

# Jose Virella Velazquez

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 [projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2013/](http://projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2013/)

## Posts from me

### Last normal day here at VRAC

Posted on [August 1, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

It just keeps getting sadder and sadder. Lisa said goodbye today and I was tearing up. She is such a good mentor and friend I'm going to miss her a lot. I am not looking forward to saying goodbye to Andrea too ☹ I can't believe this summer went by so quickly. Tomorrow we present our posters and have our goodbye picnic. Tears coming soon...

### PowerPoint Animation Extravaganza

Posted on [July 31, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello everyone,

We are doing our demo video on PowerPoint. I was greatly skeptical at first, but now I'm just surprised at the cheer amount of things you can do with it. We'll see how that goes. Eliot saying goodbye today got me thinking a lot about the summer we had here and how it flew by. In my experience, time going by fast is a clear indicator that one is having a great time. I miss my little island, but I'm sure I'll miss the VRAC's atmosphere immensely. Anyway, enough of the corny sadness. I'll be here tomorrow with updates on our demo. Signing out!

### Live from the last week

Posted on [July 30, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Today, after much tweaking, we finally sent out our poster. We are very proud of the results, but we are currently thinking about how we can improve upon the system to get better ones. While we ponder about that, we are creating a video to show in a loop for our poster. Pam gave a great talk about the HCI program here and I felt sad at the end when we talked about how this was the last week. I'm looking forward to showing our research to everyone on Friday, hope it attracts attention ☹

### Paintballs and Posters

Posted on [July 30, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Saturday I played paintball for the first time. Suffice to say it was an adrenaline fueled, pulse pounding and crazy experience. I was so into it the group almost had to drag me out of the field when we had to leave. In other announcements, the results are in: our tutor works! We tested our feedback against our expert instructor's and we had some pretty good results. Its great that they can go in the poster, which is looking pretty good as well. The last week begins...

### Game night and Craig's Awesome Pre-BDay Birthday Cake!

Posted on [July 26, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Why hello everyone,

Yesterday, we took a break from testing our tutor to play video games! Although I spent most of the night trying to troubleshoot two uncooperative Xboxs for cross platform play, I had lots of fun playing Wii. Nintendo never disappoints in providing an awesome time among friends. We also celebrated Craig's birthday today, since tomorrow he's going away. The cake was incredible. She has probably heard this a lot, but kudos to Meisha for her work. Were almost in our last weekend of the program and I have a feeling I will miss everyone a lot. Lets not talk about that XD Our tutor is faring somewhat well in testing. Lets see how it goes. Happy Early Birthday Craig!! Jose signing out!

## Feeling Fancy

Posted on [July 25, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, we had an etiquette luncheon lecture. At first I thought etiquette eating was arbitrarily developed by someone who was really bored, but there are actually very valid reasons behind the actions. It was great to know that I was wrong XD. In other news, we are in the process of testing our tutor with real student equations. We ruined our first data set, but thankfully there is more tests for us to work with and not ruin. Results coming soon!



## Equations and Connie's Cafe

Posted on [July 23, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Greetings!!

Yesterday we went to a very cool place up north called The Cafe in celebration of Connie's birthday. My girlfriend and I ended up in a very romantically fancy booth, in which we had very romantically fancy (wait for it)...burgers. It was awesome that the whole group was there. I hope Connie had fun ☺ In other news, we will now proceed to test our equation tutor using equations from student tests (real equations). Hope our software doesn't explode!



## The Eye of the Tiger

Posted on [July 22, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello Hello Hello!

Friday was great. We went to Principal Financial Group company in located in Des Moines, Iowa. The group got a chance to see how usability tests are a crucial part of website development. Then, we got a chance to see the very cool science center where I was equally, if not more, enthused that the small children that were running around. We got to be on TV, make paper rockets, race Lego carts against kids and lose, and overall had a fun time. Saturday we went to the Omaha zoo!! I loved all of their exhibits. I felt a connection with the



animals, like in Dr. Dolittle. For example, Mai a three legged tiger looked at me intensely while she was sitting in a corner. I open my mouth and showed my teeth in a way that I thought looked like I was challenging her (in retrospect I think she just thought I looked dumb). Anyway, she gets up from the corner and starts walking towards me, at which point I am scared out of my pants. Thankfully, I was not eaten and took a picture of her.

Also, jellyfish.

Saturday was a great day 🌧

Also, I've been wishing Connie a birthday the whole day and I shall continue doing so.

Connieeee.....Happy Birthday! 😊

## Activate overdrive

Posted on [July 15, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

This week, there is so much to do on our project its crazy. Manipulating strings is not as easy as it seems. On other developments, Connie's t-shirt design looks hip, cool and in the zone. Let's see what more can I write about...oh I'm excited for our extracurricular activities this week and there's a lot. Hope I make it to the end of the week though XD



## Hello everyone

Posted on [July 13, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Its day 2 in the conference and I already miss you guys (cute puppy face). Today was pretty sweet. I got to attend many presentations on serious game development and other useful stuff that can be programmed to our tutor in the future. I spoke with people from Carnegie Mellon and wow do they know their stuff! I also got a chance to speak with educators and students from other great schools like Georgia Tech and University of Massachusetts. I learned a great deal (brain hurts). Afterwards, we went to eat a place called Sweet Grass. I was scared it was all vegetarian but thankfully they had fried chicken breast with waffles, which is probably one of the oddest food combinations I have ever had. Now I know that waffles go great with everything. By the way, I love the conference logo.

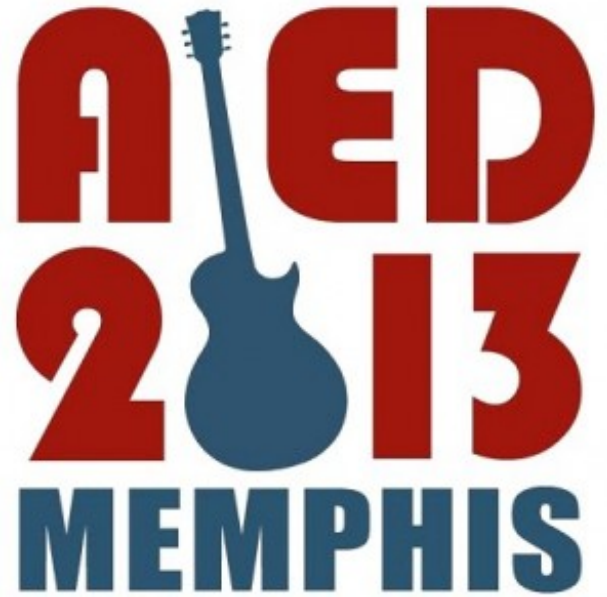


See you guys soon!

## John Deere and first day at conference!!!

Posted on [July 12, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday we went on a field trip to the John Deere factory and the place was huge! It was some good quality time with Andrea, Lisa and my fellow interns. Today was....wow. Its my first conference and I have to say I was impressed. The presentations were great and intimidating at the same time. These are people who have been working with intelligent tutors a lot more time than one summer. I hope we get to make stuff that is at least a small fraction of the coolness of some of the presented technology. At night we went to a zoo banquet!! (weird right?) It was a fancy restaurant in the zoo. Maybe I haven't stressed that enough: a restaurant.....in.....the.....ZOO!!! It was awesome and we had a really a good time with Enruo, Mostafa and Colin. Hope the rest of the weekend is as good. This is a pretty bad shot of the place we went to. Also, late HAPPY BIRTHDAY FRANCELY!!!



## Such a great weekend

Posted on [July 9, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

We had so much fun in Six Flags. We took pictures with Bugs Bunny, rode the rides, went on water slides and just had an incredible time overall. It was the best July 4th I've had so far. But the fun didn't stop there, the next day we went to downtown Chicago and I was awestruck. I had never gone to a big city before (by now you guys probably think I've been living under a rock XD). It was great fun. Now back to do good work for our project.



## Presentation and Six Flags!!!

Posted on [July 3, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Today, we finally did our presentations that we were so nervous about. It was great that everybody did an awesome job and that the atmosphere in the room was less tense than expected. Our group is going to try everything we can so as to meet our goals for the summer. Tomorrow, some of us planned a trip to Six Flags! People say its a really good theme park and were super excited. I wish everyone a happy 4th of July and that we all accomplish our tasks for the summer.

## Lit review and presentation draft

Posted on [June 28, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, we continued our hard work in our lit review and, thanks to Lisa, we started drafting our mid-summer presentation. Today we turn in method paragraph and we can finally focus wholly on our code. I believe we have great ideas and we will build up on them. We will be tree masters by the end of the summer. Mother nature's got nothing on us (tu tum pist). Hope we have enough time to accomplish all we want to do. Anyway, its finally Friday!!!

## Thai food is so good

Posted on [June 27, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, the HCI program took us to a great Thai place. I had never eaten Thai food so I didn't have that much ideas on what to expect. It was so good!! That was nice break from this week's craziness. Were almost there, just two more things to turn in before returning to a slightly less frantic level of research life. I'm sure we will prevail. ITS ITS ITS (and the chanting continues)

## Busy week continued

Posted on [June 26, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, we continued reading and re-reading our literature so as to do the best work on all of the we have to turn in this week. Were half way there but were in the zone. I honestly believe we can come up with good and useful stuff for our project. Its hard work but I guess well have to...

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(┌─┐─┐) deal with it

## Farmer's market and no more Maya

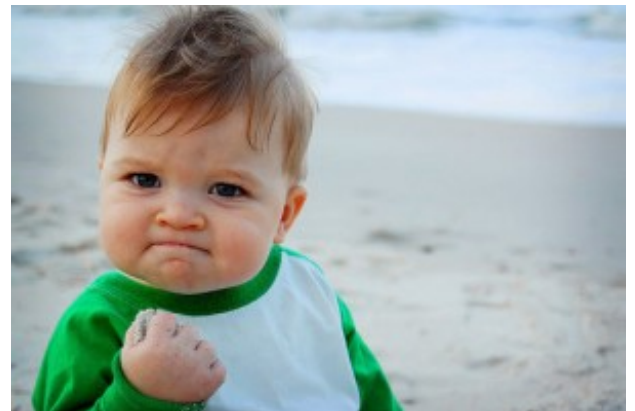
Posted on [June 25, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Saturday we went to the Des Moines farmer's market. It was a pretty good atmosphere and I loved the live music. There was lots of variety in the food selection. I wanted to try it all, good thing I didn't bring more money or else I would've spent a lot XD. For our Maya project we modeled stuff we were passionate about and I'm proud of the result, as is my team. There is lots of work to be done and were firing on all cylinders to make sure it gets done. Updates on this really busy week coming soon.

## Maya project and...Google glass!!!

Posted on [June 22, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello people. Today our team started working on our Maya project and its a pretty cool idea. We are also working on all the stuff we have to turn in next week :S Anyway, the best part of the day was when Stephen showed us Google Glass and let us try it out!!! I was the first one to put on the glasses. I am so grateful for this. For further proof of my amazement, refer to my face of awe bellow.



## I have a Maya problem

Posted on [June 20, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Okay yesterday I performed an unsuccessful attempt at modeling Nintendo's Metroid creature. I was so dissatisfied with my work that I tried to redo my drawing using the concepts we learned today. We have a lot of other stuff to do so I had to force myself to stop where I was. This one looks slightly better though. I have a Maya problem XD.

## Games and Maya

Posted on [June 19, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Today we learned that our instructor is an indie game developer! Its pretty cool learning from an artist who specializes in video-games. As you all know, I would love to make a living making entertainment technology, so this type of guidance is pretty necessary for that. Anyway, here's my awful attempt at a Metroid creature from Nintendo's Metroid series XD

## Snakes and stuff

Posted on [June 18, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Today we had another great Maya tutorial. I didn't even know this kind of program existed and now I see myself doing Maya stuff on my own sometime the future. I think most of us agree when I say we could do this all day. Furthermore, we were once again requested to post what we made today in the blog and so I present to you: a snake!!!(crowd goes wild)

## Snowballs and bombs!

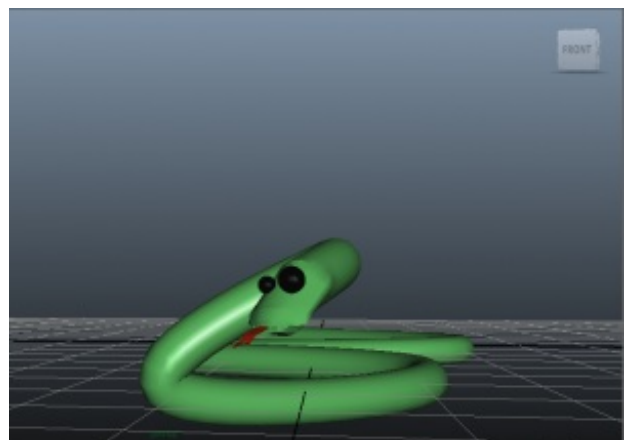
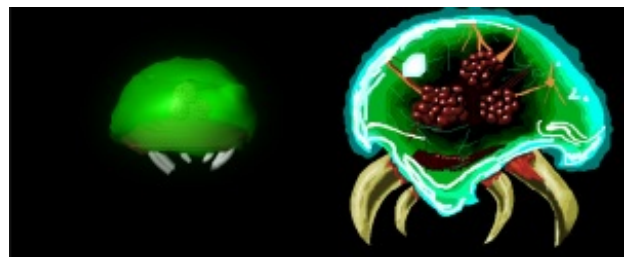
Posted on [June 18, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

The weekend was great! I have to say that the trampoline arena we went to woke up the kid in me. We all had so much fun. We also worked hard on our OpenGL project. We accomplished almost everything we wanted to and I am immensely proud of the outcome. I loved showing our work to everyone. Today I used Maya for the first time and it is powerful software. The possibilities are endless. I am tasked with posting what I did in the blog and so I shall.

## Luncheon Lectures

Posted on [June 16, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Recently we had a great luncheon lecture about Instructional Design. It was especially valuable to our group since we are working on an intelligent tutor. I think its great that they're are people out there that thrive on making education better for the good of all. One of the life situations I enjoy is helping someone understand something. I put



effort in being as clear as can be in my attempts at education, the reason for this being that I very much appreciate when someone does the same when trying to explain anything to me. Anyway, here's hoping our team helps students understand thermo ☺

## Let there be lights!

Posted on [June 13, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday I spent most of my time trying to make planets with accurate lighting. Suffice to say it was a pain and light is very complicated. Its funny how in the same day we did light painting.

I saw all the cool photos that we took manipulating lights and it made me appreciate how far we've come in photography, considering I had such a painful time trying to make lights to work XD. All in all it was good fun and I hope our OpenGL project comes out to be at least a small fraction of cool as the awesome photos we took!



## Beautiful lake and at last, graphics

Posted on [June 11, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello everyone. Yesterday we had our first graphics class on OpenGL. We were in charge of writing our name in a cool fashion using OpenGL's many drawing tools. My mind keeps coming up with ideas that make use of 3D and I want to learn how to bring them to life. We haven't decided on a project idea yet, but I'm sure it will be no less than epic. We also went to a stunning lake here in Ames. I had a lot of fun with the group as always. Not many Mondays are that great. Hope the rest of the week is as good as yesterday ☺

## Meetings and burgers

Posted on [June 10, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Salutations everyone. Friday our group had a very important meeting where we were shown the architecture of the Intelligent Tutor we would be working on for the summer. Our team is anxious and ready to start making our own contributions to this great effort. This weekend was fun and busy too. We finished our epic game, we played Apples to Apples and Catchphrase(which I had never played before) and we went to an excellent cross-research-program picnic, in which we played Ultimate Frisbee (which I had also never played before) and ate great burgers! All in all, last week was filled with new games and good experiences.

## Luncheon lectures and cars!!!

Posted on [June 7, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello again everyone. I just wanted to say that I'm finding this luncheon lectures to be very inspiring. Grad school is looking really good right now. It was always kind of an option for me, but now I'm pretty sure I'll continue studying after I get my Bachelor's degree. In other news, I loved going to the movies on Wednesday (I forgot to talk about that yesterday). I saw Fast and Furious 6, which by now you'd think they'd ran out of things to do with cars but apparently they can blow up airplanes now. Its a nice thing to know. I'll try to be nicer to cars from now on. Nevertheless, the movie was a blast (tu, tum, pst) XD

## Programming!!

Posted on [June 7, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, I spent the night programming. Its funny how, the more I think about it, the more thankful I am that I love

my career path. I was passionate about computers since early in life, but I hardly new a thing about how to create one. Although I still know so little, I have never been so excited by what the future holds than ever before. And to think that people get paid for doing this 😊

## More C++ and a fruitful meeting

Posted on [June 5, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Hello people,

The day before today we continued our C++ crash course. Because of the lack of time we had for our C++ project, we had to switch from making a Galaga game to a Connect 4 imitation game for our project. Still a complicated goal, but completely possible in the short time we have. We also had our group meeting yesterday. Being part of a meeting composed of professors and graduate students interested in our research project made me further realize the scope and impact of our future results. It was a frightening, but motivating sight to behold. We then undertook a different, more specific path of research work. I'm sure we'll try our best as a group to make of our task a truly fruitful effort.

## Learning continued

Posted on [June 4, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday, we had our first C++ tutorial. Colin and Brian are excellent. They make sure everyone is up to speed and don't hesitate to clear up any doubt. I'm very excited for my team's C++ project, as I know we will try our hardest to make the best Galaga replication we can concoct in a week. Afterwards, we eagerly continued doing research on our respective projects, considering we had a group meeting today and we are anxious to propose great ideas. Finally, we went to check the REC Center which is amazing. Such resources make it a whole lot easier to balance mind, body and spirit so as to do our best work in this program.

## Building Blocks

Posted on [June 3, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Last Friday, I appreciated how we were taught the best approach when attempting to read a research paper (a fundamental concept to have in our knowledge banks when doing research ourselves). After learning how to extract information from other research endeavors, we were lectured on effectively working in a team for ours. I had never taken the Myers Briggs survey before, so I was impressed at how effective it can be when being part of a team. It was great that we had a general view of what each of us is like so that we can better interact with each other, taking into account all our differences and similarities.

Saturday was great. At one point, I was dangling upside down while being suspended a considerable amount of distance from the ground by my teammates. It was exhilarating to say the least. We learned a little more about each other that day and I'm glad to say we will be working together for the rest of the summer.

## Nonstop excitement

Posted on [May 31, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday we were constantly bombarded with great mind boggling computer interfaces that got me even more enthusiastic about working in ISU. The sheer power of the technology shown and huge screens was a wonderful sight to behold by itself. However, what I didn't expect to see was that the people developing and describing this



technology to us seemed to be as excited as I was about the subject. Its a nice thing to witness; that emerging human interfaces (even if working with them gets more difficult the more one studies them) never falter in promoting excitement for anyone.

## A great summer begins

Posted on [May 30, 2013](#) by [jvirella](#)

Yesterday seemed like one of the longest days I've had in a while, and also one of the greatest. I am sincerely and utterly amazed by all the resources available to facilitate innovation in Iowa State University. Using my dear home university as point of reference, I can only marvel at the thought of great research waiting to happen. I'm sure this summer will be a great summer and I look forward to trying my absolute best to make use of all of these privileges for maximum harvest.