

Andrew Lilja | REU | 2012

 projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2012/

Andrew Lilja

Posts from me

Last Blag

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

We're done tomorrow! It's been a great ten weeks, lots of work, lots of learning about myself and how to work in groups. It's been fantastic. I can't wait to do it all again for two years and with less money!

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Where did the time go?

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

It feels like yesterday we were all still getting to know each other and figuring out what we were doing. Now we have nine days left. I know the end of all of this is approaching but it doesn't feel like it. It just seems like this will keep going on — every day there will be more research to do, more edits to make, more participants to run.

I can't even wrap my head around the idea that we've only been at this for 10 weeks. Even though the time has flown by, I look back at all the work we've done and I can't figure out how we managed to cram it all in.

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Busy

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

We're running our study. Things are going well. Our data is looking good. We haven't had any major problems. I can't complain.

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Built

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

We finished our environment today! It was a pretty quick build (<8 hours) but it sure did weigh a ton. Rick was pretty excited about it too, and is pretty convinced we're going to get published. Like, actually published.

That's awesome.

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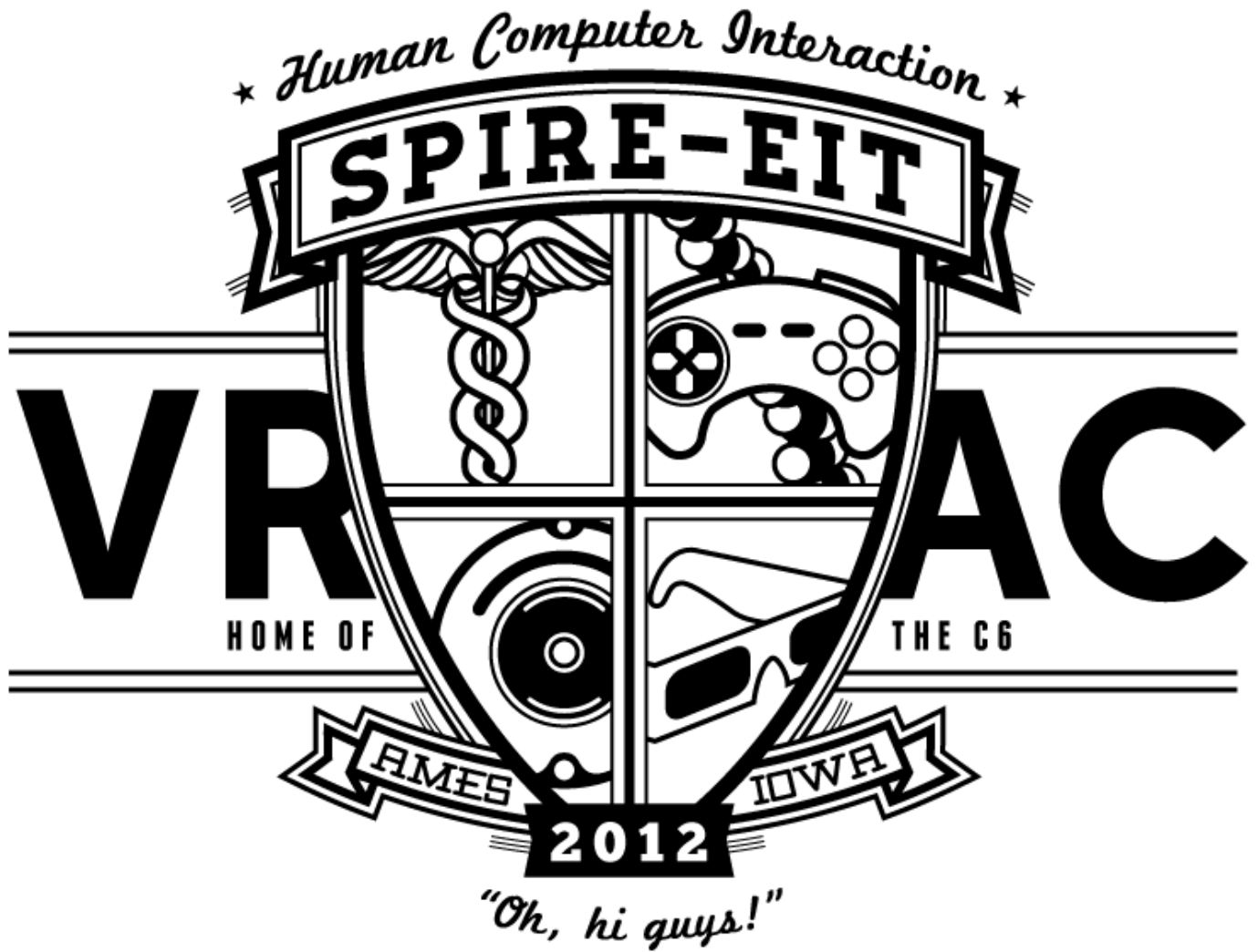




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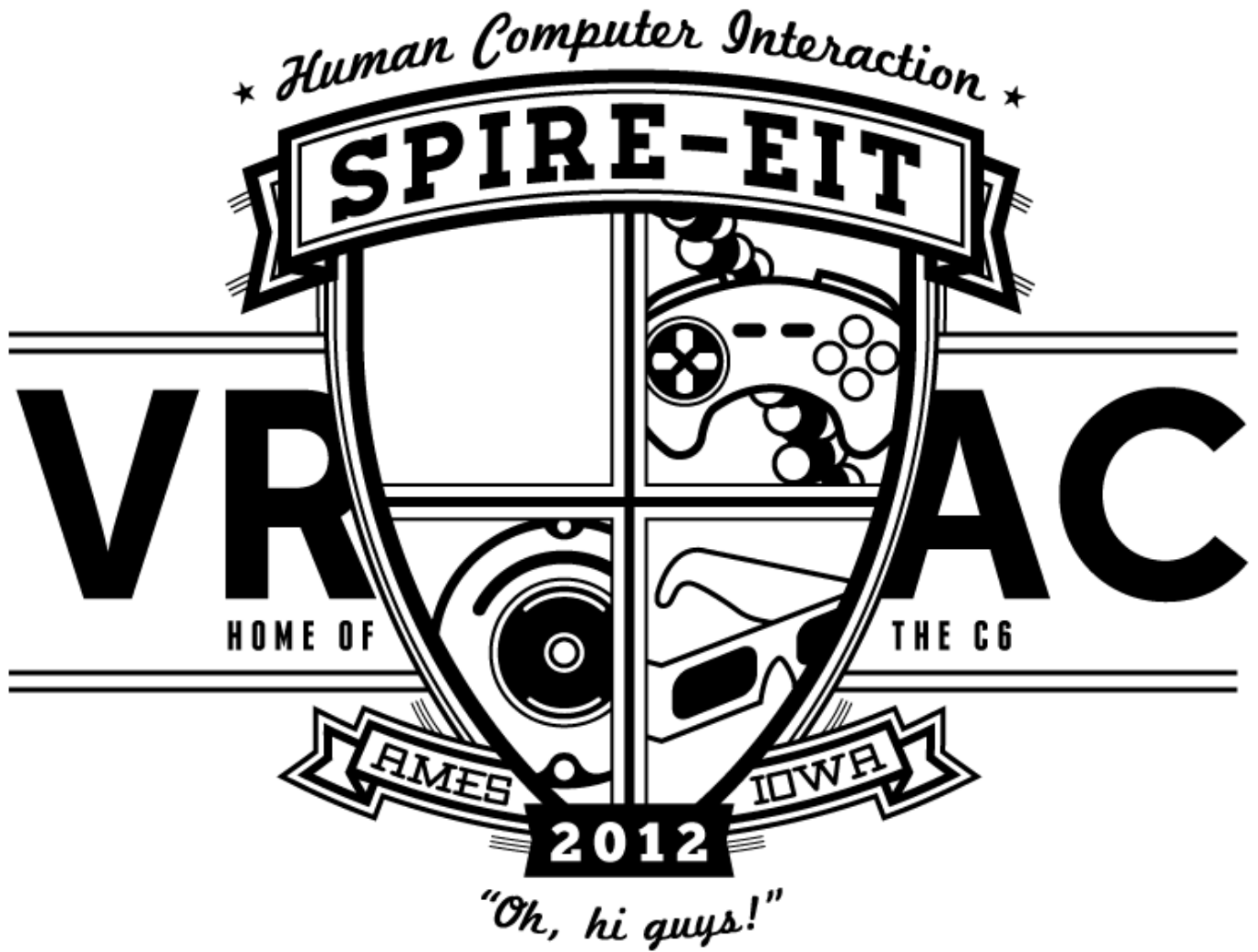
Posted on [July 12, 2012](#) by [Andrew](#)



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Posted on [July 10, 2012](#) by [Andrew](#)



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Posted on [July 10, 2012](#) by [Andrew](#)

★ Human Computer Interaction ★

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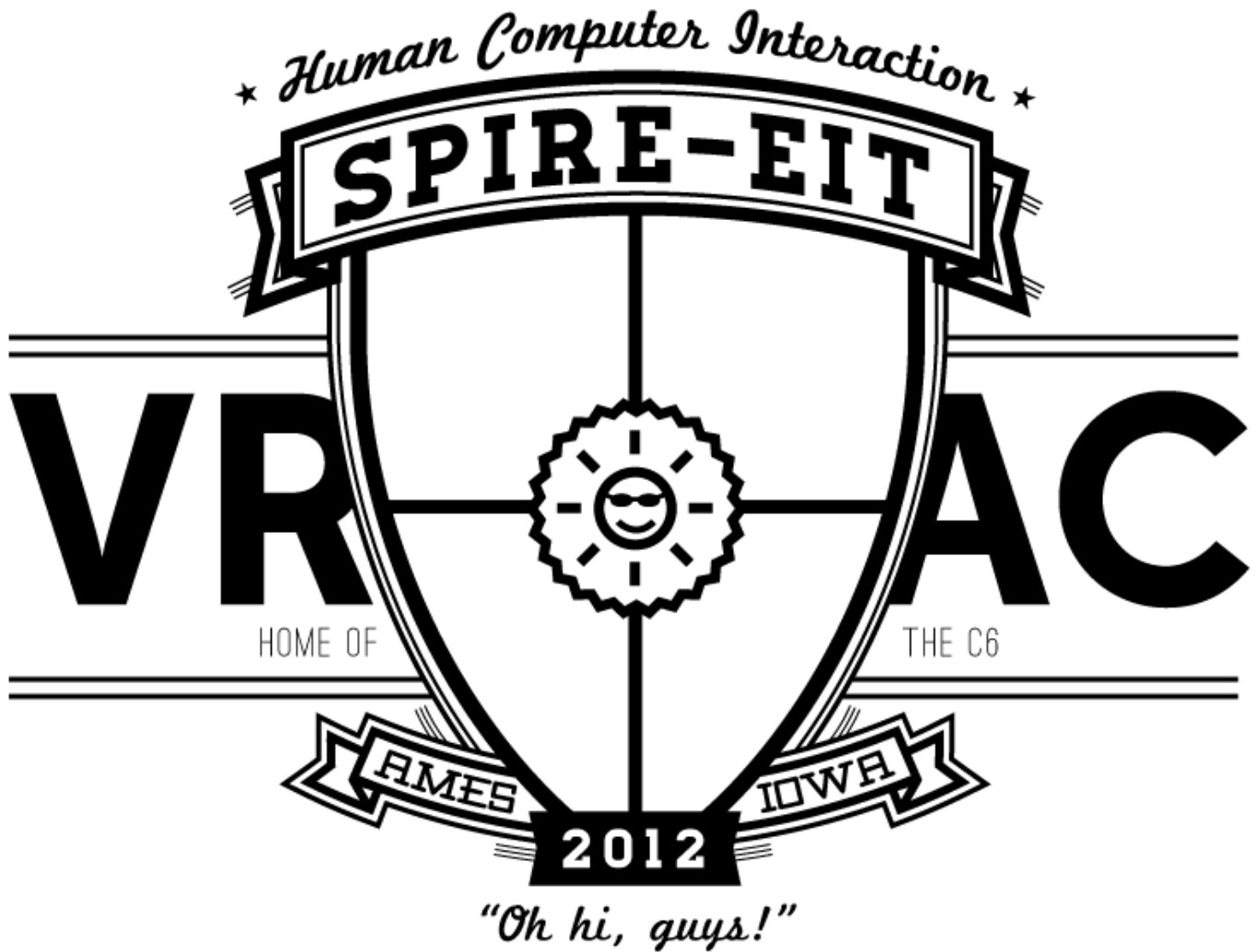


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→ → LOOK GUYS HERE IS MY TSHIRT DESIGN ← ←

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

CAPS LOCK IS LIKE CRUISE CONTROL FOR COOL



The idea is that each of the four quadrants would have a logo related to each group. The sun in the middle is Amanda's idea. If you have a better one, tell me!

Also give me ideas for the "Oh hi, guys!" text. We can keep it but maybe we want to change it to something different.

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Design Group

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

It's the design component of HCI that really got me intrigued. The theory and the research behind making new interfaces is certainly *interesting*, but it's not what really excites me. It's stuff like Tufte's work — making data easier to use — that intrigues me. It's probably my design and psychology background that makes it speak to me so much. I'm going to have to look into this more.

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Mr. Green Jeans

Posted on [July 3, 2012](#) by [Andrew](#)

You know, we had a really good talk at lunch about the future of HCI and the singularity... But it's something that Stephen mentioned to me that really made me excited. [Mr. Green Jeans](#). How have I not heard about this earlier?

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This is us.

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



Posted in [REU](#) |

Stupid Iliotibial Band

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

Projects are going well, yay hooray.

What's on my mind is my knee pain. I've played tennis for a decade and never injured myself once. I went to physical therapy for about a month two years ago because I had some knee pain when sitting; the solution was to strengthen my glutes. Well, the knee pain is back now, and it seems like the likely cause is my IT bands. It's a common, overuse-related injury, but it sucks to have to stop running and everything until it recovers. What's even worse is that I can't go see my PT because I'm in Iowa, and getting in to see the doctor is incredibly frustrating. It'll work out, but until then, I'm stuck walking.



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Splitting Time

Posted on [June 21, 2012](#) by [Andrew](#)

I don't mind learning about OpenGL and Maya — in fact, I like it — but it does frustrate me that we have to split our time working on large projects outside of class in addition to our actual research project. Part of this may be that I still don't have a good sense of what our project is, what we're doing, and what we have to do, and then when you throw on a bunch of programming assignments, the whole thing starts to feel like a million tasks with poorly-defined goals.

It's also hard to work together on a programming project. I think we've split up the work pretty well, but since I'm using XCode, a few libraries we need won't work on my computer. We've already had a number of issues converting the code that executes perfectly on my computer into the VisualStudio stuff. Something to do with how that software stores and references libraries.

There's just a lot of uncertainty on our end of things with no clear sense that anybody can tell us what to do. It's like we're aiming at a target in the dark and hoping that we hit it.

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I ain't dead yet.

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

Sorry, guys.

At least now we know what we're going to be using to build our robot. A bunch of people have built Arduino libraries specifically for interfacing with the Roomba, so now we just have to wait until we get the chips so we can start programming. It'll take a little doing to get the whole thing set up, but it's been done before and the people who have done it have posted long blogs and tutorials on how they did it. These are all good things.

It'd be nice if we had more feedback from our mentors, though. We keep feeling the time crunch but we have no idea if we're on schedule or not — or even if we're doing the right thing. It's sort of been a sink-or-swim kind of situation. I'm sure we'll figure it out eventually, but in the mean time, it's a lot of scrambling and trying to figure things out on our own without any sort of guidance.

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I hate robots.

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

Between getting them to work with your software and writing hardware interfaces, robots are just a pain in the ass. The original board/interface we were using just won't work with C++, so now we have to figure out what we're going to use. We're looking into Arduino but there are so many libraries are parts and boards and chips and options that it is extremely confusing.

Oh well, I'm sure we'll figure it out eventually.

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Planning Algorithms

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

Boy, there's a lot of math in that book. It's more than a little intimidating. It's a good thing I can write and am willing to dive right into things that are way over my head or I'd be out of my league here.

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There not enough hours in a day.

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

To do all the stuff we need to do. Work, exercise, research, eat, cook, buy groceries, read articles. I propose that the VRAC expand the length of the day by two or three hours. The extra time can come from the end of my life; I won't need it then. I suspect 27 hour days will be much more productive, and will allow me to accomplish all the tasks this REU has assigned.

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You are tearing me apart, blogging!

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

[For those who don't know.](#)

I don't just know if I can write this much about myself this often. I mean, what did we do today? We took a programming class, and then we worked on our research question. We're sort of at a loss there — we *think* we're on the right course, but with so little guidance we're a little unsure. I wish we had the mentor meetings twice-weekly instead of just on Tuesdays.. It'd make my life easier.

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XCode

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

XCode keeps crashing on me. This makes me a sad, sad boy.

Silly XCode.

Posted in [REU](#) |

Grad School

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

It's a different way of thinking. Applying it is less about what I'll *learn* and more about who I'll *know*. There's certainly an element of the education involved, but from listening to established HCI profs (like Gilbert) talk about it, the size and reputation of the department has a lot to do with how beneficial it'll be for grad school.

Also, find a grant that'll pay for grad school. And maybe get a job. \$2000 is not a lot to live on.

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Blaggin' Time

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

We went climbing yesterday. Man did it hurt, but man was it fun. Tim and I finished the corporate ladder, which are a series of free-hanging rungs that start about three feet apart and get up to about five feet. We were roped together, and had to lever each other up and over each rung to get to the top. And we did it.

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The C6 is pretty neat.

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

What is an ultra-high resolution (4k!), completely immersive, one-of-a-kind VR environment doing in Ames? This thing is really amazing, and I'm pretty jealous of my friends in the Depth Perception group that they get to work in it. We got to demo it yesterday, and even though we didn't have enough time to drive the thing, it was still pretty impressive just to be in there.

The 3D doesn't necessarily make it feel more *realistic*, but it does make it more immersive. I'd frequently catch myself swaying or feeling unsteady when the environment around me was moving. Seeing it in 3D means that your brain is trying to figure out where things are, so you see a pole and even though you know it's a 2D image projected on a wall six feet away from you, you *know* it's right next to you.

It's [pretty neat](#).

Posted in [REU](#) |

Ames is bigger than I expected.

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

And this is a good thing. Apparently most of my time will be spent researching, learning, and generally getting firehosed with information, but it's still nice to know that I'm not stranded in some boonie town in the middle of a state-sized cornfield.

The more we talk about HCI, UX, and human factors, the more excited I get about it. It feels like something I could do as a job, and it's nice to have a goal for my education that goes beyond "that seems interesting." This has reached "that seems really, really cool, practical, *and* interesting." We'll see how I feel in ten weeks.

The whole grad school experience is nice. I don't want to get trapped in some post-tertiary-education-limbo where I'm a grad student for a decade and a postdoc for another. I want to learn, get involved, and then *do* something. Getting a sense of what grad school is like — albeit, in some compressed, limited format — is incredibly valuable. I can figure out what I'm getting into and how to use my time so I can get the most out of it without getting stuck in academia for most of my adult life.

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Press f for fullscreen.



