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So long and thanks for all the phish

Posted on [August 4, 2011](#) by [Alicia](#)

so, I realized after reading a couple of your other blogs that this might be our last blog-a-day. So I just want to tell you peoples that you have been a lot of fun to work with and I've really enjoyed hanging out with you this summer. I think I've seen more horror movies this summer than I have my entire life. Anyway, continue being awesome and I wish you the best of luck in whatever you're heading off to do.

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Evaluation Thingy

Posted on [August 4, 2011](#) by [Alicia](#)

I enjoyed the program. I went in curious about applying to HCI programs for graduate school, so I guess I came with the right attitude. I really liked the luncheon lectures because they showed different aspects of HCI that we didn't get to see in our particular program. Our mentors were pretty cool, and I liked being advised on our research but also that we got to work mostly independently on it. The Milestones were useful because I knew always what was expected of us, and was less inclined to procrastinate. The only thing I didn't like was the homework from the classes sometimes conflicted with what we were trying to get done in our research- I'd advise having less homework/having it not be due at the same time as the milestones/having it be more integrated with our research (for example, tying the paper prototype assignment in more with our research). Blogging wasn't bad either, but it's not really my thing; at least, not when I have something I'm working on and it's breaking into my time. That's a petty thing though. Anyways, I know everyone had a different experience with the program and it worked out better for some people than it did for others (sorry, Team Robo), but it worked for me. If this is what graduate school's like, I think I'll have a pretty good time.

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It's all edits from here

Posted on [August 2, 2011](#) by [Alicia](#)

...I think/hope at least. Paper's been written up and is ready to be edited to pieces, and the poster's set so I'm not sure what else to do. Eliot will probably fix that problem though. It feels weird to have everything be winding down. I'm looking forward to being home in a week, but I'll be a bit sad to go too. Research is a lot more interesting than classes, but I guess I have get through the next two years of coursework anyway. It's been fun to meet y'all. We still have a week to go so I won't be saying goodbyes quite yet, but just want to let you know if you ever find yourself in the Shenandoah valley, feel free to stop by.

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Ethics: Cases and Video Response

Posted on July 7, 2011 by Alicia

The first case I looked at was that of Vipul Bhrigu. He was a postdoc at U of Michigan Medical School who tampered with research materials and swapped labels on cell culture dishes to cause false results to be reported in research funded by the National Cancer Institute. He also added ethanol to cell culture dishes to kill off the growing cells and cause false results to be reported. Worst of all, he did this to a colleague. The fact that he would tamper with someone else's research like that just shows what a colossal jerk he must be. He did this for several months and only fessed up when he was told that his actions had been videotaped. Now he is prohibited from contracting or subcontracting with any US Government agency or nonprocurement programs for three years, and is prohibited from serving in any advisory capacity to the U. S. Public Health Service. I found it interesting that he is being suspended for the same amount of time as people who falsify their own information, although I would consider his crime more significant.

The second case I looked at was that of Scott J. Brodie, a former Research Assistant Professor at University of Washington. He falsified figures, information, and images in 14 different pages. He is banned from contracting or subcontracting with any US Government agency or nonprocurement programs for seven years, and is prohibited from serving in any advisory capacity to the U.S. Public Health Service, although he's allowed to serve on any PHS advisory committee, board, and/or peer review committee, or as consultant. I'm guessing the seven years was due to the number of papers in which he falsified information and/or his role as a Research Assistant Professor. I'm interested to how they decide what punishments to merit out.

Video Response:

Okay, so people should try to be sensitive to others' feelings, and it's understandable that companies want to protect their reputation by making sure their employees don't make offensive comments. But at the same time, we're not perfect and in cases where the statement seems pretty mild and unindicative of the overall message, the person likely didn't mean to offend. It'd be great if instead of people getting offended at every little statement they focused on the clearly malicious ones, and learned to ignore the ones not worth fighting.

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Ethics: Research and Response

Posted on July 7, 2011 by Alicia

Mattel:

Honestly, after looking up the Mattel case in the New York Times, I feel like things went wrong early on, weren't caught, and ended up having an international impact for the worse. Mattel did the right thing in recalling the toys as soon as they discovered the lead paint (according to NYT, they found out in "early July" and recalled on July 6th). It sounds like the origin of the lead was in the pigment from a company that provided fake inspection quality certificates. It's difficult to imagine Mattel had any way of checking where all of their pigment comes from and it's stated that they had worked with the toy factory for a long time with no issues of quality. The toy factory would be more liable to blame for not checking the paint, but since they were buying from a paint company that was owned by a friend of his and had probably bought from them in the past- records show lead had only been present in the paint since April- I find it likely that they took the quality certificates at their word and didn't think they needed to check again. My opinion is that the root of the problem was a pigment company trying to undercut the competition with tainted pigment and forged documents rather than anyone's purposeful decision to allow tainted toys to be bought by the public. In this situation then, I think Mattel did the best they could in installing the equipment then issuing the recall, the owner of the toy factory could have done more but his error was a human one instead of any malevolent purpose. I wish/hope they persecuted the pigment company but Mattel did the best they could given the situation.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/02/business/02toy.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/23/business/worldbusiness/23suicide.html?pagewanted=1>

Challenger:

NASA's decisions leading up to the launch were poor in that they did not listen to the engineers who said there was a problem with the spacecraft and went ahead with the flight. I found it especially troubling that it was stated top level decision makers hadn't been informed about the engineers' concerns, meaning that they had been stifled by people lower in the hierarchy. Their response afterwards was better, as they grounded the fleet until their designs could be improved and began implementing safety features such as a crew bail-out system.

http://www.aerospaceguide.net/spaceshuttle/challenger_disaster.html

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Moving Right Along...

Posted on [July 6, 2011](#) by [Alicia](#)

So, we're still moving at a decent clip on our work. Even though our OpenGL project came in 3rd, I'm still pretty proud of it for the sheer fact it proves Daniel and I can fight through all the generated errors and system crashes to make something in OpenGL. Phew. Hopefully our presentation will go as well; I'm not too scared of it since it'll be for our group. The final one? A different story but we've got a couple weeks to worry about that. I'm looking forward to Journal Club Friday now because I printed off the paper and it's all about BCIs being used for communication purposes for the partially or completely paralyzed. Awesome! Although I'm a little sad/jealous the topic's taken, I'm into this stuff so it'll be cool to discuss it.

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