

Samantha Mater

 projects.vrac.iastate.edu/REU2014/

Spent a lot of time in the C6 today

Posted on [July 30, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

And doing a lot of VR stuff. It's been crazy cool — hard to believe I've worked here ten weeks and this is the first I'm seeing of a lot of these things. I got to fly around Hogwarts. Life made. Anyway, lot to do, little time to do it in. Saying goodbye to my friends from soccer tonight, will be sad, but it was great to get a chance to play with them regardless.



four days left

Posted on [July 29, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

I really need to pack. Worked out at the gym last night and it felt soooo good except now my quads are getting too big for my jeans which is frustrating (I've split two pairs in the last two weeks!) but also really really great because it means I've got muscles! Also we cajoled people into watching The Room last night — oh man. The first time I ever saw that movie was Valentines Day 2014 and it became my mission in life to show other people this cinematic masterpiece. I'm really glad other people seemed to love-hate it as much as me. Also coming soon is a tv show by Tommy Wiseau called The Neighbours. Basically he wanted to be in friends and had a lot of money, so he built his version of the show with himself as the centerpiece. Filmed in 2008, supposed to be released in 2014. I really hope it's real and I can't wait.

[Trailer.](#) [Website.](#)



One week from today

Posted on [July 28, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

I will be in Utah, helping on of my best friends get ready for her wedding. In one week, my life is going to be drastically different, and I'll be in a completely different environment. And that's shockingly normal. I did that coming here from Ireland. One week I was in Ireland, the next I had just driven across the country to be in Iowa. And after the wedding, I'll be in Indiana. And then after that it's preseason and I'll be back at college. Time is flying by.

But before then, we as a group have several things to do, and I personally have several things to do. (Below the cut is just a boring to-do list, feel free to skip)

Group

1. Research Paper
2. Testing

3. Finish Virtual Environment
4. Poster
5. +more

Individual

1. Buy & mail a birthday present
2. Clean & pack everything back into my car
3. Buy a wedding present
4. Make sure someone is picking me up from the airport
5. Drive to SB

I forgot what I was going to write about

Posted on [July 24, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Turns out my friend is coming to visit! He'll be here Friday evening and he'll leave Saturday morning. Other than that I've been working on the research paper all day and it is *slow* going. I like writing research papers, but it also takes me a long time, and I get frustrated with it. I'm the kind of person who does it piece by piece with breaks in between each section.

Sounds like people are getting sniffles around the office — I hope this last week keeps everyone in good health, and we all make it to presentations! Also I need to start packing up my room.

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Soccer Practice Tonight

Posted on [July 23, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

I'm excited, it's my last one before the tournament this weekend and I'm a little nervous. Turns out my friend might not be coming to visit because he will only be here Friday, and I'll be at work most of the day. Bummer, hadn't seen him in ten years, would have been so interesting to catch up with him. Oh well. It's crunch time with the Virtual Environment and the Research paper, but I'm having trouble convincing myself of the importance of the impending deadlines. Also the atmosphere in the office is not really conducive to work. I really want to just curl up with my laptop in a corner and blast music and crank out this research paper, but there's also a million other things to do and kudos to Kelsey and Anton because it feels like we're doing almost all of our project in these last two weeks (seriously, what were we doing for the first eight????!) and it's intense, but they are both being so boss and doing so so much.

Thank you

Posted on [July 21, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

This morning's class gave me a *lot* to think about, most of which is not really something I'd like to disclose on a public blog, but suffice to say, I really enjoyed the discussion. One thing I will comment on, is the mentor/mentee relationship — something I've never had / don't really understand what it is. But apparently it's pretty common? I didn't really feel like it was something I was lacking until today.

Other than that, the game inventory system is pretty much fully functional, next up is putting in the feedback responses, outputting data about each run to a file, and getting multiplayer functionality online. Honestly, multiplayer

is what I feel is going to be the hardest part, and most of our ability to run testing hinges on that.

A million thanks again to the Biaottos for once again having us as guests to their lovely home. The food was fabulous (I'm still full) and tubing was spectacular. Being there was the nicest way to spend a Sunday afternoon, it was so peaceful. I think watching the sunset on the water while tubing is possibly one of my more beautiful memories. I really can't thank y'all enough for letting us hang out. I feel like the amount of work we did is not near enough to make up for that, but anyway, thank you.

Forgot it was Friday

Posted on [July 18, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Other than that, my eyes hurt a lot from staring at a computer screen for long periods of time. Wonder when I'm gonna need glasses — my bet is in the next two years. Inventory is being populated which is taking me way longer than it should but oh well. At least I don't have to make the image icons, which is great.

What a pleasant feeling

Posted on [July 17, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Feeling so in my element at the moment.

Yesterday I played three sports, Volleyball, Soccer, and Broomball. This morning I woke up so tired and sore that I'm definitely skipping out on soccer today and maybe even tomorrow. My knees are not as good as they used to be, and my shins are definitely taking a beating.

Today I got the inventory systems to talk to one another — now you can buy items from a store and they'll show up in your inventory and your money counter will decrement by the appropriate amount. It's pretty nifty, but took me entirely too long, as I got hung up on something that ended up being such a simple fix — changing the script execution order. Oh well, it happens. Anyway, I'm tempted to go crazy and work on all the graphical aspects of the inventory system, because that's really fun and I like doing that, but I know there are a lot of other things I need to work on now instead. Poster Design, Lit Review, creating an updated due dates list, and then putting colliders into the environment (that last one I will probably do tomorrow). But I'm not even frustrated or tired, because I love coding and it makes everything better. I feel like we're finally getting somewhere!

inventories

Posted on [July 16, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

All I ever wanted out of this REU was to build things with code. And now that I am finally getting to do it, I don't dread coming to work anymore. Amazing how that happens. Finally getting that whole adage: doesn't matter what you do as long as you love it, otherwise you'll be miserable.

DEUTSCHLAND SIND DIE MEISTER!

Posted on [July 14, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

In case you missed it:

Thank god that's done with though, I was so stressed out about it. At the end of the match I was standing on my couch, pretty much ready to punch the ceiling if things went wrong. I get so serious about FIFA, and I've been waiting twenty-one years for this moment. It was everything I hoped it would be and more. Congrats, boys, you did it!

Weduriday

Posted on [July 11, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Wednesday || Thursday || Friday

My blog post for **Wednesday** as saved in drafts:

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Yesterday was a bloodbath. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm extremely pleased that Germany won (holla @ my boyz) but I can't help but feeling so bad for Neymar. What happened to him is actually one of my worst nightmares. A back injury that could have been paralyzing? Never being able to play again? I already have a knee that's probably going to need surgery at some point, I can't imagine waking up to your doctor telling you your World Cup dreams, the things you've been working for your entire life, are over. It must have been so devastating. Still, Germany is going to win the whole thing and I can't wait to see it. Also I want Argentina to win today, though with the internet being as bad as it is, I'll probably have to wait until I can go home and check my phone before I will know what happened there (thankfully connection problems were NOT happening yesterday). After work I went and played three hours of soccer which helped a lot with stress and general icky feelings (or so I thought) and I scored twice so that was fun.

Other news: We have a lot to do and a little time to do it in.

Thursday:

We had presentations which I was terrified for, but actually went really surprisingly well. I'm sorry to say I failed to engage with the REU presenters at the remote location mostly because I find it difficult to have a personal connection with someone on a screen vs. real life (re: my problems with skype). The Panera lunch was absolutely



fan-freakin-tastic. Oh man the only thing that could have made it better was some chicken and wild rice soup. Then I played soccer for three hours after work and scored more goals and my right shin is black and blue and my legs are so sore but it feels so good.

ALSO; had my first superdog last night. Unbelievably the best hotdog I've ever had in my entire life like wow. Felt my arteries clogging and didn't even care.

Friday:

Journal club was really interesting, the discussion we had was really engaging and it was exciting to see people get excited about a topic. Also lunch was fun. Ready for more soccer tonight and then it's the weekend. CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH. My place, Sunday, 3PM. I'm painting my face. Be there or be []

DEUTSCHLAND !

Sound

Posted on [July 8, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Today we had a lecture on data visualization through sound which *sounded* cool but in truth, when it comes to computers, I keep it muted 90% of the time. Sound on my visual interface really annoys me. I love it other places (cars, street crossings, etc.) but not on my computer. I like talking about other kinds of feedback than strictly visual, it's amazing what you don't even think about until it's pointed out to you (-insert references to research papers on accessibility here. I'm too lazy to find them but if you're interested ask me and I'll send them to you-) and also talking about accessibility is important. Did you know there are [accessibility guidelines](#) for designing websites? If you didn't, you're not alone. Most websites are not compliant with them, which makes it really difficult for people with screen readers and such to work through the internet. There's a reason there are < h1 >, < h2 >, and < h3 > tags in html. Use 'em!

Happy Long Weekend

Posted on [July 7, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

This weekend was magical. There are no other words for it. Swimming in the lake, cooking dinner over an open fire, sleeping through thunderstorms, hiking, fishing, reading by the fire (starting the fire!), it was all amazing. I could quite happily do that for a very, very long time. Also I'm pretty sure I made more s'mores this weekend than I have in the whole rest of my life combined.

Green Valley Lake, sunset

Special shout out to Holly's parents! Hi guys! Thank you so much for having us to your house and feeding us on the



Fourth of July, it was so lovely! I had so much fun! The catfish and pies were phenomenal. And boating around the lake was definitely a highlight of my weekend. After a fun, relaxing afternoon at Holly's, we watched fireworks and chilled out before driving back to the state park. It stormed but my tent stayed completely dry inside, so it was actually a really neat experience (complete opposite of the time I got flooded out in the middle of the night in Arkansas — that was fun in it's own way, but I digress). I really liked waking up and watching the rain falling outside the front of the tent. Sublime.

Green Valley Lake, pre-sunset

We also went on this epic nature hike (~7.1 miles) and I petted a field mouse and caught a fish and some fireflies and a spider and then we went kayaking and I finished 2.5 books. We had 'interesting' neighbours at the campsite, and their children were very inquisitive and adorable. Overall I give the experience a 10/10 and would go back again / want to be back there right now. Four days with barely a single thought about work was exactly what I needed.

P.S. Creston, IA is a little slice of Americana heaven. I wish I could have explored the downtown better there, because it was beautiful.

Happy Second

Posted on [July 2, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

I forgot to mention yesterday that the speaker also talked about something that piqued my interest — combining recommender systems (Like what Amazon uses to recommend products to you, or Netflix with movies, based on personal preferences and similarities to other users) with an intelligent tutoring system to keep track of the mistakes a person is likely to make, and keep track of similar mistakes other people with similar learning styles might make in order to tutor someone better. Mostly it's because I worked with improving recommender system algorithms last semester so now I see how that would be useful and totally interesting. It's probably not something I'm personally going to pursue with my life, but it's a neat concept, and I hope someone does!

Other than that, looking forward to fishing and swimming and camping and roasting marshmallows and reading and having a chill long weekend. Ready to get out of here. Have a great weekend, guys!

Iowa Games !

Posted on [July 1, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)



So in addition to Germany beating Algeria and advancing to the quarterfinals (where they play France), I have some exciting news on the soccer front. I am playing in the Iowa Games! [What are the Iowa Games?](#) you may ask.

Apparently it's like the Olympics, but for Iowa, and hosted in Ames. Anyway I'll be playing for the Ames Hurricanes F.C. (Team name: Mucky Ducks!) and it should be a lot of fun. If y'all wanna watch some soccer July 25-27th, come say hi!

At the lunch lecture today, we briefly mentioned some things that I was going to talk about anyway; the articles that Stephen mentioned during HCI last week. I've read some of them and I still haven't quite decided how I feel about them, but they involve women in STEM and in the workplace. [The Confidence Gap](#), [Why Women Still Can't Have It All](#), [Lean In](#). I suppose while we're on the topic of women and corporations, I'm also just gonna remind y'all that Hobby Lobby won their lawsuit — and now corporations are entities that can have religious leanings and can impact how their employees live their lives. Does that scare y'all, or do you agree with it, or what? I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Posted on [June 30, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we interrupt your regularly scheduled blogging to bring you a tornado.

Journal Club

Posted on [June 27, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Had a pretty good conversation today. It really got going in the last ten minutes or so when Kelsey started asking questions, but it was really fun and thank y'all for participating. You guys are the ones who made it great! (:

Other than that, got some more exciting news on the soccer front, which I'll share if it all works out, and also last night was desperately needed. Looking forward to the weekend even though we have SO MUCH work to do (goodbye Sunday) and looking forward to 4th of July (Yay camping!!!)

Optimal Outcome

Posted on [June 26, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

First off, a HUGE thank you to Eliot and Stephen and Andrea and everyone for letting us watch possibly the most important game of the summer (bar when Germany takes the cup, that'll be huge too). I was so emotionally invested in that game. I knew the stats too, so whenever Mari let out exclamations of elation or horror, I was mentally reevaluating my teams' chances of getting through. And they're both through to the knock-out rounds! I'm so impressed with America, actually, with their whole, underdog / group of death thing that mentally and physically they had to overcome and they did. It's wildly impressive, especially since no one expected them to succeed.

Germany, my boy Müller came in clutch like he does, and helped tip the Germany team to victory. What a great day. (:

Lunch Lecture #2

Posted on [June 24, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

This was the second most engaging lunch lecture we've had to date. I like her as a speaker, though I still hesitate at the practical applications of what she is proposing just yet (give it five, ten years). But what I liked even more than that, was the discussion that spawned while we were actually eating. It was a debate about the moral and ethical implications of technology and how changing the tool (from paper to a computer) that people use to shape themselves is going to change society (through education). Maybe that's a grandiose generalization but I loved hearing the different viewpoints on how people approach technology and education and where they thought society

was going. I'll be the first to tell you I love dystopian novels that talk about how technology is going to end all civilization as we know it, and if you had talked to me even two years ago I would have gone on (much like Time magazine) about how tech was destroying our generation or whatever the media was/is putting out even as I was preparing to study that for my career path. But I don't know that I see it that way anymore. My views/values/ideals are not fixed positions. Every time I get new information, I reevaluate my stance on whatever it is that we're discussing, and try to come up with either a new conceptualization or incorporate what I've learned into my existing mental models, to come to a position that I morally and ethically agree with. That lunch lecture certainly gave me some new views to synthesize and gave me a lot to think about.

And that's something I really appreciate and love. Thank you.

Very nearly forgot to blog today

Posted on [June 23, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

We finished up the OpenGL assignment this morning, and now we're working on polishing up the problem area paragraph a little bit more — so I've been looking for examples, and ended up diving into the 2011 REU website, where you can see all of the groups problem area paragraphs. Also I spent a little bit of time exploring the REU file system, it's neat that you can still see all the work from past years. Anyway, as I went from 2011 to 2012 to 2013 to 2014 I came back to our page and realised we were supposed to be journaling after lunch.

I'd forgotten because today's been pretty much unstructured and it's been so nice, I feel like we've all gotten so much done. Anton was amazing and wrote a physics engine for our OpenGL project, I went through our journal club paper to come up with talking points (Read it please!!!), Kelsey was awesome and did most of the IRB application, we've been working on and off on our problem area paragraph, lit review, coming up with an idea for methods — It's been a good, productive day.

Cognitive Science

Posted on [June 20, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

I took it on a whim last semester and it was easily my favourite class.

Here's [a link](#) to the webpage for my course last semester, it has all the powerpoints and readings and study guides if anyone is interested in learning more (and oh man it's SO engaging. My favourites were the one on memory and the one on illusion.)

Linux Poetry

Posted on [June 20, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Fun stuff:

*Segmentation fault,
execution halts.*

My friend likes to send me links to things he finds that are cool and I thought I'd share a few with y'all. Here are a few odes to Linux. His favourite is [this](#). Mine is [this](#). (Killing zombie children was probably the weirdest class of my CS career). Additionally, there's [this talk](#) on the silliness of a few programming languages. (-cough- RUBY / Javascript -cough-)



Also:

Costa Rica 1 – Italy 0.

Work Stuff:

We nailed down some independent and dependent variables (group v. individual; public v. private; differentiated v. the same). We also have tasks and deadlines, both of which make me very happy. We've also got our article for journal club, which might be accompanied by a form that isn't mandatory to fill out but I really would appreciate it if you guys looked at it briefly and thought about the questions as you are reading the article so we can have a great discussion next week! (I really really really like reading research papers, and I know that's weird but I don't even care. My favs come from [CHI](#), I highly recommend looking at articles from the last few conferences, I've read several of them and they're great. They're so fun to discuss and a lot of them have important social and ethical implications which is not something you generally see talked about in computer science, but is super important!).

As far as our OpenGL project goes, making all the code work across different IDE's and Operating Systems has been not the most fun but hopefully I will get time to devote to figuring that out this weekend because yay learning things!

73@M 7U70R!NG – @\$|<

Posted on [June 19, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

TEAM DYNAMICS:

The Dynamos, the group dynamics, the — oh whatever, we came up with a group/team name and that's it (the team dynamics thing, the rest is just me riffing)! I think it's particularly apt, because not only are we studying group dynamics in tutoring environments, but we are a group and we have dynamics! Yay!

Columbia beat the Ivory coast today and they'll advance to the group stage for sure if they win or tie Japan in their next match. Not that I really care, either way my boys will take them down. World Cup season is serious business for me, I have a great level of personal investment in it and a lot of my other interests get pushed aside for the summer. Expect updates until it ends in July, when Germany takes the cup. Sorry not sorry.

In other work related news:

OpenGL remains the same. I have a solar system, woo, exciting. Our stagnation remains the same. IRB is due tomorrow and we still don't have an idea of what we're going to investigate. Frustrating, but hopefully this meeting today will settle things, finally. I know that I am kind of throwing everyone for a curveball by saying I'm most interested in investigating where feedback is displayed (hello interface design!) when we've been talking about group vs. individual dynamics for so long, but I've read the papers on group v. individual and it's pretty intuitive stuff. People are going to prioritize the area they're getting feedback in — be that team or individual goals. Feedback creates a hierarchy in the mind and helps people decide what's most important. If the goal is to shoot a basket, and you tell someone that wearing Nike will help, that it's very important, and you give them points for wearing Nikes, you can bet that they'll wear Nikes (I mean, obnoxious brand loyalty aside)? Maybe that's a terrible analogy, I dunno. Like I said, hopefully this meeting will clear a lot of things up.

What just happened????

Posted on [June 18, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

SPAIN GOT KNOCKED OUT OF THE WORLD CUP???

Out of all the things I never saw coming that was definitely at the top of the list. Wooooooow, how embarrassing.

Sorry but that eclipsed the wonderful but a little long stats lesson we just had. It was good, the teacher was engaging, stats are very necessary. If I wasn't going to be here this summer, one of my alternative plans was to take a stats class at the community college near my house in DC. Looks like I'll be doing that in the spring instead. It's so important to both my majors, computer science and archaeology. Anyway, OpenGL is going the same as before, I'm excited to start work on our project, I hope it turns out, our team just needs to get on the same page as far as design is concerned.

Soccer tonight at 6, if anyone's interested.

OpenGL

Posted on [June 17, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

OpenGL is actually the greatest, watching code and equations turn into pictures on my screen is one of my favourite things in the world. VisualStudios and Windows, however, leave much to be desired. Call me a Linux snob but—well, actually yeah, just call me that, no way around it. Programming on any other operating system is too much hassle. Anyway, I'm really tempted to spent entirely too much time on the OpenGL assignment for tonight and ignore my actual big project, but I can't do that, so I suppose I'll get to work on that now.

Also, USA beat Ghana in the grudge match last night and it was wonderful.

AUF GEHT'S DEUTSCHLAND

Posted on [June 16, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

GERMANY

So Germany just CRUSHED Portugal in their 100th world cup match (the most out of any team!) and my boy Müller had a hat trick. Nice to know that he didn't peak at 20 (his first world cup appearance, four years ago!). The match was amazing, highlights definitely include Pele headbutting Müller while he was on the ground, and subsequently getting a red card and being sent off the pitch. Also Ronaldo just looked so sad, and I'm not saying I take joy in other people's heartache, but oh man. I can't help but be a little pleased that my team won.

In other, work / program related news:

The state park Saturday was so lovely. It was just what I needed, though I wish I'd had a little more time to just sit and appreciate being in nature. I'm definitely going camping several weekends this summer~! And then there was a bonfire and we roasted marshmallows and ate the marshmallows (seriously, it's not marshmallows? that blows my mind, I've been spelling it wrong my whole life). Sunday was really chill, I skyped my dad for father's day, and I'm ready to put that last, awful week behind me and move on.

Also, props to Anton for making the most kick-butt model of a brain I've ever seen. It looks SO cool.

Yesterday and Today

Posted on [June 13, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Yesterday:

After spending a wonderful lunch outside, and my mood being so much improved, here are my thoughts of the day:

Maya is the flippin' best. They let us play with it again and I just really love it a lot. If anyone's interested, [here's](#) a link to my final project for computer animation. It isn't rendered quite right (some of the hardware rendering wasn't turned on but oh well) but that's what I got out of a semester of learning to use Maya. Some of my classmates projects though, wow. Just wow.



So ~~today~~ yesterday outside during lunch, Getch, Mari, and I were talking about programming and the topic of awful languages came up. I mentioned chef, which structures a program like instructions on how to cook something. This is hello world in chef:

Hello World Cake with Chocolate sauce. This prints hello world, while being tastier than Hello World Souffle. The main

chef makes a " world!" cake, which he puts in the baking dish. When he gets the sous chef to make the "Hello" chocolate sauce, it gets put into the baking dish and then the whole thing is printed when he refrigerates the sauce. When actually cooking, I'm interpreting the chocolate sauce baking dish to be separate from the cake one and Liquify to mean either melt or blend depending on context.

Ingredients.

- 33 g chocolate chips
- 100 g butter
- 54 ml double cream
- 2 pinches baking powder
- 114 g sugar
- 111 ml beaten eggs
- 119 g flour
- 32 g cocoa powder
- 0 g cake mixture

Cooking time: 25 minutes.

Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees Celsius.

Method.

- Put chocolate chips into the mixing bowl.
- Put butter into the mixing bowl.
- Put sugar into the mixing bowl.
- Put beaten eggs into the mixing bowl.
- Put flour into the mixing bowl.
- Put baking powder into the mixing bowl.
- Put cocoa powder into the mixing bowl.
- Stir the mixing bowl for 1 minute.
- Combine double cream into the mixing bowl.

Stir the mixing bowl for 4 minutes.
Liquify the contents of the mixing bowl.
Pour contents of the mixing bowl into the baking dish.
bake the cake mixture.
Wait until baked.
Serve with chocolate sauce.

chocolate sauce.

Ingredients.

111 g sugar
108 ml hot water
108 ml heated double cream
101 g dark chocolate
72 g milk chocolate

Method.

Clean the mixing bowl.
Put sugar into the mixing bowl.
Put hot water into the mixing bowl.
Put heated double cream into the mixing bowl.
dissolve the sugar.
agitate the sugar until dissolved.
Liquify the dark chocolate.
Put dark chocolate into the mixing bowl.
Liquify the milk chocolate.
Put milk chocolate into the mixing bowl.
Liquify contents of the mixing bowl.
Pour contents of the mixing bowl into the baking dish.
Refrigerate for 1 hour.

In contrast, here's hello world in python:

```
print("Hello, World!")
```

If anyone else wants a look at some really really awful / genius basically nonfunctional programming languages, [here's](#) a (by no means complete) list. Seriously, just look at some of them, and be glad you'll never have to learn them. (All these programs do the exact. same. thing.)

Today:

Mexico beat Cameroun, 1 – 0. That is all.

Exhausted

Posted on [June 11, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Physically and mentally.

I need more sleep and I need more down time*. It's tough going from completely unstructured, study when I feel like it (but knowing exactly what to study) being alone ~50% of the time, to being in an office space from 9 – 5 every day, given a vague idea of what to do and almost no direction, being alone ~5% of the time. And then I have to do my summer workout if I want to play soccer this fall and I feel so frazzled. It's definitely hump day.

Really it's not so bad and I do absolutely love being here, but just today I'm having trouble focusing on my screen and while the etiquette lunch was interesting it was also hard because you do different things to be polite in different countries and sometimes it's hard to keep them all straight. Nice to refresh on what's appropriate in America though I guess.

Other than that — finally feel like we're making some progress when it comes to team tutoring so that's nice, but I have no idea how to do experimental design or anything so I feel like I'm missing this huge big piece of the puzzle when trying to see the whole picture to know how to move forward from here.

I just want to sleep for the next twenty hours and then I'll come back tomorrow refreshed and ready for everything. That sounds good.

*I guess I just mean weekends. Don't get me wrong I love seeing all y'all's lovely faces everyday, you're all so cool, but occasionally I need a day just completely to myself, and b/c of the picnic Sunday I didn't really get that this weekend.

best day ever

Posted on [June 10, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

So far this has definitely been the best day of this internship for me, spirit and interest wise. I walked into the lab at 8:45 this morning exhausted, slightly cranky, and not in the mood to do anything. Within half an hour, we had started working with CAD again (and omg I love CAD) and I geeked out to Kelsey and Anton and Stacy really hard about how great I thought modeling was. Cause I think it's really great. It's so powerful and visual and fun and at the end of it you can look at a product and think *I made that*. That's pretty dang special.

Then we had the most engaging lunch lecture of our time here, and I think it's one that'll be hard to top (no offense to everyone else who's presented). Not only am I fascinated by SMS as a medium for growth and as a way to present oneself to the world (it's a look at how a person wants to be seen, rather than how they are seen— it's fascinating to see the way those two things differ sometimes) but as a user of a SMS that I feel has drastically shaped my personality and how I interact with the world, as well as being a serious internet user, I feel like I have a personal investment in this area of research.

Anyone who knows me will tell you, "yeah, Sam spends a lot of time talking about how the internet will allow the corporations to take over society and there will be no privacy and everyone will be a part of the system" (much like all the dystopian novels I'm such a huge fan of – *Handmaid's Tale*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Brave New World*, 1984, *Feed*, to name a few) HOWEVER, there is a lot to be said for the social good that's coming out of it as well. He briefly touched on LGBT as an example in his conversation with us today, and that's just once facet of a really big deal. Creating a safe place for someone to explore their sexuality, identity, gender, race, anything, to have discussions about it and be able to share their experiences and get advice and feedback in a way that will keep them physically safe and allow them the room to emotionally and mentally grow, that's HUGE. I have grown up with the internet, one of my earliest memories is sitting on my father's lap while he was on the computer, and technology, even limited as it was / is, has shaped my life. And I think that it's really important that we acknowledge that and talk about it and study it, and that's why I found Rey's lecture / discussion / lunch today so fascinating. I would love for him to come back again or have a more in depth conversation about all this because it's something I have a great personal investment in.

There's so much more I want to say on this topic, but I don't know how much of it is work/spire/vrac/this blog appropriate, because I think it's supposed to be more about our research, but I'm gonna leave y'all with a link to [TCK](#), which is an aspect of my identity I've found a lot of ways to explore virtually than I otherwise might not have been able to. (I mean there's more identity to me than that, but oh man I just have to stop typing now—just come talk to me I love this stuff it's great I'll talk your ear off).

Week End

Posted on [June 9, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Anyway, so Friday, after feeling like i was going crazy in the lab, I got out and got a chance to play a pick up game of soccer which was amazing, and did wonders for my stress levels. It showed me that I really need to get into gear if I want a shot of playing this fall, but it's also made me more excited for it. Saturday was the farmers market and Norene's house. The farmer's market was really really fun. I didn't even mind the rain all that much. I tried a rangoon for the first time at Andrea's suggestion and it was so yummy I got another. I really liked getting the free samples and petting all the dogs. Then we went for lunch at Norene's house, which was beautiful and I got to pet her cat too so basically my weekend was fun and full of animals, which was a nice change. I also fell asleep on her back porch to the sound of the rain so that was nice too. Most of us also together to play cards against humanity that night and Anton made us all delicious crepes!

Sunday my group had a meeting which I feel was actually pretty productive, we explained our parts of the bibliography to one another so hopefully we all have a more rounded understanding of what we're trying to accomplish. We took a break and did our own things (for me that meant more summer workout) and then met again at seven to finish that up and finish mastermind, which thanks to Kelsey, we did! There was also the welcome picnic which was fun. I balked at the thought of doing the whole, "hi I'm so-and-so, my major is this, I'm from here" thing *again* because, well, I hate it, but I actually met some pretty nice people and got to play some sports with some new faces, which I enjoy. I also found out about a pick up soccer game that goes on daily, which is my jam!

This morning was modeling and CAD and oh my gosh it was the best. I love modeling, mostly because at one point I wanted to be an animator (for Pixar, that's the ultimate dream goal) but also because art and math and design is the best. It was also really cool because it tied together three classes I've taken (animation, graphics, and collective intelligence) and one of my favourite things about learning is seeing all the ways separate fields intersect and realising that really, nothing is separate, and everything is influenced by everything.

So, I'll leave you with a fun fact I picked up this past semester: In Ireland, the word weekend is often pronounced as two distinct words, week, end. There, aren't you glad you know that now? (;

LOOK HOW COOL CAD IS. LOOK HOW PRETTY THIS IS.

Light Painting

Posted on [June 6, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

We did some light painting yesterday which interested me because photography is one of my many side hobbies, but I felt like we were all too drained to really contribute. I think if we had done it at a different time / day / not after work it would have been much more interesting. Still though it was cool, and we (finally!) got to see the Mirage lab which is what I was really interested in anyway. (also I love that the banners have been updated to be pictures of us instead of last years group!)

Unlike Shamaria, Janae, and Mariama, I didn't hop aboard the whole eating healthy train today (whoops the tacos were calling my name) but hopefully today I get to play some soccer so that might make up for it. I'm really excited to go to the farmers market tomorrow, and get a home-cooked lunch.

Other than that, we're pretty much done with Mastermind, which is nice, just a few more finishing touches from



Kelsey and then everything will be grand. I'm excited for modelling next week!

Have you tried turning it off and then on again?

Posted on [June 5, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Yesterday was an adventure in trying on an EEG dry cap without actually getting any data out of it, because turns out it was never switched on. We figured that out an hour and a half later, oops. Just goes to show that even the best minds can be stumped by silly things. Oh well, at least I got a really cool picture out of it.

Also, during our lunch lecture, Dr. Winer mentioned a patent for a table that uses centrifugal force to help birth a baby, and I actually saw that in an exhibit called 'Fail Better' at Trinity College last semester. (It looked horrifying. There was a net at the bottom to help catch the child.) Here's [more info](#) if anyone is interested / creeped out. Might be nsfw depending on your bosses sensibilities though, so click at your own risk.



storm warning?

Posted on [June 4, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

So last night we had some sort of tornado watch / warning, whatever, I can never remember the difference between them. Anyway we decided that the weather couldn't be *that* bad and went out to dinner as a group. It was so fun (*and so cheap!*) and so good! I sat on one end with Kelsey, Mari, Getch, Phil, and Jesse, and there was so much laughter, it was exactly what I needed after a loooooong day at work. The chicken fingers were only okay, but the peanut brittle ice cream was oh my goodness so amazing. I feel like we'll be going back there again!

c++ project

Posted on [June 3, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Had the longest meeting with our faculty advisors yesterday, but I think we got a lot more clarification about what we're doing, which is really good. After that my best friend was here! It was so lovely to see her, hopefully it won't be another year before I do again.

In other REU news, we've nailed down our c++ project, and divided up parts, which is really nice. It shouldn't be that difficult to implement, but having a task and a timeline feels good. We had a lunch lecture which was interesting, even if I didn't understand much of the hard science stuff, and the food was really good (because that's the important part ;)) We also have another meeting today to discuss our annotated bibliography and hopefully nail down our project more.

Other than that, being here has kind of shown me I'm not that good at the whole team player thing, but hopefully that will change, and being here will make me better at it. It's definitely a skill I need and something I'm going to work to develop.

Week 2

Posted on [June 2, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

Sorry for the lack of posting, this is my first blog with an actual audience, and I'm not sure how to proceed, so bear with me. At this point everyone knows everyone else but I'll introduce myself regardless, I'm Sam, I prefer she/her/hers, I'm a compsci / archaeology double major, and I'm working with Team Tutoring.

The last week or so has been jam-packed. From moving in to meeting everyone to doing the activities it's all been so fun, and I'm so excited about what we're doing here. Granted, our project is still really uncertain which I'm not super happy about (I'm very much a task oriented person) and I don't understand a lot of the psych side of things, but we get to play with really cool tech and because I don't know much about the psych I'm going to learn so many new things!

Other than that... the ropes course this weekend was really fun, made it to the top twice and wow was it way higher than I thought. Though I didn't really enjoy getting picked up or anything, there's no denying that the whole adventure course thing really built a solid camaraderie among us interns (and even some of the grad students)!

The C++ class this morning made me feel a lot more in my element, and we're meeting with our group to discuss our project more in depth later, and I'll let y'all know how that goes tomorrow!

Oh, also exciting and very much a side note, my very best friend (who I've seen once in the last three years) is coming through town today and I'm so so so happy to see her.

Posted on [May 29, 2014](#) by [Samantha](#)

hello, world.