

Amanda Skinner | REU | 2012

 projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2012/

Amanda Skinner

Posts from me

The End.

Posted on [August 2, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I cannot believe this is actually my last official blog post for this summer. I don't think it will hit me that these 10 weeks are over until I wake up in Buffalo Sunday morning. Even after that, it might take me a bit longer to get out of REU intern mode and back into regular routine. This summer has been a delight. I did not expect to fall in love with this program or this field of study. I most certainly did not expect to make the relationships with this group like I did. These are friends that will indeed last a lifetime. We are unique, we are individuals, we are driven, and we are a solid group of love. I couldn't imagine a better summer. Truly, this was perfection.



Stephen and Eliot are phenomenal. I have never worked with such dedicated, devoted, caring people. Pam is actually our groups mother. There is no question we felt right at home within minutes of being here all thanks to her and the way she touches hearts. The comfort we experienced here is unusual, and invaluable. We took advantage of every comfort and became close knit.

Every person in this program is brilliant. I have bettered myself by surrounding my work time and free time with all 11 of them. I will miss everyone so dearly. Although it is time to close this chapter and keep moving forward to my senior year, grad school applications, and my family, SPIRE-EIT HCI REU holds a very special place in my heart. I couldn't say enough thanks for this opportunity.

Posted in [REU](#) |

You are what you eat!

Posted on [July 31, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today we had an etiquette lecture. Honestly, it was exhausting. It was stressful trying to remember every last detail. Although some of us did get a good laugh out of a few moments, it was very informational and I think we can all say we took quite a few things away from it.

Our team practiced for about an hour and a half this morning for our demo presentation tomorrow. I feel great about the progress we made. I was so impressed with how much easier this was to rehearse than our first presentation. I'm really proud of my team and how far everyone has come over the past 9 weeks. Tim and I never thought Andrew would be giving us public speaking advice, nor did Andrew ever expect to be giving it. It was a nice change for us to be helping each other differently than usual. We collaborate so well.

I refuse to countdown to Saturday. I'm not 100% ready to leave.

Posted in [REU](#) |

The beginning of the end.

Posted on [July 30, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today is the last Monday here. I think it began to hit when Saturday morning we realized it was the last Saturday together. The day was rather enjoyable with pancakes and the Olympics, but it's still difficult to understand how 10 weeks went by so quickly. I couldn't have asked for a better experience, so it's comforting to know that this was all time well spent.

Our teams submitted our posters today to be sent to print! It's nerve-wracking because although we printed many copies and checked it over and over again, there could still be a mistake or something may not look right. Nothing can be done at this point, so we are hoping for the best!

Our data seems to be presented interesting results, which is nice. We are meeting with Jon today to discuss that further, as well as figure out what we would like to use as a model in our presentation. Wednesday's demo presentation is going to creep up quickly on us.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Backbone

Posted on [July 26, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Sometimes it gets really difficult to always be the "backbone" holding the group together and keeping everyone on task. It becomes quite taxing when crunch time hits and motivation is getting lost. I definitely need some time to relax. My group has been working hard lately, but I don't think everyone has been taking into consideration how time consuming some of our upcoming deadlines are. We need to be way more effective over the next 24 hours if we plan to submit a quality paper. I hope we can stick to our deadlines and goals by 5pm tomorrow and remain a solid team. I know we are capable.

On a bit of a lighter note, we got great feedback from Stephen on our poster. Although I wasn't expecting as much confusion with our ideas, it's good to see what another set of eyes sees. I hope Eliot gives feedback soon so I can effectively edit our poster before Monday. Hopefully the end result will mostly please everyone.

Visiting the Science Center and Principal Financial yesterday was a really great time. The Science Center interested me a lot. I was so pleased to hear about all the efforts made to attract an audience and keep them interested. They really take into consideration how parents feel about science and struggles they may have when it comes to teaching their children. The exhibits were great to walk through and the children's activities fun as well. The Principal was definitely a different kind of experience. Working as an intern in the corporate building of a bank 2 summers ago gave me a feel for the living, breathing, eating, a company. However this was a different taste. Holly was wonderful in telling us about usability and her background. She was so passionate about her career, which was reassuring and comforting. Although right now I can't see myself being so involved in a company that size, at some point it would be a really great opportunity.

Hua and I are running journal club tomorrow. We were joking about it in the beginning of the week, but realized we never finalized that we were running it. Hopefully we can pick a nice article to finish the final session of journal club and get everyone involved.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Potpourri post

Posted on [July 24, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

It feels so great to have time to blog again. I feel like I haven't had time to sit down after lunch and blog in weeks. Yesterday we had a nice meeting with Jon and Melissa figuring out how to start taking the next steps with our project. During our meeting today we are going to start pulling apart the results, as well as confirm some adjustments that have been made to our paper draft. It will be great to look at the data and figure out how we want to formulate a results section from them.

We had a great luncheon lecture today about grad school. It answered a lot of questions I still had, and some things for me to consider. It confirmed my decision to take a year off before applying to graduate programs. This will give me enough time to figure out financially how to move forward in the application process and all of the other factors involved. It is a lot to consider, and something I will need to plan out over the next two years. That being said, I have a meeting with Eliot today to discuss options for my future in this field. I had a wonderful meeting with Jon last week also about this topic and am so grateful for all of the feedback I'm getting.

Last night I got to record my voice for Polymer Island's video game!!!!!! It was really fun(ny). Shea, Hua and I couldn't stop laughing, but we managed to get through it. I'm excited to see their final project with everything put together!

I also got to participate in Telerobotics experiment today. I'm so happy that they were able to figure out their project even when all roads seemed to be pointing to disappointment for a while. They did a great job and I can't wait to see the kind of results they get as well!

There is a heat index of 110 today. Sometimes I don't think it's real.

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Ready for our close-up!

Posted on [July 23, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today we are hoping to get pictures and video of our experiment. We were planning to get into the MIRAGE at 1pm to get that taken care of, however Paul seems to be missing. Hopefully he turns up soon so we can get going on it. We completed our experiments (unless we add one more pair last minute). This is a relief considering how insane last week was. Re-testing participants was taxing not only on our motivation but on the participants' interest as well. We are meeting with Jon and Melissa soon to start going through the data and figure out what kinds of results will come of it. I'm looking forward to completing the last few goals we have left, however I am beginning to realize how short our time left here is. It is truly bittersweet to have had the summer fly by. It is unsettling to think that I may never see this amazing group of people again. The connections we've made and memories we've shared are one of a kind, and I can't imagine myself not meeting everyone. As much as I miss my family/friends from home and am looking forward to my Senior year, my friends here hold a very special place in my heart and it will be quite difficult to leave in 2 weeks.

On a sweeter note, the poster is complete! Well the draft anyways. I'm excited to get feedback from Stephen and Eliot on it this week!

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THE CHOSEN ONE

Posted on [July 19, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I am so relieved that all 5 members of our group agreed on the same poster design: THE CHOSEN ONE. I spend hours on hours on hours working on not 1, but 6 poster designs. It was very difficult because there was always something on the poster that someone didn't like. I was doing everything possible to accomodate us and our mentors, but it proved to be impossible. It was then I decided to create a bunch of ideas and see how they narrowed

them down. In the end, everyone agreed on liking the same design above the others, making me a very happy designer. I can now finally take a breath and release the stress I held on to quite tightly over the past few days. It was definitely a great way to become comfortable with Illustrator!

We are back on schedule with our participants. Things are working well and everything seems to be fixed. Let's not jinx it though, Ken always tells us how cursed we are. I don't want to test our luck.

It's been a really great week with my mom being here. Since my uncle is in California for a conference with my aunt, my mom had the opportunity to watch my cousins, who she doesn't get to see very often. She has been having a great time with them and being able to see me. I have no complaints, because I get free dinner! It has been a nice relief during this stressful week. Thankfully, everything is winding down and I feel much better.

Posted in [REU](#) |

“and I was like, why are you so obsessed with me?”

Posted on [July 17, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

This is what Adobe Illustrator and our poster should be saying to me I just can't get enough! I absolutely love working in Illustrator and our poster has been so much fun for me to play around with. Today I am going with a completely different concept than what we submitted for our draft yesterday (oops) but so far the team likes it! It's nice to have more to do again.

Our lecture with Pam was so eye opening today. I had a pretty good hunch about 2 weeks ago that HCI is something I could see myself pursuing. Realizing we only have three weeks left is sad to me. I don't want this program to end because I don't want this work and experience to end. I am enjoying researching and learning and experimenting so much. It doesn't feel like work or like anything I should be getting paid to do. I am enjoying every minute of it so much. I mostly can't wait for Melissa to go into detail about more human side options on Thursday. My dreams may just be changing around a bit, and for once I'm completely okay with it.

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Time flies

Posted on [July 16, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I haven't blogged since last Monday, oy vey. So much as been going on!

Tuesday last week we stayed late and worked on getting the program up and running. We weren't successful in getting the experiment running on Monday so Tuesday afternoon was our only shot. We did get most things ready to go at that point, but still ran into some problems.

Wednesday last week we had the John Deere tour. It was very interesting, however it isn't a place I see myself interested in working. I thought it was really cool to see all that goes into making the machinery and the facts they told us on the tour were really eye-opening. It was definitely a great experience.

Thursday we were supposed to start testing a pair of participants, however there were scheduling problems and overbooking concerns, as well as not being confident that our program was going to run successfully. We had to reschedule our first participants for Friday morning so we could take time to do a pilot run and get out the kinks.

Friday we ran 4 pairs of participants! Although we did encounter some problems in the morning, everything ran very smoothly in the afternoon. We seem to be cursed when Ken isn't around babysitting, so once he was there everything was great. It was really exciting to run the tests and take turns instructing. It was nice being able to see all

aspects of how the experiment was running. I really enjoyed it and am excited to finish up the pairs this week so we can look at our results and make some conclusions.

Today we have been working on finishing up our poster draft. Picking colors was one of the most difficult tasks for the three of us to do. We all have very different ideas of what is interesting, what is attractive and what colors work well together. We ended up choosing a color scheme similar to our first idea. We have one more box of information to place on the poster and then it will be ready for submission! We also have 2 more pairs to run this afternoon in the MIRAGE. I'm excited to see how they go.

Whew. I hope that caught up enough. Last week was crazy but this week is a lot less intense so blogging will definitely be easier. ☺

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TSHIRT THOUGHT PLEASE READ

Posted on [July 9, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Hey guys, I mentioned this earlier in the summer but I'm not sure who remembers or was interested. A few people were interested in the idea I had to get the shirts white with whatever design we wanted and then we would tie-dye them. I've done a lot of tie-dye shirts very well so they would definitely turn out looking great! If you guys are interested please say so in a comment so we can make the designs accommodate it!!!

Thanks ☺

Posted in [REU](#) |

“Uh oh, looks like someone has a case of the Mondays”

Posted on [July 9, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

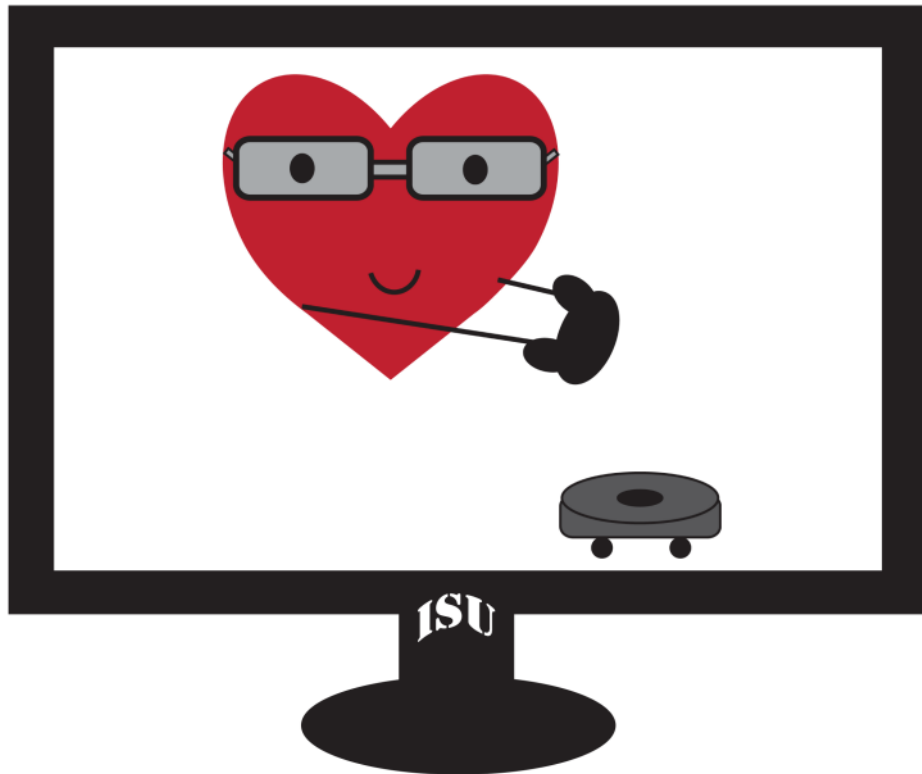
Shea and I watched Officespace last night. Always a good comedy. Hence this title.

Yesterday was the canoe trip. It was a lot of fun! Shea and I tried to be in the same canoe, but he soon proved to be angry and yell at me a lot, so we switched. Funny thing is that the guide I was with told me I was doing just fine for my first time! He needs some patience Anyways, the day definitely took a lot out of me. I was very tired last night and it has sort of affected me today. Luckily, we only have little things to do today so our short tasks are keeping us focused for good lengths of time. Hopefully later today everything will be running smoothly in the MIRAGE so we can feel fully prepared for our first experiment on THURSDAY! We are so excited!!!

Posted in [REU](#) |

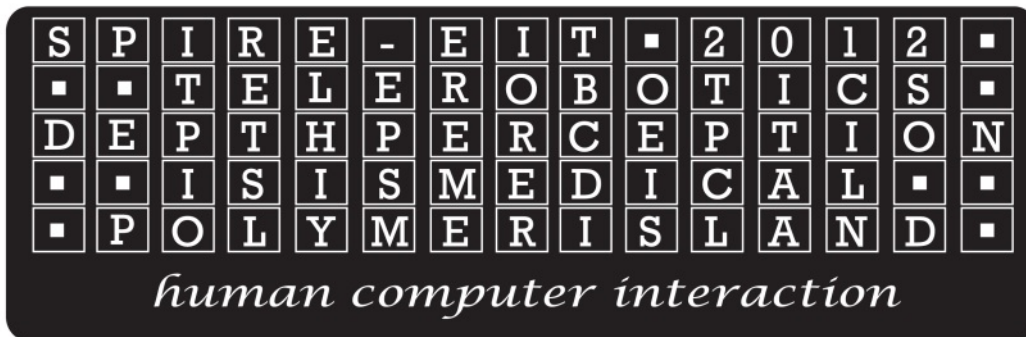
more tshirt ideas – please look!

Posted on [July 6, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)



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human computer interaction



Posted in [REU](#) |

[On our own.](#)

Posted on [July 6, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

It's Friday! I'm sure we're all well aware of this. This week was different. We were on our own 100%. No one was here checking up on us or anything. At first we were all a bit shocked and confused, but I think we adjusted quickly and put our time to use very wisely. I'm getting stressed for our group though. It is very difficult knowing I can't be much help with the finishing touches of our experiment. Tim and Andrew have some programming to work through and it ideally needs to be done today. I've been taking over the experiment responsibilities to help them focus exclusively on the programming, but it is still difficult to know what needs to be done but be unable to help. I have all the confidence in the world that they will pull it together, I just hope they don't go too crazy doing it.

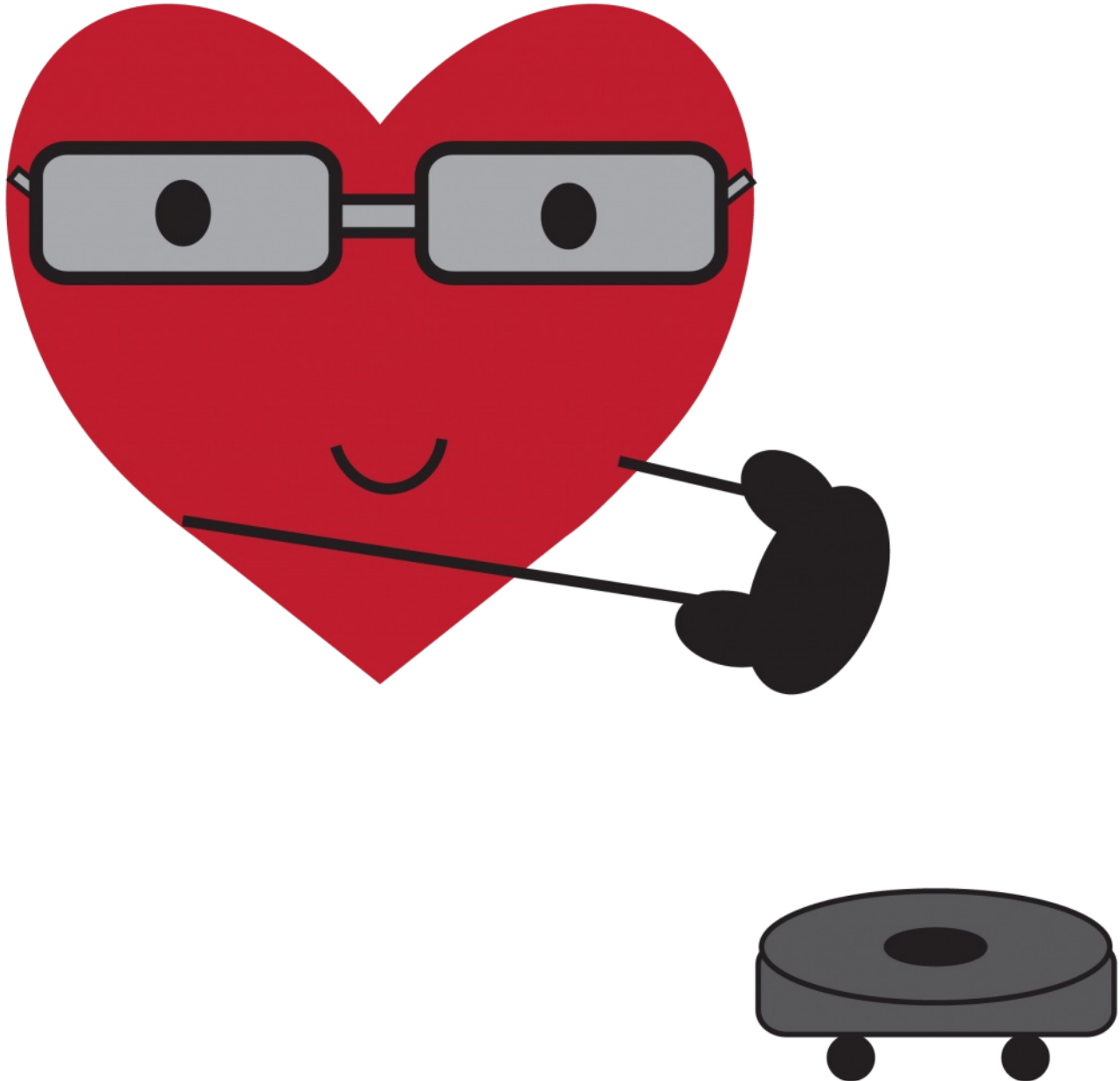
Yesterday Hua and I found ourselves stuck in our beds all night after work from being a big dehydrated. We were determined to not let that happen today, so we have been drinking water a lot more today. This heat is just

something I am not used to and has caught me off guard lately.

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BEST TSHIRT DESIGN!!!!

Posted on [July 6, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)



The heart is for ISIS, 3D glasses for DPIVE, game controller for Polymer and Roomba for Telerobotics!!!!

For real though, do you like it?

Posted in [REU](#) |

Sparking an interest.

Posted on [July 5, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today we had a fantastic lecture from Debra Satterfield. She works in HCI and focuses very heavily on the H side of things. This is exactly my cup of tea. I found myself wanting to find out so much more about her research and results. As much as I am enjoying my research project, I've found that I am most excited when it involves meetings, experimenting, contacting people, and analyzing. It was a breath of fresh air for me. She definitely sparked an interest in a different direction this field can take me, and I plan to look further into it.

We have been getting participants for our experiment this week. We only need three more people at this point! I am very excited to get going with this. However, we have had some less than satisfying experiences in the MIRAGE lately with our environment. I truly hope things go well today and/or tomorrow so we can do a pilot test on Monday.

I'm excited to hear everyone's presentations later today! I can't wait to see what my friends have been working on and hear about their plans for the next four weeks.

Posted in [REU](#) |

A Monday in July

Posted on [July 2, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I think this is the first Monday that I feel relatively well rested. This weekend was a lot of fun. My birthday was so much fun. The farmers market in Des Moines was a great time. The heat was a bit intense, but I had a great time walking around and sampling lots of delicious things! I bought some sweet corn (which I ate last night and LOVED) as well as some bread. I am very pleased with my purchases. The mall was also fun! It was a nice change of pace. Hua and I almost bought metallic blue and red leggings for July 4th from a costume shop. We decided against it and instead spent money in Forever 21 (:

This week we have less deadlines, thank goodness. Our group has plenty of time to get back on track. We are actually planning to get a head start today with materials for our presentation on Thursday. We plan to finish in time to run numerous practice presentations before Thursday afternoon.

We get to go in the MIRAGE today to try out a sample environment to put towards our experiment. We started finding participants today as well. Hopefully things keep running smoothly!!

Posted in [REU](#) |

Lucky.

Posted on [June 29, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

IT'S MY BIRTHDAY. I have always loved birthdays. Not the presents, the cake, the terribly tone-deaf Happy Birthday singing, or the balloons. Rather I feel we are so fortunate to be given another year. So much happens in the blink of an eye. Seeing the people we were one year ago, or many years ago, and comparing to who we are now can be a roller-coaster, but a fun one. The cake, balloons, and celebrations just add to the experience. It may be childish, but I will never regret aging. I also am so lucky to have such an amazing summer family to be with on this special day. Everyone has made me feel so loved and accepted so far. I can't wait to order out pizza tonight and spend time with my wonderful friends.

Our group is definitely fizzled today. We have done a great deal of very focused and productive work this week. The literature review is really kicking our butts at this point. I know we will pull it together, I just don't know how satisfied I will be with our work. Sometimes you just need to shut down for a bit and rest. Thank goodness it's Friday!

I'm really excited to go to the farmers market in Des Moines tomorrow. I think we will have a great time. This week has been taxing and I don't feel like a lot of us have spent much time as a group lately. It'll be nice to be together.

Also, Tim's birthday is Sunday! Happy early Birthday Tim!

Posted in [REU](#) |

Cheesin'

Posted on [June 28, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I like us. I think we're a "soopehr keww!" group. ☺

Posted in [REU](#) |

Feelin' good.

Posted on [June 27, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

"It's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life for me, and I'm feelin' good." – Michael Buble

Spicing up my after-lunch 'I'm so full I'm tired' routine with some Michael Buble today. Such a wonderful choice, always. There was a fire (drill?) during lunch today. I was so sad because the strawberries were really good today and I just wanted a few more ☹

We have group photos today! Wahoooo!

My group is doing great so far. We have a big to do list this week and are really tackling it well. So proud!

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Catch up if you can

Posted on [June 26, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

The past two days I have been extremely

exhausted. Spending all day Sunday in the airport took a much bigger toll on my sleep schedule than I expected it to. I just don't feel like I have been able to catch up. Hopefully I'll have time tonight to get to bed early, but it never seems to work out that way.

Caribou Coffee is pretty good. Might need to start making more trips there throughout the week

The Ethics class was great this morning. It was really interesting to see the kind of role ethics plays. and how conflicted a person can feel in certain situations when their morals are tested and such. I'm excited for future lectures on this.



(P.S. The colors serve no purpose other than fun)

Posted in [REU](#) |

Back to the grind.

Posted on [June 25, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

This is my first day in the lab since Wednesday. It was lovely being able to go home for my brother's graduation, but I missed my time here in VRAC. Yesterday was a nightmare trying to fly back. I was at the Buffalo Airport by 10:30am. My initial flight was delayed 3 1/2 hours before it was cancelled, I then had to reroute and switch airlines, recheck my luggage, go back through security, and get a 5:30 flight into Washington D.C. I finally got back to Iowa at 9:50pm, ending my 12 hour adventure to make it back here. It was exhausting and the furthest from a good time. Luckily, my friends were ready to welcome me with open arms when I collapsed on the floor of the Freddy apartments around 11pm, luggage and all.

Needless to say, I'm feeling a bit behind today. Not only am I much more exhausted than normal, but I'm a bit behind with our OpenGL project. I missed the days Tim and Andrew spent creating our robot arm, so the best they can do is fill me in on what their process was and show me the finished product. I'll feel a bit out of place during our presentation, but I'll catch up soon enough.

We had a great meeting with Jon and Melissa this morning at Carabou Coffee. We really pinned down some key points on our timeline in the weeks to come. We have definitely started looking at specifics and have begun planning out the real work that lies ahead. I have become much more confident in the success of our group. Today the three of us had a bit of a disagreement on an aspect of our future experiment. Unfortunately, it was not something we could agree to disagree on and had to talk it out. There was a point where I felt steam rolled and was making little progress in keeping calm, so I left the situation for lunch. It was a great indicator for Tim and Andrew to take a break as well, realizing we were chasing each other in circles over a very small concern. I am confident we can discuss the issue again later with much less conflict now that we are aware with how we stood earlier.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Lights, Camera, Smile :)

Posted on [June 20, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Last night Britta taught us how to light paint. I have to say, I had an absolute blast. It was a really enjoyable experience and we all had a great time. We didn't even let the bugs stop us! We stayed an hour past when we planned to because we had so many ideas. It was a really great way to blow off some steam, although yesterday



wasn't really stressful. The power went out, ending the work aspect of our day around 3 instead of 5. However, we had a really great meeting with Eliot at 4 to touch-base and reiterate some expectations. I think it was necessary and handled very well. He is a great mentor and connects really well with students. It's refreshing and reassuring to see how dedicated our faculty mentors are.

In a couple short hours I'll be heading home for my brother's high school graduation. Although I am excited to see my little broski graduate, I am sad to leave for 4 days. I hate missing courses and work with my group. I'm hoping I can stay in enough contact with them tomorrow and Friday. It'll be a nice long weekend regardless. I'm such a proud big sister!

Posted in [REU](#) |

You're tearing me apart Lisa.

Posted on [June 19, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Last night some of us watched **The Room**, one of the worst movies ever made. Correction, the worst movie ever made. Not only were the actors horrible and flat, but the storyline was so poorly written. Although we have been able to quote the entire movie throughout the day and get numerous laughs, it was still the worst thing I've ever sat through. Oh well, it'll be a good memory from this summer. "You're tearing me apart Lisa," "Oh, hi Mark," "I don't love him anymore," "Cheep, cheep cheep," and a few others may be heard in the lab frequently throughout the rest of the program.

Today we started working on an assignment for OpenGL. I'm actually understanding this quite well considering I've never seen any of it before. I feel much more confident than I did during C++, which I am more than happy about. I was a huge help today when Tim had some errors in the coding he couldn't identify. I felt great being able to help and to finally be on the same level with my team during a programming task.

Tonight we are light painting, something I've never done before. I'm really excited! Britta is being very secretive about it, which is making me even more excited to see what it will involve. I'm also glad the activity is starting later. It's been difficult having extracurriculars twice a week with only an hour or two to get home, make dinner, and unwind from being in the lab all day. I know some of my peers and I have agreed that it's getting difficult to find interest and stay motivated during the events twice a week. We loved going to dinner together on Thursday and thought about keeping that as a weekly trend to end our weeks.

We're meeting with Melissa to finalize everything for our IRB modifications. We have done so much work over the past few nights writing modifications, questionnaires, worksheets, and solidifying our future research goals. I'm happy with our progress and am ready to keep moving forward. I feel confident that things will keep going smoothly while I am out Thursday and Friday.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Mumbo Jumbo

Posted on [June 18, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Another beautiful Monday in Ames! It's going to be 97 degrees today, not sure how I feel about that. I know I'm definitely not in Buffalo anymore! Well, I actually figured that out Friday after work when we ran home in a monsoon. I couldn't believe how absolutely drenched everyone was. It felt like someone was throwing buckets upon buckets upon buckets of water on us. Good thing I wore my rainboots!

We went bowling and laser tagging this weekend. I was almost the worst bowler, but luckily I made up for it by winning the Jackpot on an arcade game TWICE. I got some really cool prizes – 3 jumbo pixie sticks, candy, playing cards, friendship bracelets, and bubble gum. It was a successful night if you ask me.

I'm leaving this Wednesday to go home for my brother's high school graduation! I'm excited to see him graduate, but not ready to leave Iowa for 4 days. I'm having a lot of fun in VRAC and with my friends. I'm also upset that I'm missing two lectures of the Computer Graphics course ☹️ Hopefully someone will be able to explain what I miss.



We're meeting with Melissa today to go over the modifications we made to our IRB application and to begin writing our questionnaires. We made a lot of progress as a group last night, which I think we were all very pleased to have happen. I hope we can continue to be as productive over the next two days so I don't feel like I'm leaving them with a ton of work while I'm gone.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Milk and cereal

Posted on [June 15, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

SOOOOOO last night we had Thai food I will never be having Thai food again. I did not have the most enjoyable night after the meal, and ended up eating milk and cereal at about 11 to calm my stomach.

On a much more positive note, Maya is going swell! I love my dinosaur and making it. I haven't picked a name yet, but Tim and I came up with some good ones! (Cheez-it, Keyboard, Melinda). None have stuck yet though.

I'm excited for the weekend! Hua and I love weekends. We are planning to go to the water park (weather permitting), play lasertag/bowling, and maybe try a new chinese restaurant! Hua and I also have this really cool new hand thing that we do. It's really fun. We think we're funny.

HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND <3

Posted in [REU](#) |

RAWR

Posted on [June 14, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I STARTED MAKING THE COOOOLEST DINOSAUR EVER.

I LOVE MAYA.

Posted in [REU](#) |

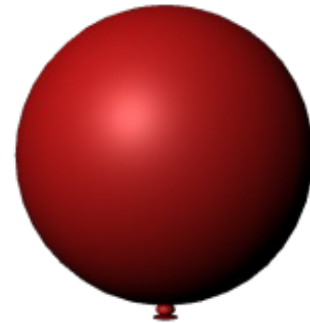
99 red balloons

Posted on [June 13, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Well, almost. More like 1 red balloon. I had some fun with Maya this morning and had Tim help me make this really super cool balloon. Tomorrow I want to make a triceratops. CAN'T WAIT. I sent a picture to my mom, she was so proud of me.

The snacks in the lab were the best idea thus far.

Our problem paragraph is finished! Wahoooo. We also are all set to meet with Ken tomorrow to discuss our project/research hopes and dreams for the MiRAGE.



Posted in [REU](#) |

Re-decorating

Posted on [June 12, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Our PDIVE pod had a little fun this afternoon and decided to rearrange ourselves. Unfortunately, Andrew has been hidden by a big cement pole, which has left him out of some conversations between Tim and I. We can now see each other head on from each of our seats, which will be nice for the rest of the work on our project. And, we won't be a traffic jam to the printer anymore.

Today was the second day of Maya and I have to admit to having a bit of fun. I was too eager to go with the pace of the lecture, so Tim helped me jump ahead to finish the tutorial. The slideshow was a really great tool in teaching the material today. I felt a lot more confident in what I was doing today from yesterday.

I found out some rather exciting news this morning. The practice rooms in the music hall are open until 7pm Mon-Fri instead of 5 like the website said. I definitely have some excess energy that I need to get rid of, so I'll be checking out where they are after work today. I cannot wait ☺

Lastly, it's GROCERY SHOPPING DAY!!!!!!

Posted in [REU](#) |

ZzzZzzZzZ

Posted on [June 11, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today I am suffering from being unable to fall asleep during last night's storm. It is a rather sleepy Monday.

We started learning Maya today. Unlike the C++ course, this is much more hands on. I definitely learn better in this style. However the instructor was difficult to hear and had a bit of a disorganized plan today for teaching. Luckily Tim is a Maya Master so I'm sure I'll be just fine ☺

GYM DAY. Hua and I WILL master squatting.

strong like bull.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Brain freeze.

Posted on [June 8, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

This week was eventful and long in the best ways. I do however feel a bit drained and am looking forward to having some time to relax this weekend and reflect on the past 5 days. I don't really have much to blog about, I feel like my brain is exhausted and pushing through the next three hours hard enough already.

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A night owl's mind.

Posted on [June 7, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Yesterday was an extremely stressful day. The programming assignment took quite the toll on my sanity and I really felt myself shutting down. Feeling discouraged is never enjoyable, especially when a significant number of the other interns were on edge in similar ways. Eventually we all spent time with some form of outlet to relax and shake off the day, but it was not an experience any of us particularly liked. It led me to wonder what kinds of things would be helpful coming into this program not knowing what kinds of days you will be having. It is difficult to bounce back from such a low point, so what are some ways to keep your head above water?

Advice letters.

I spent some time over the past two nights thinking about how the transition here could be made smoother. There were a lot of questions we had that weren't answered, and a lot of information we would have been better off knowing beforehand. We spend an hour every day blogging, so why not take 20 minutes of that blog time once a week and write a letter? This program has been successful thus far, leading me to believe there will be future programs as well. What better way to get experience than to hear from previous interns? It isn't possible to keep former interns on hand after leaving this program, but if they are writing about their experiences by week during their time here, future interns can only benefit. The surprise of what each day and week will bring is definitely part of the fun, but reading about someone who has been in our shoes and got through it could be so helpful. Words of inspiration to keep trying, things to be aware of to be successful, and stories of failures and successes through the process. Each of these ideas can teach so much. AND, because this program is interdisciplinary, there will be lessons that everyone can learn and relate to.

I want to spend more time with this idea, but I think it is definitely something to be considered.

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Sunny with 100% chance of fog

Posted on [June 6, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today was our third lesson with programming. I started off feeling confident with what we learned yesterday. However, I was quickly thrown under the weight of much heavier material that my head couldn't find it's way around. As the title of this entry indicates, it felt rather foggy. I am not the type of person who can listen to a lecture for 2 hours and walk away confident with the material. I am a very hands on learner and staring up at a bunch of codes teaches me nothing. I have found that I understand how individual things work, I am unsure as to how or when they are used. I just need to spend some time with the material on my own to try and tie things together. Andrew L. is also going to help fill in the gaps with a crash course later tonight, which I am extremely grateful for.

Yesterday we met with Dr. Jon Kelly and proposed some ideas for our project. I was unsure what kind of reaction he would have. Luckily he was really interested and my group stayed downstairs drawing different models for about an hour. So far we have 8 really solid ideas/images to work with. Unfortunately, we don't have much research on our project to help guide us in any particular direction. It will be an interesting journey, but I think we're just ready to jump in, starting in 10 minutes in the C6!! I'm excited to see what kinds of things we find and play around with.

Also, venus was really cool.

Happy Birthday Charlecia!!!

Posted in [REU](#) |

Insert clever third blog entry title here.

Posted on [June 5, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Up until about 1 hour ago I wasn't considering graduate schools for another 3 years. My game plan was to get my undergraduate degree, move to New York City, play the 'starving artist' role for a year or so, and then figure out what to do with my life. I didn't expect this program to already begin directing me away from that plan and into considering furthering my education sooner. That's about all I have to say about that right now.

I have slightly more important things on my mind however. Currently, I'm getting ready to meet with Dr. Jon Kelly and Melissa Burton (via skype?) with the DPIVE group about our project. There is an idea that we are really excited to propose, so I hope the next 35 minutes fly by so we can start discussing.

On a more casual note, I can't even begin to describe the friendships I've been making. I plan to talk about this in almost every single blog entry. Tim and I had a conversation last night about what we expected everyone would be like compared to reality. We both had similar concerns about everyone being very quiet, not too social and being alone. The fact that most of us spend not only our days in the lab together, but our evenings together as well is such a treat. We are all so different, but get along so well. It doesn't seem real sometimes.

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The Big Leagues

Posted on [June 4, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

This is our first Monday in the program. Last week was a lot to take in and was only 3 days, so I'm interested to see how we hold up for our first full week of 9-5!

This past weekend we had the ropes course. I have to say, although I was beginning to feel quite comfortable with the other interns already, the ropes course took it to a whole new level. It really built up my confidence going into this week. Today we began learning about C/C++ programming. This is an area that I have no experience in. Last week I was extremely embarrassed of this fact and felt like I wouldn't be able to perform to a high enough level in this program without prior knowledge. After the ropes course, I realized that we all have our strengths and weaknesses. Everyone here is supporting each other 100%. That is a truly remarkable thing considering we've only known each other since last Tuesday. I felt like I was able to ask questions today during the lecture without feeling embarrassed. Tim Honeywell and Andrew Mendez have also been so supportive and are willing to help me with anything I need. I can't wait to see what we will be able to accomplish as a research team based on the many great efforts the three of us have made for each other already.



Tim, Andrew and I decided that for our C++ programming project we will be making Connect Four. I am really excited about this. I am so eager and ready to put in as much effort as I can to be a successful team member. I can't wait to hear what the other groups are deciding to do for their projects! I came into this program hoping for a great opportunity to learn, and I have already begun that process only 6 days in! ☺

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First Steps

Posted on [June 1, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

Today is my fifth day in Ames, IA. I have to admit, I didn't expect much when I first got here. I visited the town a few years back and was overwhelmed by how little there seemed to be around. I came into Ames this time with an open mind and it has truly paid off for me thus far. Although I wasn't nervous about meeting new people, I was nervous about getting settled and finding a routine. These have both been surprisingly easy to figure out, and for that I am extremely happy. It has also been easy to get to know the other REU students, which is a major plus. So far the structure of this program has done a great job of making the transition here smooth and comfortable.

Yesterday was the first day we got to discuss our projects with our mentor. I was excited when I found out that I would be working on depth perception in virtual environments because I was exposed to virtual reality at a young age and have been interested in working with it ever since. When we sat down to begin discussing different approaches for the project I didn't expect to have much say in what we did. However, we were proposed four different possibilities of study that we are taking time to think over and choose between. This is right up my alley, considering that one of my biggest assets is my creativity. I can't wait to start looking further into the proposed ideas and figure out what kinds of research can come from them. Tim Honeywell, Andrew Mendez and I have already begun to narrow down these choices without much discussion. I am glad that we are on the same page and collaborating well from the beginning. I am also looking forward to working with Dr. Jon Kelly and Melissa Burton in the upcoming weeks.

Meeting and working with students from different schools and disciplines is such an enjoyable experience. We have

started getting to know each other and have found connections quite easily. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone better and see the kinds of relationships we build throughout the rest of the program, starting with the kind of teamwork the ropes course on Saturday will require. I'm really eager and excited to see how the rest of the summer will go!

Posted in [REU](#) |

This is me!

Posted on [May 31, 2012](#) by [Amanda](#)

I am a senior at State University of New York at Geneseo where I am a Communication and Musical Theatre dual major. I live in Buffalo, NY. After completing my undergraduate degree I plan to spend some time in a larger city, like NYC, before deciding upon a graduate program. I'm looking forward to all of the challenges and learning opportunities this program has to offer me!

Posted in [REU](#) |

Press f for fullscreen.

