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We were supposed to do this at 9 am (5/28/09)

Inspiration from Connor Schneck.
There is no ugly.
The Bad: July 30, 2009

The only bad part about this internship was the structure of it. Not the organization, because that would be the furthest thing from the truth. I mean, right now I have really nothing to do but pack, which I can't do since I'm supposed to work from 9 to 5. I guess I knew it would be structured when I applied, so it's not the fault of the internship here at ISU. SPIRE-EIT is a great program and I'd recommend it to friends. However, I don't think a structured program suits me very well. I feel like if I can do the work (40 hours/week) then it should not matter when I am here, which is more of what graduate school is like.
The Good: July 29, 2009

This internship has been immensely helpful in reaffirming my goal to attain a graduate degree. Working in teams has been a blast as well as seeing more of the world, although it's the same country. I'm glad that I applied and chose to come here and I'll be a little disappointed to leave and not see some of my fellow interns for a while. But this experience has been good, if not great.
I can count the days left on a hand

This summer seems to have just flown by. Looking back, we've done a whole lot, all of us. Every team has had their hardships and period of uncertainty, waiting for something to fall into place or someone to return. Now that we're winding down, orchestrating all of our efforts in posters, presentations and demos, I've realized how wonderful this program is. It's been an amazing summer and I feel like I've accomplished more than I would have if I had spent this summer doing any other internship.
The End is Nigh: July 27, 2009

I still need to watch Watchmen...

The final week is upon us and I cannot wait for the symposium, the end of the summer party, and the ensuing flight back to a coastal state. Today we just worked on the paper and poster a little more. Hopefully we will have the paper ready to Rob and mentors by tomorrow. Hamadi and Mina do a great job of writing.

wait, you've read the book and not seen the movie? You need to watch Watchmen, it's a good movie.
Today we got our poster printed off. Currently, we are in the state of preparing to practice our poster presentation for next Friday. Good luck to Mina for her presentation this Friday though. Actually, good luck to all the ladies presenting for PWSE.
REU Video: July 17, 2009

Bringing it all together

Yesterday, Stephen came to check on us and noticed that “work” has become less busy and reminded us of the REU video. That’s what I’ve been working on for most of the past 48 hours, especially trying to screen capture visualizations from winamp. I’ll probably be in the lab on Sunday doing some more work on it. Tonight and tomorrow though, I’ll be chilling with some like-minded people creating a video game. Should be fun!

UgonaOhiri - 21 Jul 2009 - 21:58

I'm glad I was able to aid you in your video documentary...Are the like-minded people from UMBC?

ZayiraJordan - 20 Jul 2009 - 09:48

Curtis, we also talked about the “documentary” last Friday during Journal Club and Kelly's group is going to work on that.
It's kinda done...

Our poster drafts are due today and we were graced with our mentors' bountiful help on it. We still need to do a discussion section and tidy up the thing a little, but I have no doubt that it'll be done by the end of the week.
So, I start a lot of blogs with the word "so" and today is no different. I'm really tired as I type this, I just finished approximately half of my entree from Chili's - the jalapeno steak quesadillas. But the tour to John Deere is supposed to be the highlight of our day, so I'll try to talk about that. I found it pretty interesting, seeing lasers and manufacturing lines and whatnot, and our tour guide was very knowledgeable. In fact, he said he was hired in 1955 and has been retired for some time. I believe my dad was born in '54 or something, so I'd definitely say our tour guide was pro.
I hope I can slide in before I get tagged

So there's not too much to do now. Results were due last Friday, but I think ours will be in later today. Due to some craziness, we were not able to meet our target of 10 subjects, but I think we'll be just fine. The poster draft is due in two days and the final this Friday. After that though, I'm not even sure what there will be to do. Our paper only needs the results and discussion sections, along with the abstract, all of which are currently put on hold.
Relaxing: July 9, 2009

So relaxed, couldn't think of a subtitle.

Rainy days just put me into a relaxing (some may call it complacent and inertial) mood. I fixed the blackjack and FPS problems today and watched as Linh was capped and did Blackjack and the FPS. Somehow he managed to break a lap of the game, but it fixed itself, which was a surprise to me. Oh well, about to go run another subject. Photos and videos will be coming soon, pending permission.

BellaManoim - 09 Jul 2009

please look at the email Pam sent and sign up for our study
Good News: July 8, 2009

is no news?

Not much news, I'm afraid. I received an email from Kira today that the game needed to be fixed and fixed them both as soon as possible. Then I get an e-mail telling me that there is nothing wrong with the FPS, which I just finished working on. Turns out, the thing that was wrong wasn't too noticeable, but everything's been fixed. I may go into the lab to see how people react to the game. Good luck to those getting capped.
The Beginning: July 7, 2009

Experimenting Time

It is a little weird to think that most of the work we've done until now is just preparation for something bigger. I guess it would be similar to taking the time to build a microscope then when you're finally done is when the breakthroughs start pouring. Well, the FPS is done (and so is my trial for the Torsion IDE, great timing) and now starts the beginning of collecting and analyzing data, using the FPS and the EEG. Good luck to Hamadi and Mina who will be doing the bulk of that stuff.
Nearing Completion: July 6, 2009

of the First Person Shooter at least

So today we will be testing the FPS that we scripted in Torque. The level environment is pretty sweet, however the fact that the experiment participant will have to do the level 12 times will seem tedious, in my opinion. But it is a psych experiment after all. After today, (or if we need to make changes, after tomorrow) we can start running participants in the lab in Science I and analyzing the data we get from that. Feels like I'm almost done doing the hard stuff.

MinaChoi - 06 Jul 2009 - 15:42

NACE! except it still crashes.. T.T As long as they don't crash it... WE ARE GOOD~ mwahaha This internship is nearly over! T.T + =D
Grinding: June 25, 2009

Grinding!

For anyone that has ever played any role-playing games, you may be familiar with the term “grinding”. Grinding is the repeated action of repeatedly acting to repeatedly raise skills until you're ready to actually play. This process is usually as boring as the preceding sentence and sometimes just as complex. It seems now that we’re entering a grinding phase with research, grinding a starter kit fps into a psych experiment and getting the level design down. The end benefit of grinding is that you're ready for “end-game”. End-game is the actual fun part of the game, be it PvP (Player vs. Player combat) or raids or just collecting rare items. In this case, I'd probably say that end-game is presenting our research, possibly getting published.

Grind on!

-- MichaelCurtis - 25 Jun 2009

I don't care what nobody say. Imma be me. Stay hood. Stay raised in the streets. Cuz I'm out here grindin'.

HamadiMcIntosh - 01 Jul 2009 - 13:30

grinding? yes continuously working hard into becoming a perfectionist.

HamadiMcIntosh - 01 Jul 2009 - 13:30

lol

MinaChoi - 25 Jun 2009 - 16:33
It's Slowly Coming Together: June 19, 2009

Bit by bit

Yesterday we demoed the OpenGL version of Blackjack to our mentors. It looks pretty pro, I must say, but I can’t take credit for the artwork included in it. However, we still have some modifications to work out, including animations and moving the console screen.

Anyways, I’m starting become more and more excited about work. Having more than one project is great for me, because if I get tired of one thing, I can switch over to the next. For example, we have OpenGL, the first person shooter and I have been tasked with a binary I/O script. It’s all coming together and I love it.

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MinaChoi - 23 Jun 2009 - 15:43

yay go team!!! Glad your on the team Curtis~

HamadiMcIntosh - 23 Jun 2009 - 13:26

Are you excited about being the only one given an extra side project? Lol.

PamShill - 22 Jun 2009 - 07:54

I’m so glad that you are working hard and still having a great time!
Some Days Are Rainy: June 16, 2009

But it ain't that bad

We had the GMAP Symposium today, which was interesting. I don't think I had a full appreciation the social science research, since it was mostly qualitative with a small sample size. However, I did pay attention to the first presenter of the second A session, who is an alum at the school my brother currently attends. I guess that means I'm more of an engineer type person, although I disagree.

It also rained today, which mirrored my feelings about OpenGL Blackjack, which didn't get finished. I'm convinced that a multithread implementation would have been better, since I have multithreading experience in Java. But that might require more time and effort and understanding.

Subtitle inspired by Lupe Fiasco. "Some days it ain't so sunny, but it ain't that bad."

MichaelOren - 17 Jun 2009 - 13:41

C++ threading is more complicated than Java. I hate C++ threading, personally. The language was written when processors were lucky if they could run one process in series well, let alone running a process jumping back and forth on occasion--the threading was then tacked on (and it shows--not to mention being painful). Python threading is fun to write though.

Did your group create a system architecture design document beforehand to plan out how everything fit together? It seemed like you had some modular programming, but how modular was your design?

IvanOjeda - 17 Jun 2009 - 00:23

Curtis For President

I'd vote for you if you were a candidate.

BellaManoim - 16 Jun 2009 - 16:19

you guys did a good job on it anyway
Hard at Work: June 15, 2009

It doesn't seem interesting enough...

First, I have to apologize. I'm not someone who finds their work too terribly important to blog each day about the little bit of code I pushed around. So for the blogs I didn't post, here is what I/we/our team did: We finished blackjack completely, it logs and does highscores and supposedly can communicate with the parallel port. (The EEG amp has been absent as of late,) we have been working on the OpenGL version of blackjack, which may or may not be done by Tuesday. Hamadi and Mina have been doing an excellent job with the lit review and I have been busy scripting the first-person shooter while avoiding understanding how it actually works. TorqueScript may be a fine language, but weakly typed PL's make my head hurt.

On a side note, I've started ordering the parts for my new PC. Here is the case that I'm going to use. (It won't come with a power supply.) It was a deal, got it for $59.99. Power to newegg.

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 16:01

just kidding. I know you tried hard... =) We might've won if our program worked. And I'm also kidding about not helping you anymore. Gosh, I can be such a jerk sometimes. yay!! GO DIGITAL GAMES. We are the best team~ Seriously though, tell me when you need help if you feel like you are doing all the work.

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:57

btw: u can't say NOTHING now! I did a lot of the OpenGL coding... WHAT NOW!?

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:57

you've been spammed! XP

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:56

spam

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:56

spam

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:56

spam

MinaChoi - 16 Jun 2009 - 15:56

spam
hello curtis!!
yay! I'm no longer required to understand coding! You are the comp sci major!! =)
I Missed a Day: June 10, 2009

Happy Belated Hamadi Day

So yesterday was Hamadi's birthday. However, I'm not sure too many people noticed, which was reconciled today with birthday cake. MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM! So happy belated birthday Hamadi, sorry the Lakers didn't win.

On a more serious note, blackjack is coming sweetly. It can recover from bad/erroneous input. Now the challenge will be making it a 3D application and determining what features are in console.

-- MichaelCurtis  - 10 Jun 2009

BellaManoim - 10 Jun 2009 - 18:50

I posted some questions for Journal club, take a look at them (add/edit if you want)

MinaChoi - 10 Jun 2009 - 15:49

spam

HamadiMcIntosh - 10 Jun 2009 - 15:29

Thanks. I don't think the Lakers got the note that it was my birthday. Hence the lack of effort.
Real Progress: June 8, 2009

One project down, more to go

It's the beginning of the week and blackjack is finally done, mostly. The only thing that needs to be done is the high score part, which is "simple" file I/O. Other than that, I'd like to get some random shuffling and whatnot, but it's not important that it is done by our presentation tomorrow. However, we were also given an OpenGL project to come up with by next Tuesday, which will be a continuation of blackjack, taking it to the graphical realm. Aside from that, blackjack will need to be able to communicate with the EEG amp. So, although the blackjack game is mostly done, more can be modified and added onto it.

I hope OpenGL will be easy. I just finished taking linear algebra and I've done a bit of graphics with Java applets. We'll see how this one plays out.

BellaManoim - 08 Jun 2009 - 15:32

did you have a topic in mind for the journal club this week?
Two Fridays Down: June 5, 2009

Creativity escapes me

So while there is a lot of stuff I could blog about, I'll talk simply about our "Craft of Research" class we had today. It was a great overview of grad school and how beneficial it could be. I've always been a fan of informative entertainment, sometimes called "edutainment", so the comics Mike Oren showed us were insightful and informative. Now I have a new way to slack off. Yay!

I might comment more after the journal club today.
Automagically: June 4, 2009

It's a Technical Term

Automagically is the term used to describe how things work that we don't fully understand. My CMSC 331 (Programming Languages) professor introduced me to the term, describing the way compilers work, or something like that. It also describes how this research project will come together. Hopefully, at the end of the summer I won't use “automatically” to describe anything.

Today, I met with Mina, Hamadi, Kira, Wutthigrai and Dr. West about our progress with blackjack and other team goals. Apparently, we've hit a roadblock regarding our middleware (TGEA) and so we'll have to use TGE instead, since the combat pack only works with TGE. We could port it to TGEA, but porting is tedious, takes forever, and could cause you to become short with your dear teammates. Mina came up with a great idea of inducing fear to measure game performance/reaction time and while I had other ideas (which are usually too complex to be workable), her idea seems more workable. So hopefully we'll finish blackjack quickly and be able to take some time with the FPS.

"Automagically" is also sometimes used by technical folks in a condescending way to talk to non-technical folks about operating system installs and such. Used mostly by the hardcore, compile the kernel themselves (e.g. Gentoo) Linux users. I like the idea of inducing fear--that's what I'm hoping Nintendo will do with games for the vitality sensor (and not just use it for the Nintendo Home Gym...)
Settling In: June 3, 2009

Orientation is basically over

Well, we've been here a full week now. The only difference is that we
don't have as much orientation stuff anymore, but that got replaced
with work. Today, we had a meeting with Kira and Wuthigrai about
our progress so far. They showed me a little about Torque's Mission
and Terraforming Editors, which are pretty sweet, if I say so myself.
They also informed us it'd be a good idea (read: mandatory) to have
read through a paper written by a Swedish research group about
their processes by tomorrow's meeting. That's not as sweet, if I say
so myself. However, it's not like I have much to do at this point, since
blackjack is coming together beautifully.

If you need some cheering up, hit the "people" link on the sidebar and
look at Michael Curtis. That smile is brighter than the sun.

LinhPham - 03 Jun 2009 - 13:56

hahaha straight up cheesin

MinaChoi - 03 Jun 2009 - 13:05

hopefully the blackjack program comes together beautifully... hahaha

hamadi will be MIA for the next 2 days due to Laker's game hahaha
we might be working well into the weekend.
So today we got news that we bought the Torque engine by GarageGames. It seems pretty nice, considering I've looked at 0.00002% of it by now. However, the documentation looks like it'll be helpful. Or maybe not, since the documentation itself says that it may have incomplete or completely wrong sections. Sweet! It's nice to know that someone is being pro. But, sincerely, I'm excited to work with some middleware, since most of the time I programmed a game, I wrote the engine myself. That's definitely no fun.

Other than that, the C++ proposals were held today. All of the projects look like they'll be fun and I look forward to seeing them completed. Our project, blackjack, might be a challenge, especially if I try to adhere to realism as much as possible, such as sorting and shuffling the cards and exhausting a deck. On top of that, I've been blessed with the majority of the hard coding, which isn't much of a problem, but I hope that our code will integrate well when it's time to unite it.
It's the first of June

Well, there's a full week ahead of us. So far I've figured that it's probably better to work a little on the weekends now than try to do it later in week 7 or 8. Today we had the programming class, in which we learned the basics. And by basics, I mean basics. But it's all good, since I've never learned C++ and the syntax is a bit different from C/Java/Prolog/LISP/Python, with which I'm at least slightly familiar with. For our comp sci. project, we'll be doing a blackjack, which goes hand-in-hand with one of our research team milestones. Yay!

Other than that, I can't wait to see the EEG and lab that my mentor works at, whenever we get to see it. I don't have anything else to say right now, but I guess I'll think of something later. That's what the edit button is there for anyway.

I'm sorry boss, I'll get to work at full pace tomorrow... =(

If you know C and Java than picking up C++ should be a walk in the park. Not many places teach LISP (sometimes for AI courses), I'm surprised you learned that one.... I'm, personally, a huge Python fan (but it does have performance issues).

Do you have a lot of good experience from all your programming classes that will help with our research project?
ARG Workshop and Group Meetings

Today was another early-starting day. We began with a tasty breakfast at 8:15am and then moved into the ARG (Affinity Research Groups) workshop at 8:30am. I feel like it was helpful for most people, but not to brag about Meyerhoff, but leadership and teamwork was drilled into us during our Summer Bridge. Nonetheless, it's necessary to have a refresher and the only way to have a concrete understanding of a subject is to be able to teach it, which is part of what we were required to do. Even though it ran from 8:30 to 1:30, it didn't seem overwhelming or overbearing at all. In fact, it seemed to pass really quickly.

During lunch today, which was more tasty than breakfast, our research group and mentors met to brainstorm, create and prioritize tasks. I hope I have an idea of what the project entails, but I feel like the digital game development should be the least important thing and we should focus on the communication between EEG and software. It's easy for gamers to get carried away by what they believe is a cool idea, even though they don't realize how long it could take to implement. If we are still going to have our first milestone be a blackjack game that can communicate with the EEG, we won't need a pro middleware game engine.

HamadiMcIntosh - 29 May 2009 - 14:00

I liked your idea for the hunting game.
We were supposed to do this at 9 am: May 28, 2009

Technical Difficulties Happen

Just testing out the blog and wiki. I guess we are now able to change passwords and edit sites.

**Edit:** Since people are reflecting, I'll post a real blog.

For two days, I've been in Iowa and so far it seems like a great place to live and/or go to school. I don't know if HCI is the right concentration for me, but I guess I'll find out. Other than that, I am looking forward to the research project, especially since my dream job is being a game developer.