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Melanie Hendricks

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A video summary of team ISP's research

Posted on August 8, 2011 by Melanie

ISP Demo Video_Take2

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One last blog before I go

Posted on August 4, 2011 by Melanie

Has it really been 10 weeks? The fact that this is our last working day hasn't really sunk in yet. Tomorrow we have the symposium and a picnic and then we are free to go…right after I pack all my stuff that is (which will probably be at the last minute).

Today, team ISP has been finishing up some data analysis and revising our paper. I don't think we'll have enough time to get it to the "final draft" stage, but I'm glad we at least have a start. The demo video is also ready to go, so yay. We will be running through our presentation at 2pm today, which should be interesting since we haven't had time to actually practice, but at least we've actually done stuff now so we can ramble on about that.

Also one last suggestion for the program before I go: INCREASE THE TEMPERATURE IN THE LAB.

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Stick people are better than papers
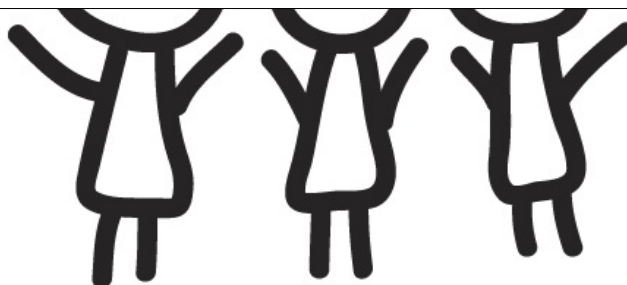
Posted on August 3, 2011 by Melanie

So instead of continuing to slave away on our poster yesterday, I made a video for the symposium. It has stick people drawings. And is awesome. I have a few more tweaks to make to it and then it's back to typing away on our paper, which is still missing 4 of its 7 sections…plus references…

I have a feeling it's going to be another late night…

ACTIVATE!

Also, things I liked about the program:

- The food – much better than the usual cafeteria, particularly the dessert bar
- The housing – it's nice to have your own bedroom
- The classes – modeling, programming, and graphics were the most fun and I learned a lot too
- Extracurricular Activities – the ropes course, paint-balling, and canoe trip were the major ones and they gave me the chance to try something I normally wouldn't do
- Helpful mentors and staff – everyone is so nice and helpful…what are you plotting??
- The technology – can we have one last visit to the C6, plleeeaasse?
- Food bin – those granola bars saved me from starvation on multiple occasions
- We had free access to the rec – at my last REU I had to pay to use the rec… and it was pretty much the only form of entertainment in that town
- We actually did research – it wasn't always fun and exciting, but there were definitely parts I enjoyed and I know I learned a lot

If I had to change anything it would be the amount of time we spent working on the classes compared to the time spent working on our actual research. Maybe if you just limit the homework for the classes to allow more research time?

Overall, it was an excellent experience and thank you everyone who made it possible!

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Typy Type Type

Posted on August 2, 2011 by Melanie

Yesterday I threw together a draft of the methods section for our research paper. It's about 2.5 pages longer than the original paragraph we typed up weeks ago, so I guess that's proof that we've actually done *something* this summer. We're still having some trouble analyzing our results, but hopefully we can get everything figured out this afternoon.

We had our last luncheon lecture to day with VRAC's new post-doc from Germany. His research is really cool and involves projecting virtual 3D images into a real environment to create an augmented reality. There were some pretty neat applications too, like testing the viability in a car before its finished—the windshield and top half of the car was a 3D image projected onto a real bottom half of a car that a user could drive around.

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Accio Paper!

Posted on August 1, 2011 by Melanie

I wish it were that easy. We still have a lot of work to do and only a few days left to do it! While team ISP did manage to finish the transcription and tagging of all our audio files, we still have to actually analyze everything to determine our results. Not to mention typing everything up into a brilliant research paper. At least our poster is done and off to the printer, I made a few last minute changes before sending it to Pam this morning. Currently, I am working on the methods section of our paper which is making me realize just how much stuff we did.

On the plus side, the weekend was nice. I got plenty of sleep, did a bunch of laundry in preparation for packing, and saw Captain America (which was pretty

awesome).

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…this is a recording

Posted on July 29, 2011 by Melanie

This feels like the longest week ever. It started out with so much rushing and trying to get work done, but has faded into the slower process of listening to the audio from our testing and tagging key parts. I'm definitely dragging. Luckily, it's Friday and I should be done tagging video after today, so the weekend will be free for me to catch up on my sleep. And start packing. Woot.

Next week is the final stretch and we still have quite a bit to accomplish, like analyzing our data and writing our paper…

Suggestion for future REU's: Replace 'Blog Time' with 'Nap Time.' Naps are nice.

Posted in Uncategorized | 1 Comment

Field trips are nice

Posted on July 28, 2011 by Melanie

Yesterday, we took a trip to Des Moines to visit the Principal to see how they do usability testing. We also stopped by the Science Center to learn about how they create their exhibits. It was a pretty interesting day, especially when we got to go behind the screen of the IMAX!

I've spent today mostly working on our poster and trying to incorporate all the feedback I got from Ted and Marie. Its coming along, but I still need our results section which means we've got a lot of data analysis to do before Monday. I can't believe we're almost to our last week. Between data analysis, paper writing, poster demo practice, last minute REU stuff, and the cleaning/packing I have to do before I leave, I'm guessing next week will be extremely busy.

Back to work!

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Finished

Posted on July 26, 2011 by Melanie

We had our last study this morning and I have to admit, I'm kinda sad it's over so soon. It was cool to watch all the teams work on "Mary's Problem" especially the one's that actually used the interaction model I put together. We got a lot of great feedback from the teams, thank you so much everybody!

So now we get to move on to analyzing the data, which doesn't sound nearly as fun, but hopefully gives us a better understanding of what happened. I still think we're many user studies away from being able to answer our original research question, but we did learn a lot about *how* to go about testing which will help should our project be continued.

On a different note, the speaker at today's luncheon lecture discussed how to apply to graduate school. She gave us lots of good information and answered our questions, which is always nice. Tomorrow we have a field trip to Des Moines where we will visit with a company and then explore the Science Center (that place is soo cool!).

Posted in Uncategorized | Comments Off

Paintball, dance, and the spinning beachball of doom.

Posted on July 25, 2011 by Melanie

It's been a busy couple of days. Saturday, we went paintballing, which I had never done before. Naturally, I got shot in the leg during the very first round, but quickly learned that cover is only cover if your whole body is hidden. It turned out to be lots of fun, and I managed to hit more people than hit me so yay! After paintball, I went to a cultural dance event that featured dance from India. In one dance, there was a single performer who was portraying an epic battle between 3 of the Indian gods and some bridge-building monkeys. Strangely enough, I

was able to follow the story even though the 1 dancer was playing all 4 parts.

Sunday, was less amusing. I was in the lab from 10am-2:30am finishing up our interaction model and helping my team prepare for the testing we had this morning. Thankfully, even though the program was crashing EVERY TEN MINUTES (we're pushing it to the limits with our model) I finished the model and we've gained some interesting results from our first day of testing. Testing has definitely been a learning process, we've had to tweak our procedure after each session as the team problem solving process has not gone as expected. We have one last testing session tomorrow, so we'll see how it goes.

As for the remainder of today, I'm off to bed in hopes of getting more than 3 hours of sleep. Night!

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workworkworkworkwork

Posted on July 22, 2011 by Melanie

I haven't had much time to blog today due to the massive amounts of work I am trying to get done before Monday. I think I might actually have the interaction model done in time—maybe. I've pretty much been working on it non-stop for the past couple of days, and it's gotten to the point where I am even starting to dream about work, NOT COOL.

Tomorrow is paintball and a tapestry dance with our PI, so even though I won't be working for once, I will still be pretty busy. Then, on Sunday, it's back to work! Not exactly a relaxing weekend, but it should be worth it in the end.

I am now off to bed where I will hopefully not have anymore work-related dreams.

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