting your job search after you graduate, begin planting seeds well in advance. Try to get a rough idea for the kind of job you'd like to have, and start joining professional organizations and attending industry gatherings. For example, if you think you might like to be a Ruby on Rails web developer, start attending the Rails conferences that every city has. Recruiters lurk at these meetings for the specific purpose of finding people just like you!

It's also important to realize that what you actually do for a job will probably have little to nothing to do with anything you learned in school. It's unlikely that you'll have to implement a bubble sort anytime soon. Learn what skills are in demand (for web, in-demand skills include HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, Ruby on Rails, .NET, Java) and get yourself some experience using those technologies.

And don't think that technical skills alone translate into being a good programmer. It's important to be competent with "soft skills" as well, which can actually be just as hard as the computer stuff. For this I recommend the classic How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie.