

Alexander Hornick

 projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2015/

the FINAL blog (pics included!)

Posted on [July 31, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Before I get into the poster presentations today, I'll do a summary of last night's activities. After a bunch of packing and cleaning, about 9 of us went to the High Trestle Bridge (again for me) but this time we parked a lot closer! It was definitely a beautiful sight.

Going into the Poster Presentation today I was pretty nervous. This was pretty much the first time that I've ever given a poster talk like this before. Luckily, my nerves went away during the session! Our group ended up talking to well over 20 people, and we got some great feedback and questions. I'm super thankful that I was able to have this experience of a Poster Presentation because it is not often that one gets the chance to do these kind of things.

Tonight we're going to have our last hurrah at Hickory Park and then it'll be time to prepare for the long drive home tomorrow. 📺

Overall this experience has definitely been one of the best summers of my life. I've gained so much knowledge in so many different areas. I've learned about Research Writing, Grad School, Areas of computer science that I had not been exposed to before, and an in depth look at HCI. It will definitely have a great impact on my life.

I've also gained so many great friends during my time here, and we've all shared such amazing experiences and fun together. I will really miss everyone and all the time that we shared. I know there were talks of reunion next year, and whether that's realistically going to happen is another issue but I do believe that some of us will have our paths cross again one day.

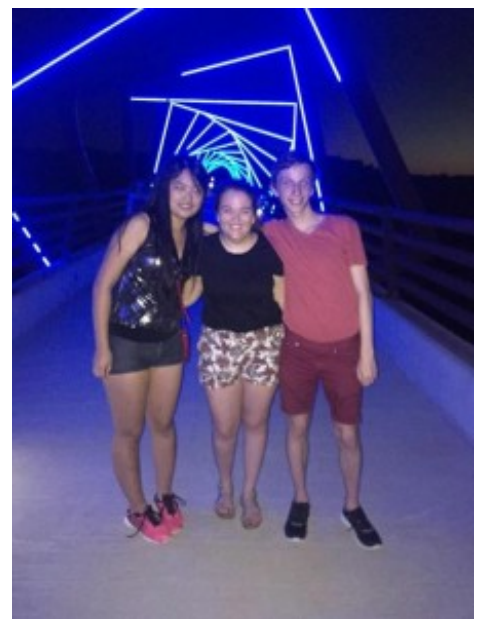
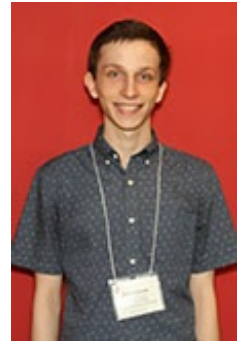
Till next time!

On Thursdays we wear pink

Posted on [July 30, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning Nancy and I went over to Meissner's lab across campus to go install our program on his lab computers, and we went in thinking that it would be simple and not take more than an hour but alas, something went wrong, again. Our interface couldn't play .mov files so we had to spend quite a while converting all our video files to .wmv files and it was a pain, and it made us late to our Post-focus group which was a hassle.

After lunch we had our Poster practice talks and Demos. It went okay, I didn't talk enough which was partially due to me being a deer in the headlights during public speeches, and partially because I have a super



sore throat that hurts every time I talk. I ended up buying cough drops so hopefully tomorrow I can be prepared to speak more.

Other than that, today we're wrapping up our research paper and fixing up our Elevator pitches for tomorrow's poster. One more day guys! Let's make it count.

Game night & Preparing for the End

Posted on [July 29, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Yesterday after work we all stayed to have a game night on the VRAC, and we ended up splitting into two groups and we played 2 versions of the game "Munchkins" which is a super fun game. Once again David won, but I'll get my revenge next time..

This morning our team worked on our Elevator pitch, our research paper, and getting our demo ready for Friday. So far everything looks like it will work out smoothly. As for our interface, all we have left is to install the software onto some of Meissner's computers in his lab so it can still be run after we're gone.

It's also about time to start packing and getting the apartment ready to check out so I have a lot of things like laundry, cleaning, and packing to get done and the earlier the better so I'll probably do that tonight.

Rain rain go away

Posted on [July 28, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So for the second day in a row there has been torrential downpour, and I am pretty sick of having wet shoes and socks haha.

But anyway, last night the whole crew went to Perfect Games for bowling, laser tag, and pool, and it was super fun especially since everybody came. In the two 2 games of bowling that I played I got the best score I've had all summer which I feel pretty accomplished about.

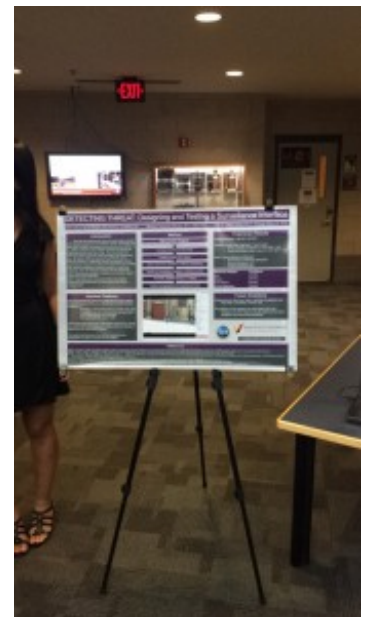
It feels like the amount of days until we leave is winding down pretty fast, I'll be so sad to leave. A week from today I will be on a flight to California to see my family though so that's pretty exciting. I hope that in the next few days we can all enjoy some fun times together while we still can. ☺

The Last Weekend Summary

Posted on [July 27, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Well, it was our last weekend and it was well spent in my opinion. Also, prepare for quite a few pictures.

On Friday night several of us went to Indianola to see the Hot Air Balloon Festival and it was great! We got to see a lot of balloons fly up into the air and we listened to some live music. I think more people should have gone because it was very relaxing and fun.



After that, Sarah took us along on a mini-tour of Simpson College, which is her university, which was pretty cool. After our tour we went to go eat ice cream and then we decided to play on a playground for a little bit before heading back home.

Saturday morning we went to go paint balling at Seven Oaks and it would've been more fun if it wasn't so hot... I felt pretty overheated most of the time and also paintballs hurt especially when one hit the back of my neck and left a small bruise. But I still had fun and I was pretty proud that I hit a few targets since I'm not that great at aiming.

Sunday morning 5 of us went out to the volleyball court to try and do the Freddy volleyball tournament but it ended up being just us. Still it was fun, and once we started playing short court, our rallies starting getting better and better. After that, Ogue, Jordan and I went to go get Starbucks and then we went thrifting at Good Will! I found a few shirts I liked for a pretty good price. A few hours later 6 of us played Smash for a while, ordered pizza, and then we played a game called Munchkins for several hours. I won the first round by sheer luck, and was close to winning the second round but David came in from nowhere and stole the game.

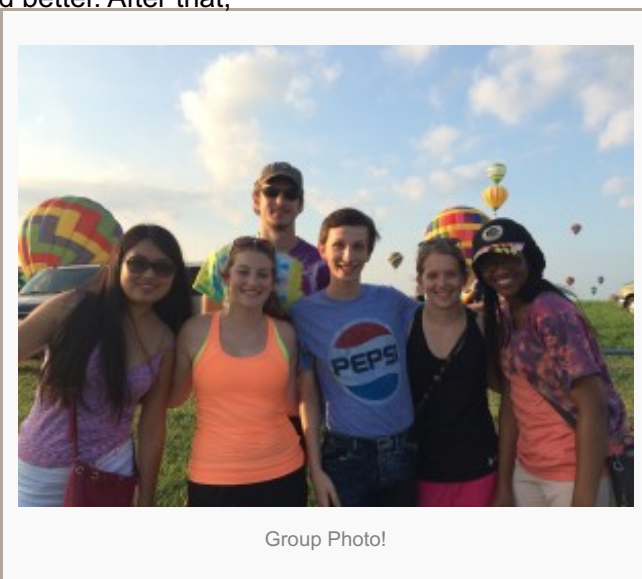
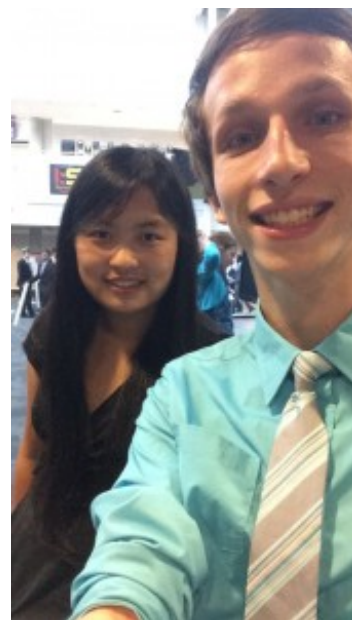
This morning started off like any other morning. At 9 we had our daily Coffee/Bagel trip to the library. Once we got back we added more stuff to our to do list. Then we kinda got distracted and took the Harvard Dialect Survey which pin points where your dialect is from. Mine gave me Californian cities such as San Jose which is pretty accurate since I grew up close to San Jose. We also discussed having a possible reunion next May which would be awesome. Realistically it would be hard to pull off but I think it'd be worth the effort. We discussed Nashville as a possible meeting point, and since I live pretty close I'd be able to pick out the fun areas of Nashville/Tennessee.

Guess it's back to work now!

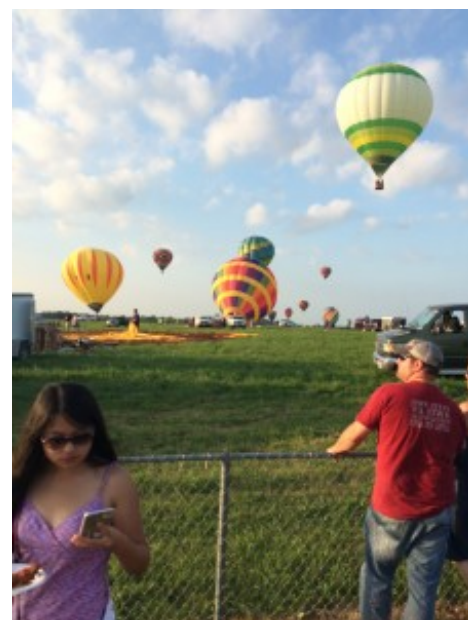
One more week...

Posted on [July 24, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

To start the blog off, I'm going to talk about the letter that we all wrote at the beginning of the program and how I reflect on it. Basically in the letter I talked about the importance of friends and family. And that definitely still holds true. Throughout the program I've relied on contact with friends and family by calling them every so often. One thing that's changed is that I consider all the interns my friends now as well. We've all stuck together through the peaks and valleys, and I'm definitely so grateful for all the



Group Photo!



support.

Other than that today has gone by nicely for the most part. I ran Desmond through our experiment this morning and it went well. Nancy's participant however figured out a bug in the code and crashed the program which was a little embarrassing but Nancy took some initiative to fix it pretty fast!

All we have left is two more participants and we'll be done I believe. Over the next week we are going to work on the interface so that it can be carried on after we leave, so basically making the code readable, making the tutorial editable, making the program run on different computers, creating a mock up version for the poster presentation, and finishing our instruction manual.

Tonight the group is gonna go to the Hot Air Balloon festival to see a band play and some other kind of event tonight, and then possibly go paintballing tomorrow. That'll be fun.

Tank-Thursday

Posted on [July 23, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Yesterday afternoon went by pretty normally, around 8, six of us went out to play Sand Volleyball (and to get some practice in before the Sunday tournament!). After that we all went to play Hearts the card game, and Justin definitely surprised us all by shooting the moon 3 times..!

This morning we ran participant after participant with our study and it has gone smoothly so far. Sarah did the majority of them and I ended running one which is a good experience to have. I enjoy getting feedback on our interface about stuff to improve.

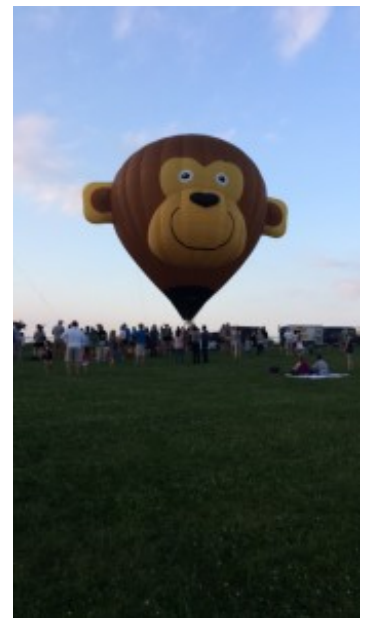
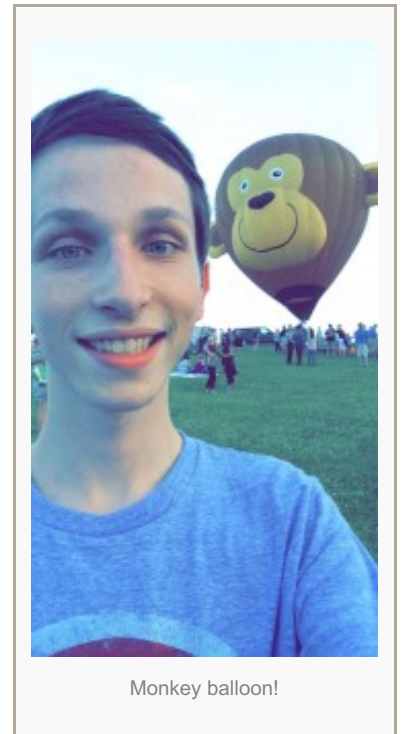
Yesterday during some free time Nancy and I played around with a building a faux "Detecting Threat" website complete with a gallery, about, and contact info. Each page had a theme customized to one of the group members, so unsurprisingly Nancy had a cat theme. It was super fun making it interactive and it definitely reminds me about what one of the Luncheon Lecture speakers, Hannah, was talking about with having a lot of side projects for a portfolio.

I think tonight there may be a get together and Buffalo Wild Wings and possibly laser tag so that will be fun..!

Testing time!

Posted on [July 22, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

After several hours spent yesterday trying to simply get our interface running on my laptop, we decided to run our experiments on one of the Lab computers instead. It was very frustrating and hopefully we can figure something out before the program ends. Other than that our experiments have gone fine so far! I'm proud of how far we have come.



I like that a bunch of us are in the habit of eating dinner at UDCC as well since we have enough meal plans left, so that is probably going to happen again today. Also found out that David is pretty good at drawing Eeveelutions.

Till next time!

Crunch time...again

Posted on [July 21, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night a bunch of us went bowling and then we played pool for a bit which was fun. I almost never play pool and I'm pretty bad at it but luckily I got a few balls in lol.

Today was spent prepping for tomorrow's experiments and it has been such a hassle. Moving our program from our desktops to my laptop has taken a lot longer than expected and so far has encompassed 5 hours of time. I really hope that it works so that all that time wasn't for nothing.

We also had two interesting luncheon lectures today. The first was about Systems Design and the second one was about Media and its impact psychologically which I found to be pretty awesome.

Back to work I guess

Weekend Update

Posted on [July 20, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Friday:

Friday night we had a video game session up in our room, and we played Mario Kart, Mario Party, and Super Smash Bros, as well as Mario kart on the N64! We also all ordered Insomnia Cookies to be delivered which were super delicious.

Saturday:

On Saturday, Allie, Maya, Ogue and I all went to Furman Aquatic Center for a couple hours and it was very fun! I actually went onto the diving board a couple times and even did a cannonball lol. It was also pretty much the perfect day to go swimming because it was in the 90's and super sunny(unfortunately I got a little bit of a sunburn). After relaxing for a couple hours, most of us played games in 5224 such as Resistance and Cards Against Humanity. We had a lot of fun considering we were playing until 1:15am haha.



David showing off his strength



Live music & Sunset!



Playing Munchkins

Sunday:

Sunday morning about 7 of us went to a Lake with Anna. We played Frisbee on the beach, rode some Tire Swings, ate barbecue, and hydro biked across the lake. It was a blast overall, even though I wish more people would've come (we only have one more weekend left...). Then at night a bunch of us went to the movies to see Trainwreck which was very funny.

Today:

Today we had nothing but free time, which was great because we got IRB approval today and we need to be ready to start testing users ASAP in order to have data on our poster.

...SCIENCE!

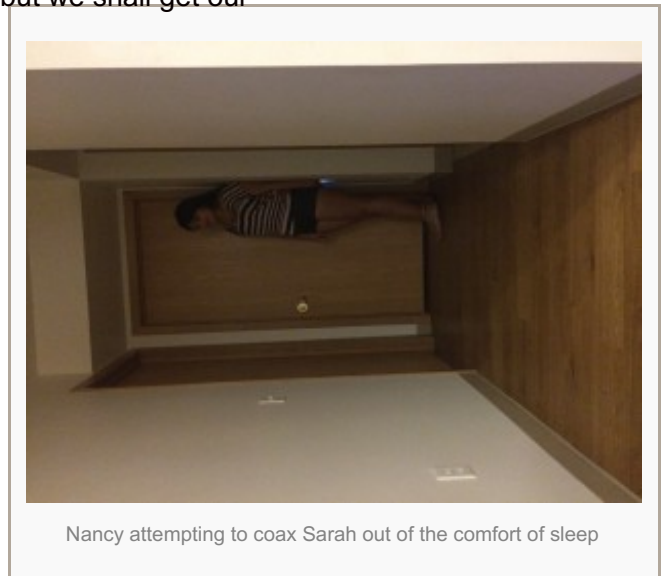
Posted on [July 17, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night those of us who went to eat S'mores and Swim in the lake had a blast! David ended up dunking both me and Nancy under the water but we shall get our revenge one day...

Today we went to the Science Center in Des Moines and they had a lot of cool stuff. Reminds me of when I would visit Science centers back when I was a kid.

After that we went to a cafe that overlooked the capitol and downtown.

The food I ordered was smaller than I expected so I was still left hungry afterwards.



After we got back we had Journal club, and I was put on the spot to present Sarah's/Nancy's slides that I wasn't that prepared for and I was a little embarrassed... I pulled through alright I guess and it's good experience.

I hope that we all find something fun to do this weekend since it's getting so close to the end. 📅

Spinning the Web

Posted on [July 16, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night Sarah Nancy and I finished most of our journal club presentation and I'm glad that's out of the way. After that we + David went to ColdStone to get ice cream/shakes!

Today's Luncheon Lecture was definitely my favorite out of them all. I took over 3 pages of notes of advice and info

about the industry. A company like the one she works at would probably be my dream job to be honest. Web Development is a topic that excites me so much and I feel like there's so many paths for me to take.

It's really great to hear someone from the industry I'll be going in to give advice because it's not that often that I get that opportunity. I also probably asked more questions this Lecture than I have for all the other Luncheon lectures combined.

Today most of us also wore our bro tanks which is awesome! I love seeing all the tanks we got.

Presentations

Posted on [July 15, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Today was pretty much spent practicing our presentations. I was pretty nervous but I think we did pretty good, tech issues aside. It was actually really interesting to hear all of USC's projects and I found all of them really interesting. I liked how linguistic focused they were! Overall it was a good time, my attention span was kind of giving out towards the end.

Tonight we have to work on Craft of Research and our Journal Club presentation. I honestly just can't wait till this week is over with, cause after that there will be a lot less stuff going on all at once. I'm kinda sad at how fast the time is going by. It'll be July 31st so quick 📅

Bowling!

Posted on [July 14, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Yesterday we got to practice our presentations and we got some really good feedback. Hopefully our team will have ours finalized tonight, I have to work on making a video illustrating our interface so that'll probably be the most difficult.

After that we got some more feedback on our interface from Dr. Sweet, which mostly had to do with rewording our tutorial. Today for our team meeting we're going to present it to our other Faculty Mentor and Grad Mentor and have a test run and get some more feedback probably.

Last night a bunch of us went to go Bowling and it was super fun! Even though I got second to last both games, it was worth it. Hopefully we can go bowling again sometime and with more people!

Overall I definitely feel that this week is the busiest and most stressful one out of them all, having to balance our interface work, Midsummer Presentation, Journal Club, and the several other things we have due, but I think after this week is over it will be a slightly smoother ride.



Nancy and I wanted a photo of us all wearing stripes but Sarah wouldn't have it so I got photoshopped in.....



Nice view of downtown!

To the mall!

Posted on [July 13, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

FRIDAY:

Friday after work a bunch of us went out to play sand volleyball for a few hours which was really fun! It's so much better with more people. After that we all went to get Snow Cones by the Mall and they were delicious, I definitely want to go back and get more.

SATURDAY:

Saturday we had an amazing trip to the Mall of America! We went on the Rock Bottom roller coaster and I was screaming the whole time. The rest of the time was spent walking around the three floors and doing some various shopping. Also, a really weird coincidence happened. As I was waiting outside a store, I ran into someone from my high school in Tennessee that I've known since I was 11. I was not expecting that. Even though we had 7 hours there, I definitely feel like we did not get to see all of the mall since it was so huge! I would love to go back there someday and ride more rides or look at more shops. Overall I didn't spend as much money as I thought I would but I got some nice clothes and a great experience!

The ride back was pretty much spent sleeping the whole time, and Allie has a pretty funny photo of all of us sleeping.

SUNDAY:

Sunday was pretty much spent recovering from the very busy trip to Mall of America. In the afternoon my roommates and I played Worms on David's Xbox for a while which was pretty fun, and then we played some Mortal Kombat. After that though it was time to get to work. For an hour and a half my team finalized our mid summer presentation, and then Nancy and I stayed at the VRAC till 11:30pm to work on our interface.

TODAY:

Today we have been getting ready for our Mid Summer presentation practice, and I'm pretty nervous. Public speaking makes me very anxious but I think I've practiced my slides enough that I can hopefully be able to work on other things like eye contact and coming off as clear and controlled.

Till the clock strikes 12

Posted on [July 10, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Yesterday my team presented our Interface to our mentors and we got some more feedback about what to improve on. After work we got to tie dye shirts outside of Freddy and that was super fun! I've only tie-dyed twice before. Even though the shirt size wasn't the best fit, I still hope it turns out well!

After we finished tie-dyeing, Nancy and I went back to the VRAC and worked on our interface until MIDNIGHT! That's the longest we've ever stayed. We got a lot accomplished though so it was worth.

I am honestly so excited for tomorrow's trip to the Mall of America! Riding a roller coaster sounds so fun and I can't



wait to go shopping!

Crunch time

Posted on [July 9, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Yesterday Nancy and I actually managed to leave at 5pm! Our interface is pretty much ready for testing. A little while after I got home I tried Frisbee Golf for the first time with David and his friend. It was fun while I was playing, but unfortunately I ended up throwing his disc into the river.....hahaha. I probably should stick to Frolfing away from rivers.

This morning was spent working on our Mid Summer Presentation and Journal Club presentation, along with making our Interface design look better. For our luncheon lecture it was pretty nice being able to hear from different Grad students!

Land ho!

Posted on [July 8, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night and this morning, Nancy and I pretty much finalized our Media Player interface! Tomorrow our mentors are coming to give us their final feedback. I'm feeling pretty accomplished about it!

This afternoon we had our group pictures and it was pretty fun! I especially loved our pic on the boat. Hence the title "Land Ho!". Poor Jordan got a pretty bad bug bite though.. I also loved my teams Charlie's Angels pose.

Not much else to talk about, so peace out!

Blogging...at night

Posted on [July 7, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

I've been so busy coding today that I just now remembered to blog... so last night Nancy and I, and eventually Sarah, stayed until 9:30pm at the VRAC working on our Media Player interface. We got a lot accomplished! And thanks Sarah for picking us up and taking us to Subway!

This morning we had a very informative Grad School lecture and I learned a lot of key information about the Application process and general timelines to follow. It will definitely come in handy when it comes time to start applying!

For our team meeting today we presented our Interface to our faculty mentors and got feedback on what features to add on. Nancy and I stayed till about 6:30 and we got over half of our task list done and we should be finished with it tomorrow! That will be such a huge relief once it's done.

4th of July Weekend!

Posted on [July 6, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Thursday:

Some of us had quite the experience on Thursday night..... we had hoped to get to the High Trestle bridge at sunset, which was at 9pm. However, as we discovered, we parked 2.5 miles away when we could've parked 1 mile away, and we started off in the wrong direction, so we ended up about 3 miles away. After a very long walk in the forest

wilds of Iowa, we made it to the bridge at around 10:30ish, and I suppose it was worth the gruesome exercise.

Friday the 3rd:

On Friday a few of us went to the Good Will to see if there were any clothes worth buying. I only ended up buying a black vee-neck but Allie got a cute purple raincoat! After we got home, those who remained in Freddy had a pretty awesome Barbecue featuring hamburgers, chicken, and corn. Then at Night we all went to Reiman Gardens to watch the fireworks in Ames and it was a nice show!

Saturday:

On Saturday we decided to hit up Des Moines to see if anything was happening. Unfortunately most of the shops were closed, but we did see some cool antique shops and we walked to the Capitol building. After that we ate Barbecue at Jethro's and after we got home we were all too tired to really do anything else.

Sunday:

Sunday was pretty much a leisurely day. Watched netflix and picked up Jordan from the airport.

Btw, thanks Ogue for taking this awesome pic of me on the bridge!

0 / 0 = Sad Cookie Monster + No friends

Posted on [July 1, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

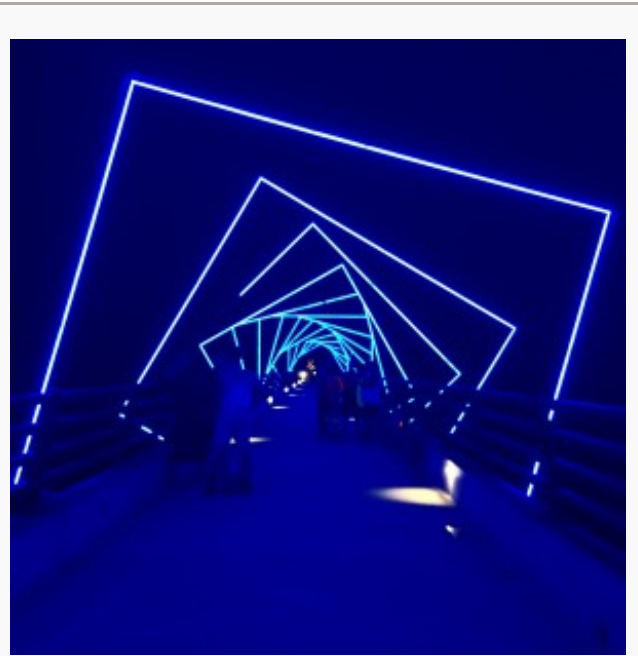
In case you don't understand the title, ask Siri 'what is 0 divided by 0'.

So today we pretty much had free time to work on our projects until 12, and Nancy and I accomplished a few of our tasks. We're aiming to complete our interface by Monday and hopefully that's a realistic goal. Making an interface user friendly is definitely a challenge.

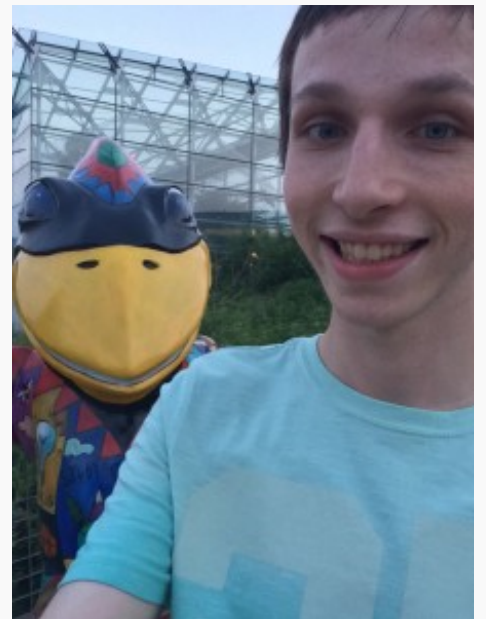
This afternoon we get to watch Anna's Defense, it'll be interesting to learn more about Anna's research. And then tonight we're going to have our Mid-Summer dinner at the Thai place downtown.

Also we finally got the volleyballs out of the closet so it would be pretty awesome if this weekend we could all play some sand volleyball by our apartment! I really enjoyed the last time we played volleyball at Norene's.

And the winner is...



High Trestle Bridge!



Cy at Reiman Gardens!

Posted on [June 30, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night we had our first Super Smash Bros tournament! It was so much fun. In the first tourney I made it to the finals against David but his counter-attacks were just too powerful. Then in the second tourney I lost against Gabe's all-mighty Little Mac in a pretty awesome fight. Then Gabe went on to defeat David/Shulk in a pretty epic final battle! I would love to have another tournament sometime before the summer ends! Hopefully I can hone Zero Suit Samus and become better at avoiding counter attacks haha. By the way, thanks Ogue for providing sound effects during my fights when I was unable to hahaha.

This morning we learned about talks and posters with Dr. Gilbert and it was super helpful. I especially liked our improv talk exercise, because it required fast thinking and it's great to be able to hear another person critique your speech. I, for one, should stop using the word 'like' so often.

Our Luncheon Lecture today was really cool and I love how she incorporated videos and images about hyperreality which is a concept that interests me.

The Weekend: A Summary

Posted on [June 29, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

On Saturday we had quite the busy day! First we went to the Des Moines Farmer's Market which had lots of interesting food, drinks, and dogs! After that we went to the Art Festival and we got to look at some pretty interesting artwork. It was super hot and sunny which made me pretty tired pretty quick though. We ate lunch at Norene's and had a lot of fun playing Volleyball and Cornhole. I probably got too intense with my dives for the ball, which explains the soreness in my legs haha.

Today we got to see our 3D Printed models! Ours turned out pretty well. We probably could have angled the holes for the charger a little more but at least it will hold a phone pretty well! Check out photos below:

I'm pretty excited for tonight's Smash Bros. tournament. There's some tough competition in our group!

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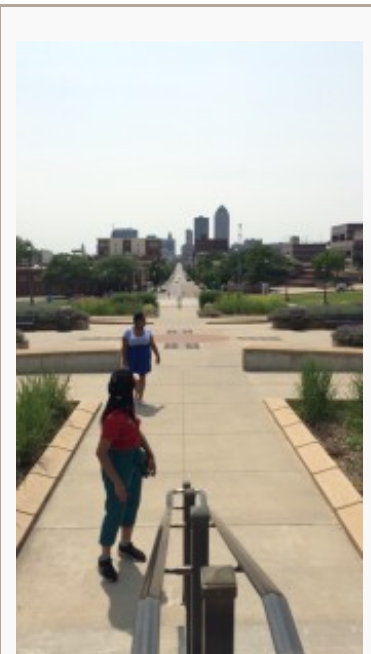
Posted on [June 26, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Not gonna lie, my whole day was made this morning when I found out the Supreme Court ruled in favor of same sex marriage! I've had trouble focusing on other things since I was so ecstatic about it haha. It's been a long time coming, especially for states like mine where it was banned.

Today we presented our 3D models from a few weeks ago and I really hope ours will be printable because that



Creepy Orange @ Antique Shop



View of downtown from Capitol



would be awesome! Journal Club covered a pretty interesting article about Wearable Temporary Tattoos even though I didn't completely understand all the biological and chemistry terms behind it.

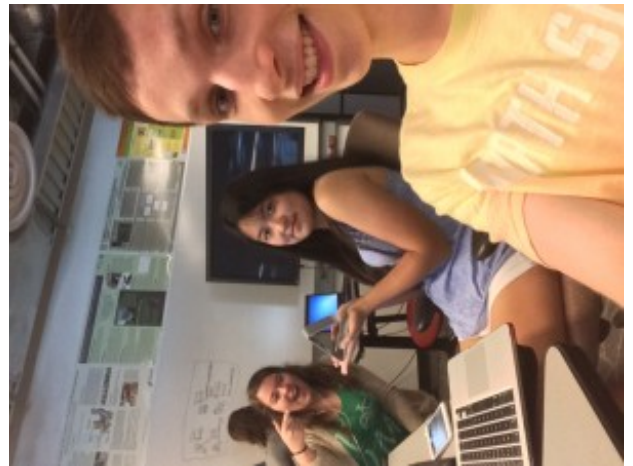
Other than that I am super excited for our Des Moines trip tomorrow! I can't wait to do some shopping and have lots of fun at the Art Festival!

Day One with no Internet

Posted on [June 25, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning I discovered (along with Nancy) that our desktop computers are disconnected from the network. Seeing as how I just took a Networking course this past semester, I thought I could handle it, but alas, no.... At this point it looks like it won't be fixed till Monday. And now I'm really regretting leaving my computer at home.

I think the image below accurately describes how having no Internet connection feels like.



Anyway, as for the rest of the day, we had our Luncheon Lecture with Jon Kelly and it was quite interesting! When he talked about applying to grad schools or jobs out of your state or region I got a little worried. I grew up in California and visit there every year, and I am very determined to live in California someday. I just hope that my going to a small school in Tennessee won't affect my chances... Living in the Bay Area or San Jose would be awesome to me.

Anyway, looks like it's time to work on Craft of Research and Journal Club! ~

Caught in the rain

Posted on [June 24, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning we had a hour break between 9 – 10 and it was nice being able to have some time to catch up on our other assignments! Then at 10 we had our first Ethics course and I have to say that I enjoyed it. It really makes you think and the questions Eliot would pose had no correct answer. I had trouble deciding what I would do in those situations he posed for us. I really look forward to the next one.

After that we headed over to Memorial Union to have an Etiquette Lunch and the food was pretty great! I learned a

bunch of things about how to eat properly during a formal dinner, and even though I still think it's stupid to have separate forks for different things, it's still a skill I'll need to have in the business and adult world. As we were going to leave, we noticed that it was raining pretty hard, so a bunch of us went to the bookstore, and I am pretty glad we went cause I got some good ISU shirts and a new umbrella! Still managed to get pretty wet though.

This afternoon we have a Statistics Course from Dr. Jordan, and I'm not going to lie, I have never had a Statistics class in my life so this will be interesting...

Taco Tuesday

Posted on [June 23, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning we delved deeper into MAYA and Free form modeling and I am definitely starting to understand more about it than I did yesterday. I wish my home University provided more Computer Graphics courses cause this is something that I'd love to learn more about.

For our Luncheon Lecture today Caroline Hayes was the guest speaker. Hearing her advice on what kind of research in grad schools I could do with my Web Development was very helpful and it's something I will look into.

Other than that there's really not much to talk about, we have our weekly team meeting today, and I feel that we are slowly getting farther and farther into our project which is good!

Down by the river...

Posted on [June 22, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Saturday we all went to the Des Moines river and floated down in tubes for several hours and it was a blast! It was the perfect way to have a relaxing couple of hours. Kinda sad that my sunglasses were lost to the river but at least they were my cheap pair! (And not the ones that were a souvenir from Italy)

On Sunday we had our big family dinner which consisted of Hamburger Helper and Cheesecake! The half of us who played Uno were have a little too much fun with the game so sorry about that haha.

Since our group's roller coaster project ended up being a bigger problem than imagined, Nancy, Sarah, and I had to spend extra time in the VRAC on Sunday. And by extra time I mean several hours. Today we finally made our breakthrough by making the camera actually rotate around our helix so thank goodness all those hours didn't go to waste. I'm pretty excited to present our project!

Today we began our foray into Free form modeling with MAYA, and I have to say that I enjoy not having all those constraints that SolidWorks had.

F is for friends who present together

Posted on [June 19, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So today was our big Journal Club article presentation! I have to say that Group B last night had way too much fun with our presentation. I'm pretty sure the whole building heard our (especially Jordan's) crazy laughs. It was also fun figuring out how to incorporate musical numbers that reference Spongebob.

Not gonna lie, public speaking is a great fear of mine and one of my greatest weaknesses... My voice was probably shaking a lot but I'm definitely better at public speaking than I was last year.

Overall, even though our presentation ran a little long, it had some good content and it was a lot of fun.

So I'm definitely looking forward to tubing tomorrow! It's been forever since I've gone tubing and I think it'll be super relaxing and fun.

InterfaceHCI

Posted on [June 18, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Interface 1: Amazon:

Task: To help online shoppers navigate through products and to make recommendations for new products and assist in checkout.

What's working:

- The search bar is prominent and it always provides good results
- The recommendations not only find items that fit your interests, they also show what products are popular or new.
- The design is clear to follow and it's easy to navigate
- Checking out is easy because it stores your Card information so all you have to do is click.

What's not working:

– I feel like the User Interface for Amazon Prime Video is not up to the standards of sites like Netflix. It's hard to find titles I like, and their selection is not as wide and diverse as Netflix. It just seems disorganized.

To make it better:

- Give Amazon Prime video more titles, and make it more organized and easy to navigate through.

Overall Amazon has very clean, professional design and interface values. It features a relatively muted color palette of white, navy blue, and hints of yellow. It manages to be both elegant and pragmatic.



Interface 2: MacBook Case

Task: Conceptually it should provide protection for the MacBook Air, and add aesthetics to its look.

What's working:

- It's designed to fit a MacBook air, so the case actually holds on really well. It latches on and stays there, but it can also easily be taken off.
- The four pads on the back add stability and make it so that it stays in one place on a flat surface.
- It's not so thick that it won't fit in my laptop sleeve.



-A behavioral principle of the case: The vents on the back ensure that there will be no overheating, as it lets the heat out instead of keeping it within the case.

What's not working:

- The material of the case is not very sleek, and it gets dirty pretty easily. The texture can feel a bit grimy at times.
- The bottom part of the case will sometimes collide with the top part at certain angles which is a minor hindrance when trying to close the laptop.



To make it better:

- Make the material of the case plastic or something different that makes the texture and design aesthetic more sleek.

Roller-coasting

Posted on [June 18, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So last night my phone decided to shut off randomly, which means that my alarm clock wasn't able to go off this morning! Luckily, my internal alarm clock decided to wake me up just in time to get ready and catch the bus. Maybe I should invest in a back up alarm clock.

For our graphics class this morning we learned about textures and SkyBoxes, and it looks like I'm gonna be working on making a Skybox for the moon so that our roller coaster will take place on the moon! That'll be awesome. Dr. Lee spoke to us at our Luncheon Lecture today and it was a nice talk! Her work with the leather-like clothes was super impressive.

Anyway, there's a lot of work to do for Journal Club, intro to HCI, and our graphics project so it looks like it's back to work!

Who?

Posted on [June 17, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Today started off like any other day. Woke up at 7:40, caught the 8:37 bus and made my way to the VRAC (unfortunately without my usual Starbucks frappuccino). Our lecture for Computer Graphics was all about Light today! Learning about all the vector calculations for normals was pretty confusing, especially since I haven't had a Math class since high school. However working with adding light to our Solar System definitely helped me understand the concepts we covered a little more. It's also time to start making our roller coaster! I have no idea how that's gonna turn out lol.

Some of us who have finished the new season of Orange is the New Black (*cough* not Mak *cough*) had a pretty nice discussion and complaints about the finale at lunch. Not gonna put any spoilers on here though! Anyway, we have quite a lot of homework to get done today so it looks like it's time to start on some of that... I actually like being put in other groups outside of our research (like for our Journal club Presentation or our Harry Potter teams) because it's nice being able to work with others that we don't always get a chance to work with.

Another day

Posted on [June 16, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Today we got into a little more complex GL topics and we started to build a Solar System model! It's pretty fun so far. For our group project it looks like we're going to do a roller coaster and make it look the viewer is riding the coaster.

Today we had another Luncheon Lecture with Eliot and it was very informative. It was nice to learn how he balances work and personal life, and about all his different experiences in industry and academia.

This afternoon we're having our weekly team meetings and I think our meeting will be productive. There's kind of a lot of going on right now: Research projects, OpenGL assignments, and our homework for Craft of Research and Journal Club but I think it can get done haha.

glBegin(GL_DAY1);

Posted on [June 15, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So this weekend was lots of fun! On Friday a bunch of us went to eat at Buffalo Wild Wings and then we went out to see Jurassic World in 3D! On Saturday we finally got to do the ropes course that we were originally going to do the first weekend! I loved swinging from 30 feet in the air even though it was scary, and climbing the tower was challenging but fun. It required a lot of teamwork and trust, and I'm pretty thankful that my teammates helped advise me in how to get up the tower because I would've been clueless otherwise haha. I love how we are all becoming such great friends with one another!

Sunday was pretty much my relaxing day. I did some clothes shopping, and then me, Ogue, Maya, and Jordan all took a short trip to get some fast food and some Cold Stone ice cream! It's been forever since I've had ColdStone and it was delicious. I definitely recommend going.

So this week marks the first day of our OpenGL course! Out of C++, Modeling, and OpenGL, OpenGL is definitely the one I was most excited for. There's so many things you can do with GL and it's probably something I'll keep looking into after this course is over.

Other than that, it's time to start preparing for tomorrow's team meetings. I'm a little worried that I haven't accomplished as much as I should have, but I believe I'll get more done tonight.

Running out of interesting titles

Posted on [June 12, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning we learned about resumes and it was super helpful! I've done resumes before but I've learned how to make them even better. Also, I never knew what a CV was so it was nice to learn that haha.

I enjoyed being split up into groups in Journal Club today. I was assigned the Slytherin team which is probably the Hogwarts House that least describes me haha. The Pottermore sorting quiz I took actually placed me in Hufflepuff.

Tonight a bunch of us are going to Buffalo Wild Wings and then to the movies to see Jurassic World! I'm pretty excited about both and it's fun to hang out as a group outside of work. This weekend is also looking pretty fun. Wish the weather wasn't so cloudy but oh well!

sea lions, tigers, and bears, oh my!

Posted on [June 11, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

(that was a wizard of oz reference in case you didn't get that)

So yesterday my team and I went to see an Eye Tracking lab and it was so cool! I actually got put through a little experiment where they tested where my eyes were looking at throughout the duration of the video. Although my team may not end up using Eye Tracking in our project, it was still nice to see that technology.

Today we didn't really have a Modeling class, but we had plenty of time to finish our 3D models. Our group is pretty much done with our cell phone charging station that will accommodate the iPhone 4 – 6 models. Hopefully. After that we had our next Luncheon Lecture with Veronica Dark. My favorite part of the lecture was doing the different Psych tests/games and seeing all the aquatic photos she's taken! I've been up and close with Sea Lions several times before and her picture of one was adorable!

3D Printing & More!

Posted on [June 10, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Last night we got to see the planetarium in the Physics Hall! It was very awesome. I loved seeing him point out all the different constellations, and since I'm a huge Greek mythology nerd I loved hearing different stories of how the constellations came to be. After that we went outside to go look through a telescope at Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus. My favorite one to see was Saturn because you could actually see its rings!

Today we started moving into 3D Printing, which is something that looks really interesting to me. I'm excited to see my group's actual 3D printed object, in this case an iPhone 6 charging station that we're designing at the moment. I'm slowly getting the hang of using SolidWorks, and I actually think it's fun to mess around with its features and learn new things.

This afternoon my group is going to see some Eye Tracking technology, and although we decided that we're probably not using it in our project, it will still be nice to see.

Adventures at Furman

Posted on [June 9, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So yesterday after work me, Nancy, Sarah, Jordan, Ogue, and Mak all went to Furman Aquatic Center! I was pleasantly surprised that it only cost \$5. We started off with some floating down the lazy river in a tube, which was pretty relaxing. Then we went swimming in the bigger pool. Although I chickened out on diving, Jordan and some others did some diving and it looked pretty fun! We also went zooming down the huge slide and it was slightly scary but fun haha. I definitely recommend going for those who haven't!

This morning we had our second day of Modeling Class and I enjoyed it more than the first day. Hearing just the lecture can be hard for me to understand concepts, but when I actually go and utilize the concepts in SolidWorks I actually understand it.

And today we also had our most productive team meeting yet. I believe we figured out the software we're using and how it's all going to be implemented, and we each have our own tasks to work on this week. There's kind of a lot to do this week but hopefully I'll manage.

America's Next Top Modeling Course

Posted on [June 8, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Today marks the first day of our modeling class and it was pretty interesting. Modeling and CAD and general engineering things are very new to me so I was pretty lost at times, but I think I'm slowly learning. We did a tutorial in SolidWorks and it was very awesome. Still not sure what a lot of things mean but I'm getting the hang of it.

This afternoon we're going to present our C++ game projects! Together our group did one project, War, but since we finished early, I implemented a game of Blackjack and Nancy somehow managed to make a really awesome game of Tetris as well.

And by the way, this past weekend was awesome! We went to Des Moines on Saturday and went to SkyZone and Zombie Burger. Skyzone was super fun but I kinda got sick from jumping around too much but I recovered in time for Zombie Burger. I have never eaten something so unhealthy haha.

`output.open("6/5/15.txt");`

Posted on [June 5, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So we finished our last programming class today and we learned about File I/O and then we had time to work on our projects. The thing is, Nancy and I finished ours yesterday. So we're looking into either making our game more interesting, or programming a new one.

We had our second Journal Club and it went better than I thought. The different types of studies (Cross-sectional, case control, etc.) and the theoretical vs. conceptual framework is very new to me so I was worried about that but I'm definitely learning more about what those things mean.

Tonight I think we're going to the Artwalk in Ames and I'm pretty excited about that! This weekend we may be going to Ledge's Park or SkyZone depending on the weather and that sounds really fun!

*Pointers to Grad School

Posted on [June 4, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

This morning we had our 4th day of Programming Class where we learned about pointers, and we are pretty

much almost caught up on what I had learned in a year's worth of C++ classes. Talk about fire hosing! My group's C++ game project is coming along quite nicely. Nancy and I stayed an extra hour in the lab yesterday to finish debugging our code, and as stressful and frustrating debugging is, it was fun. It is definitely nicer having someone else to help debug. I think our group is aiming to finish our project by Friday.

Our Luncheon Lecture today had some very helpful pointers (hence the title) for Grad School. The lecture really helped answer questions about Grad School that had been lurking in the back of my mind like Applications and which Professor to choose, etc. He talked about going to Grad School away from home, and that is something I thoroughly agree with. When I go to Grad School I think it would be amazing to explore a different part of the country and broaden my network.

Let the games begin!

Posted on [June 3, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So this morning, after learning about Classes and Inheritance, we each presented our Game ideas for our programming course! Between class and lunch I would have to say that we got a substantial amount of coding done for our project, and I think that it is coming along. Although I've had C++ before, Nancy taught me something new about using an unordered set for our Deck generation so it's always awesome to learn new things. The card game we're designing, War, is a game I used to play with friends all the time so it'll be fun seeing a command-line version of it!

This week our group will also need to do some research into body recognition software that can segment a body from a video into different sections. This may be the most challenging part of our project, since it would be difficult to find good enough software without it having a lot of errors. But we can always work around it. Next week my group might get to go see an Eye Tracker in action and that'll be interesting to see how we can incorporate one into our project.

`void printTitle() { cout << "The Price is Right" << endl; }`

Posted on [June 2, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So we started off the morning with our C++ class and we discussed each of our groups ideas for our project. Originally my group wanted to implement Tetris, but it appears that we don't have the graphical knowledge necessary to do that. So at this point it looks like we're going to do a card game!

After that class we had our very first Luncheon Lecture, and I have to say that it was very entertaining but also informative. I do not have much experience with presenting posters, so hearing him give us advice on that was extremely beneficial to me. I tend to get very nervous when I speak, and I do a lot of "um's and errs" so I'll have to practice on that.

This afternoon we are having our next research team meeting, and I am kind of nervous about how that will turn out. We have a lot to discuss about where this project is going to go, but I'm glad that we have adequate time to figure that out. There's a lot of questions over whether an idea we have is technologically feasible in 10 weeks.

Week 2

Posted on [June 1, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Today went by pretty smoothly. This morning we had a C++ course and it's nice to get some review of it. I'm actually

Today went by pretty smoothly. This morning we had a C++ course and it's nice to get some review on it. I'm actually really excited about our C++ Group Project because I've always wanted to program an interactive game so that will be fun and challenging. After that we toured the UX Lab and it was nice seeing some Haptics technology and the MIRAGE. Around lunch time my group and I met with our faculty mentor and we discussed our projects and got to know each other a little better. I didn't get a lot of work done this weekend so it looks like tonight I'll need to start working on our Craft of Research assignments and for Journal Club as well as our Team Research meeting. This afternoon my group and I will do some people-watching since our project involves recognizing abnormal walking patterns of gestures so that'll be fun!

Funday Sunday

Posted on [June 1, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

It was pretty nice being able to sleep in today and I definitely took advantage of that. Around 2 a bunch of us went to the State Gym to do some rock climbing and swimming. I almost chickened out at the last minute to go rock climbing but I did it and made it to the top! Swimming around was very fun as well. We went in the hot tub, played pool-basketball, and swam around in the whirlpool for who knows how long. After some exploring of the campus we ate at Jeff's Pizza which was quite good. A while later after we got home, we had a Super Smash Bros. session with about five of us and it was very fun. (Sorry Maggie!)

Looking forward to another productive week!

First Weekend!

Posted on [May 30, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

So very early this morning we head off to the Ames farmer's market, and although I was feeling very drowsy at the time, after getting a Frappe Jamocha at Cafe Diem and playing a bit of Scrabble I started to get a little less drowsy. The Farmer's Market was pretty nice and it looked like they had some good food! After that we took a nice trip to PetCo and a Sports store and then we all returned back home to relax a bit.

A few hours later me, Gabe, Jordan, Allie, Mak, and Nancy all went to the State Gym for the first time and it was a blast! We played basketball for a while and Gabe pretty much smoked us. Then we went and played volleyball, and surprisingly I was not as bad as I thought I would be! I have to say, Jordan and I make quite a good volleyball team. Tomorrow we might go and do some rock climbing, so I'm excited about that.

It's Friday!!

Posted on [May 29, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

It has been quite an interesting day so far. We took a C++ pretest today, and even though I've had C++ before there were still a few challenging questions. I look forward to reviewing it in the course because I'll need a little refresher. The coolest part of today was touring the VRAC and seeing the C6! It is some truly amazing technology and I am so grateful that I was able to see it. I never thought in my life that I would look inside a Tractor combine. Seeing all the different Boeing jets was very cool as well.

I think I speak for everyone when I say that I'm excited for this weekend. Hopefully on Saturday we can do the Ropes Course, and if not then I'm sure we will find something equally as fun. I think it will be very relaxing to have a day or two where we are not fire-hosed with information. As the days go by I feel like there will be less fire-hosing haha.

First Blog

Posted on [May 28, 2015](#) by [ahornick](#)

Forgive my generic title as I am not so good at coming up with interesting titles. So what a crazy three days it has been! So far I think today has been my favorite day. We met with our teams and team leaders to discuss our research projects and it was great being able to learn more concrete details about what our projects were going to be about. I am a little nervous about implementing my project and how we're going to carry it out through technology, but I am very excited to start working on it with my wonderful team mates and hopefully learn lots of new things!

Another thing we did today that I very much enjoyed was our Part 1 of Building a Computer. Our team had a lot of fun picking out the different parts of computer and trying to fit into the budget of \$250. Our system, whose name is 'Betty', turned out to be the winning design which was pretty awesome! I can't wait to actually build it because I have always wanted to build a computer from scratch.

I really love how as each day passes by, our group becomes more and more comfortable around each other as we grow closer and share lots of laughter. Lastly, I'll answer the question of which superpower is better: flying or being invisible. And to me, the answer is clearly flying. I love traveling so being able to fly around the country/world while avoiding traffic would be awesome.